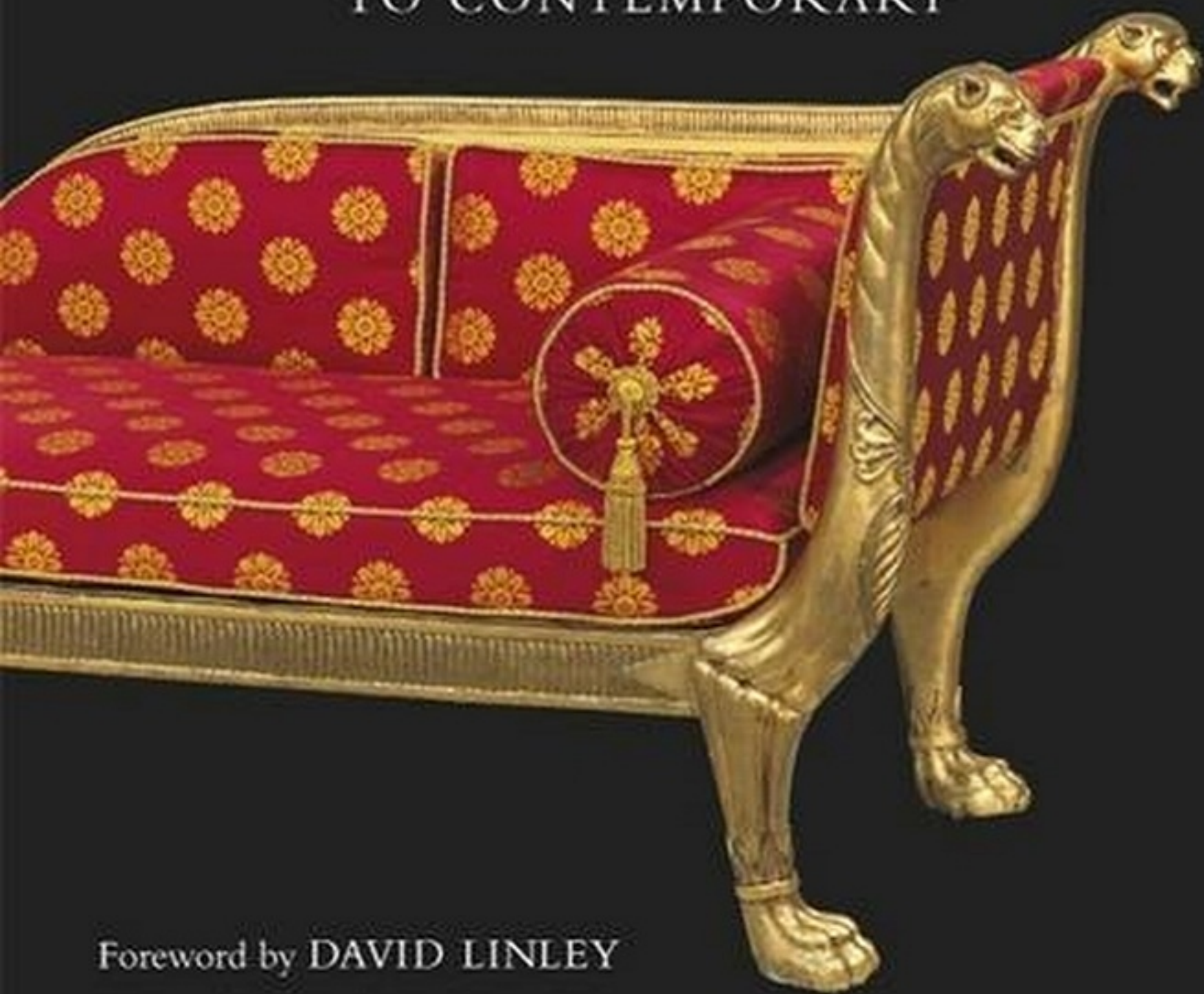


JUDITH MILLER
FURNITURE

WORLD STYLES FROM CLASSICAL
TO CONTEMPORARY



Foreword by DAVID LINLEY

FURNITURE





FURNITURE

Judith Miller



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FOREWORD

“A chair is a very difficult object. A skyscraper is almost easier. That is why Chippendale is famous.”

LUDWIG MIES VAN DER ROHE

Anyone who has ever admired the proportions of a Chippendale chair or the finely carved pediment of a Queen Anne highboy will know there is no skill to match that of a cabinet-maker. There is an immense sense of achievement in bringing a furniture design to fruition – from the first sketch on paper to selecting the wood, working the surfaces until smooth, and adding final touches such as handles and escutcheons – a craftsman takes pleasure in each step of the process.

This sense of satisfaction is a lasting one when you consider that a finely constructed desk or table will last many lifetimes and bring pleasure to all who use it.

Furniture styles have changed so much through the centuries. At times designers have been inspired by the past: at others they have fixed their sights firmly on the future. Whether you are delighted by the simple form of a Shaker cabinet or the exuberance of a Belter sofa, furnish your home in the traditional Chippendale style or the futuristic designs of the Memphis Group, there is much to learn from seeing furniture from around the world placed in context as it is in this book. However, while designs and fashions change one thing remains the same: the enthusiasm and creativity of furniture-makers.



David Keitley



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PRICE BANDS

Some of the pieces of furniture in this book are accompanied by a number that gives an indication of value:

- 1 £100–500 2 £500–1,000 3 £1,000–2,500 4 £2,500–5,000
5 £5,000–10,000 6 £10,000–20,000 7 £20,000–50,000
8 £50,000–100,000 9 £100,000–250,000 10 £250,000 upwards



Previous page: The Swan This lounge chair was designed by Arne Jacobsen for the Royal Hotel, Copenhagen. The chair has a moulded, synthetic inner shell with red fabric upholstery and stands on an aluminium, swivelling base. 1958. H:85cm (33½in); W:75.6cm (29½in); D:63.5cm (25in).



Opposite page: Boston highboy This highboy from Massachusetts has a maple case and a white pine interior. The case is japanned and has Queen Anne-style brass handles, escutcheons, and cabriole legs. c.1747. H:178.4cm (70¼in); W:100.6cm (39½in); D:53.3cm (20in).

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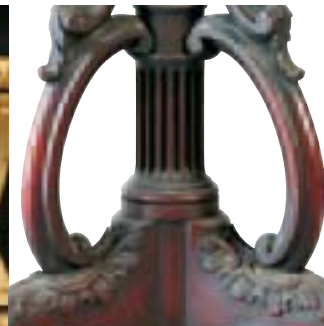
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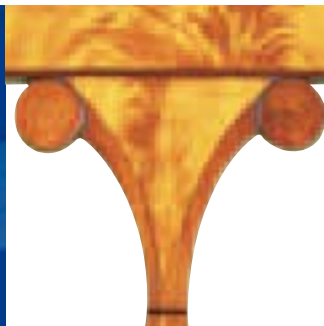
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INTRODUCTION

The story of furniture is inextricably linked with the story of our civilization. From Roman day beds to Louis XV armchairs, and from Neoclassical desks to Postmodern storage units, the furniture people have used in their homes has always reflected the aspirations, fashions, and technology of the time.

I was born into the “Formica Generation” of the 1950s. My parents were proud to say they had thrown away the old Victorian furniture they had inherited and replaced it with the latest modern designs. I, however, spent many happy hours wandering through the grand stately homes in the Scottish Borders where we lived, many of them designed by Robert Adam and his sons. I think it was in

Paxton House near Berwick that I was first struck by the wonderful furniture made by an 18th-century craftsman called Thomas Chippendale. It was the beginning of a long and exciting journey of discovery.

Since then I have been able to study furniture in a huge variety of styles and in a wide range of countries, from French Art Nouveau in the Musée d’Orsay, Paris to the American Furniture Collection in Williamsburg, Virginia and Modernist pieces in the Bauhaus Museum in Berlin. All of them have added to my fascination with furniture.

Being able to identify a piece of furniture requires an understanding of how it was made, what it was made from, and who it was made for. Most of the grand



furniture that we see today was made for the aristocracy who wanted to show off their wealth and good taste. By the mid 19th century, however, furniture was more affordable and the middle classes could furnish their homes in the latest styles. This book shows not only the masterpieces created for the finest homes, many of which are now in museums, but also the less expensive, everyday furniture designed for more modest settings.

While furniture design has evolved over time, certain forms, such as the klismos chair, have often been revived. Some styles also spread across continents: the excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum, for example, inspired French Empire furniture, the designs of Hepplewhite and Sheraton, and American Federal furniture.

There are many fine specialist books on furniture but I always felt the need for one which would provide a definitive overview of world furniture. This book looks at the evolution of styles from the earliest times to the end of the 20th century, and is illustrated with 3,000 photographs. Each chapter investigates a specific period, setting the development of styles within a social and political context. It provides an overview of furniture design and a guide to the key elements of decorative style, then shows how furniture developed from country to country, including features on styles, designers, and movements. Finally, themed collections of pieces from different countries are analysed and compared and include price bands, where possible, to give collectors an indication of value. Some pieces are accompanied by a letter code identifying the dealer or auction house that is selling or has sold them.

I hope that this magnificent and comprehensive book will fire your imagination, just as that first piece of Chippendale fired mine, and will give you a lifelong interest in the styles, techniques, and history of this fascinating subject.

Judith Miller.



PERIOD STYLES

Developments in furniture design have always been subject to various factors – economic and political change, technological advances, necessity, status, and fashion. Not all countries have experienced exactly the same influences, nor are the features of any one style seen in all the furniture made at that particular time. However, each period style does have its own defining characteristics, whether it is the overall shape of a piece, how it is decorated, or the materials used, which make it easier to identify as belonging to one era rather than another.



Renaissance

Originating in Italy in the 14th century and finding expression throughout Europe over the following 200 years, Renaissance means “rebirth”. The style was inspired by a renewed interest in ancient Greece and Rome. Taking their lead from architects, furniture-makers applied Classical features, such as columns, cornices, and pediments to their work, producing symmetrical, architectural pieces. Popular motifs included vases, putti, and caryatids.

Renaissance sgabello chair (see p.29)

Baroque

An expression of wealth and power, the Baroque style was sculptural and theatrical. Drawing on Classical and Renaissance motifs, designers produced elaborately carved furniture on a grand, architectural scale, using exotic materials and techniques such as marquetry, *pietra dura*, and velvet upholstery. Evident in its purest form in Rome around 1600, the style was adopted by other European countries as the century progressed, with varying degrees of exuberance.

Italian Baroque cabinet (see p.37)



Chinoiserie

Chinoiserie was a style that developed from the European fascination with the exotic porcelain, lacquerware, and other forms of decorative art imported from China and Japan, from the 17th century onwards. Derived from *chinois*, the French word for “Chinese”, the style developed in its own right as European designers created their own fanciful interpretation of exotic Oriental styles and motifs. The result was a style that lasted in various forms for about 200 years, combining ornament from China and Japan, sometimes with both styles evident in one piece. Characteristic of the style was the use of exotic motifs such as pagodas, dragons, and lotus blossoms, stylized landscapes, Chinamen, imitation lacquerwork known as japanning, and luxurious materials.



Gothic armchair (see p.166)

Gothic

Influenced by medieval ecclesiastical architecture, Gothic-style furniture has enjoyed a number of revivals. The first emerged in Britain from the mid 18th century, when furniture-makers such as Thomas Chippendale applied Gothic architectural elements, such as cusped arches, ogee curves, and quatrefoils, to their designs. The style was revived during the 19th century and had a considerable influence on the Arts and Crafts Movement.



Lacquered commode in the Chinoiserie style (see p.170)



Georgian chest of drawers (see p.179)

Georgian

Georgian is a term used to describe furniture made in Britain from 1715 to 1811, during the reigns of Georges I, II, and III. Early Georgian furniture was primarily made from walnut, and incorporated a number of the Rococo features prevalent at the time, such as serpentine curves, C- and S-scrolls, and claw-and-ball feet. Late Georgian pieces were mostly made from mahogany, and displayed the rectilinear shapes and Neoclassical ornament that became popular towards the end of the 18th century.



Rococo commode (see p.73)

Rococo

By the beginning of the 18th century, furniture designers began to reject the heavy formality of the Baroque style and sought to create a lighter, more feminine look. Emerging in France, the Rococo style dominated European design for the first half of the 18th century and made much use of curvaceous *bombé* forms, asymmetrical ornament, and the cabriole leg. Popular motifs included C- and S-scrolls, naturalistic foliage, and rocaille, which often took the form of elaborate gilded mounts.

Louis XV

The French interpretation of the Rococo style was named after the early 18th-century monarch, Louis XV. The style was influenced by a more informal, intimate, and comfortable way of life, with an emphasis on the interior as a harmonious whole. Colour schemes were either rich and vibrant or pale and gilded, and new forms, such as the *duchesse* (chaise longue), the *bergère* (armchair) and delicate *bonheurs-du-jour* (lady's desks) reflected the increasing influence of women in society. Gilt-bronze mounts and japanned surfaces imitating Oriental lacquerwork were also popular decorative features.



Louis XV giltwood *bergère* (see p.78)



Queen Anne chair
(see p.116)

Queen Anne

A more understated form of Rococo design emerged in Britain, influenced, in part, by prevailing trends in the Low Countries. Furniture forms during this period (1700–15) were more restrained than elsewhere in Europe and elegant proportions were considered more important than decoration. Pieces tended to be made of lightly carved wood – usually walnut – and had very little additional ornamentation. Characteristic features included the cabriole leg, claw-and-ball feet, and vase-shaped back splats on chairs. The style was adopted with considerable success in the United States from about 1725.



Neoclassical *secrétaire* (see p.177)

Neoclassical

Popular during the second half of the 18th century, Neoclassicism was a reaction against the Rococo style and was linked to a renewed interest in ancient Greece and Rome. Furniture-makers were inspired not only by the rectilinear shapes of Classical architecture, but also by its decorative details, such as the Greek key and Vitruvian scrolls. Applied ornament, often gilded, took the form of laurel swags, urns, and medallions.



Gustavian armchair (see p.155)

Gustavian

The Gustavian style was a restrained version of French Neoclassicism which was unique to Sweden during the reign of Gustav III (1746–92). Characterized by light colours and rich silk damasks, it was based on Neoclassical elements, such as friezes, fluting, and laurel festoons, but the furniture was painted rather than gilded. Klismos-style chairs upholstered in silk and oval-backed chairs with straight, fluted legs were typical. Entire rooms were decorated in the Gustavian style and often had panelled walls embellished with tall giltwood-framed mirrors.



Federal wall mirror (see p.247)

Federal style

Taking its name from the creation of the Federal constitution in 1787, the Federal style was an American form of Neoclassicism, based primarily on British forms. Furniture was predominantly made of mahogany, and was light in style, with a sparing use of ornament. Typical motifs included the American eagle, carved scrolls, bellflowers, swags, and shells. Late Federal pieces began to reflect the influence of Empire style, with applied ormolu mounts and brass banding.



Empire mahogany-veneered commode (see p.200)

Empire

A form of late Neoclassicism, the Empire style dominated European furniture design in the first half of the 19th century, originating in France under Napoleon. The style was inspired not only by ancient Greece and Rome, but also by ancient Egypt. Rectilinear forms took on grand proportions and were often embellished with brass or gilt mounts, or with sumptuous

fabrics. Designers used architectural elements, such as pediments and columns, on case pieces, and sabre or splayed legs on seating. Popular motifs included swags, laurels, and medallions, as well as sphinxes and Napoleon's personal emblems: the crown and the bee. The style directly influenced the Regency style in Britain, the Empire style in the United States, and the Biedermeier style in Germany.

Biedermeier

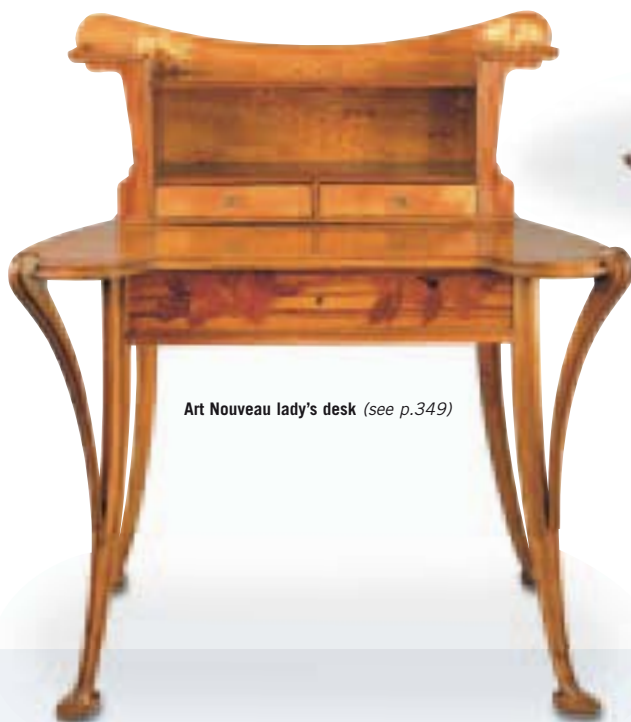
Biedermeier was a more restrained version of the Empire style and developed in Germany, Austria, and Sweden during the first half of the 19th century. Principally a middle-class interpretation of the high French style, Biedermeier furniture was simple, classical, comfortable, and practical. The majority of pieces were rectilinear, and Classical motifs and the sabre leg were common features. Although many pieces were made from mahogany, light-coloured native woods such as walnut, cherry, birch, pear, and maple, were also used, often punctuated with ebonized highlights. Biedermeier furniture was visibly hand-crafted, adding to its homely appeal. Chairs and sofas were usually upholstered in pale fabrics to match the overall light colour schemes that were a prominent feature of Biedermeier interiors.



Biedermeier walnut-veneered commode (see p.217)

Art Nouveau

This decorative style flourished in Europe, particularly France and Belgium, at the turn of the 20th century. In a reaction against the historical revivals of the mid 19th century, designers sought to create a "new art". The style was characterized by sinuous, asymmetrical lines and was primarily inspired by nature, although there were variations from one country to another. It echoed many of the decorative motifs of the Rococo style 200 years before and was also influenced by Japanese art.



Art Nouveau lady's desk (see p.349)



Art Deco table
by Ruhlmann
(see p.293)

Art Deco

Coined in the 1960s, "Art Deco" is a term used to describe a decorative style that blossomed at the end of World War I. Essentially of French origin, and inspired by influences as diverse as Neoclassicism, the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb, and Cubism, Art Deco furniture was large, geometric, and sumptuously decorated. Typical motifs included stylized sunbursts, chevrons, and abstract geometric patterns. Art Deco also developed in Central Europe, the Far East, and the United States, where streamlined pieces were particularly successful.

Modernism

Pioneered by the Bauhaus School in Germany in the wake of World War I, Modernism was a rejection of all historical styles. Expressed initially through architecture, the movement spread, and furniture designers embraced manufacturing processes with renewed verve. Forms became predominantly stark, geometrical, and stripped of all ornament – being functional was all-important. Preferred materials included glass, laminated wood, and tubular steel, and new designs included the cantilever chair.



Modernist Wasilly Chair (see p.434)



Victorian armchair
(see p.277)

Historicism

The second half of the 19th century was a time of historical revivals. Epitomized by the Victorian interior in Britain, reproductions of earlier pieces in the Gothic, Renaissance, and Rococo styles were mass produced, in line with industrialization. There was a greater emphasis on comfort, reflected in curvaceous forms and deep-buttoned upholstery.

Aesthetic Movement

Evident in Britain and the United States towards the end of the 19th century, this was a short-lived movement advocating "art for art's sake". Designers were influenced by the decorative arts of Japan, but also by Gothic, Moorish, and Jacobean styles. Pieces borrowed elements from all these styles and were often ebonized to create a lacquered effect.

Aesthetic Movement rosewood cabinet (see p.326)



Arts and Crafts cube chair
(see p.338)

Arts and Crafts Movement

A forceful rejection of the mass-produced, shoddy furniture produced as a result of the Industrial Revolution, the Arts and Crafts Movement championed good design, skilled craftsmanship, and the finest traditional building materials, as part of an ideal of the good life. The style associated with the movement developed in Britain and the United States during the second half of the 19th century and lasted well into the 20th century. Designers worked with native woods – predominantly oak – and produced simple, geometric pieces based on traditional vernacular forms, such as the settle. Additional forms of decoration were sparingly used, the idea being that the grain of the wood, often quartersawn, was sufficiently decorative in itself.

Mid-century Modern chair by Eames (see p.451)

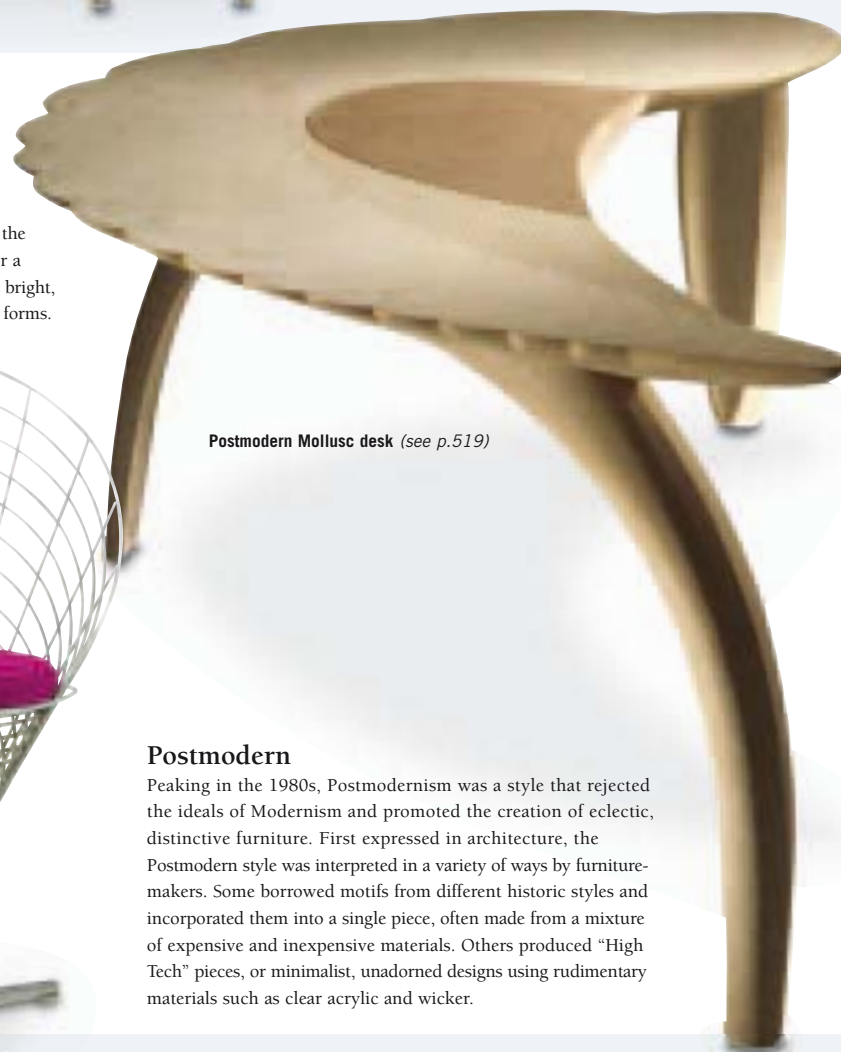


Pop

Pop is a term used for design of the late 1950s and 1960s that exploited popular culture. Furniture could be made very cheaply and took the form of gimmicky, brightly coloured pieces, often inspired by the space age and designed predominantly for a young audience. Characteristics of Pop are bright, moulded plastics and organic, amorphous forms.



Pop wire-cone chair
(see p.480)



Postmodern Mollusc desk (see p.519)

Mid-century Modern

Mostly associated with designers working in the United States and Scandinavia after the end of World War II, Mid-century Modern furniture was a natural extension of Modernism, but designers had a looser, altogether more sculptural approach to furniture. They continued to make use of the latest technological advances, which now included the production of moulded plastics, foam padding, and lightweight aluminium frames. Characteristic of the period was the experimentation with innovative, often organic, shapes and a bolder use of colour.

Postmodern

Peaking in the 1980s, Postmodernism was a style that rejected the ideals of Modernism and promoted the creation of eclectic, distinctive furniture. First expressed in architecture, the Postmodern style was interpreted in a variety of ways by furniture-makers. Some borrowed motifs from different historic styles and incorporated them into a single piece, often made from a mixture of expensive and inexpensive materials. Others produced "High Tech" pieces, or minimalist, unadorned designs using rudimentary materials such as clear acrylic and wicker.



ANCIENT FURNITURE
4000_{BCE} - 1600_{CE}



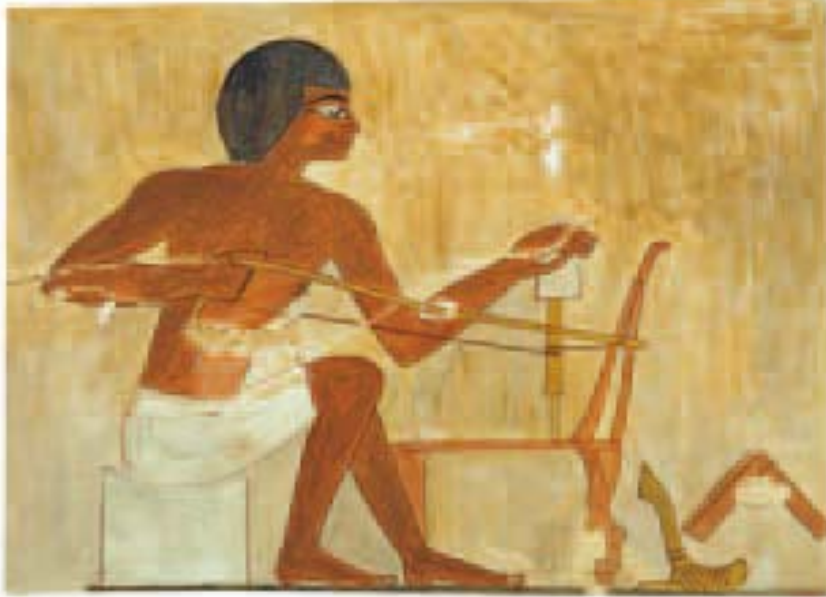
ANCIENT EGYPT

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN FURNITURE is better documented than that of other ancient civilizations, and it was obviously very well regarded in its day. Indeed, excavations at sites in Mesopotamia and further afield have shown that furniture of Egyptian origin was also exported and given in tribute to foreign dignitaries.

The ancient Egyptian world-view included a complex set of beliefs regarding the afterlife. The Egyptians believed that one aspect of the eternal soul, “Ka”, was the double of the physical body, freed at the moment of death but able to return to the corpse at will. This aspect of the soul required sustenance in order to continue to exist and this is why the burial chambers of Egyptian dignitaries were filled not only with food, but also with ceremonial and household furniture that represented the highest achievements of Egyptian craftsmen. Being perishable, wooden frames did not always survive interment. However, gold casings and ivory inlays, found on tomb floors, have enabled Egyptologists to recreate the furniture.

SECRETS FROM THE TOMBS

Reconstructions of artefacts found in the tomb of Queen Hetepheres have revealed an elaborate canopy



Copy of a wall painting This painting from the Tomb of Rekhmira, 1475 BCE, shows an Egyptian youth constructing a chair using a bow drill to bore a hole in the seat.

bed, a carrying chair, and other items including numerous boxes. The tomb of Tutankhamen, who was born in c.1340 BCE and died more than 1,000 years after Hetepheres, contained artefacts designed specifically for the burial site: his funerary couch, for example, is carved in the form of Ammit, the eater of the dead, a god with the head of a crocodile, the body of a leopard, and the hindquarters of a hippopotamus. Tutankhamen ruled for less than ten years, and much speculation surrounds the circumstances of his death.

When Howard Carter discovered Tutankhamen's tomb in 1922, there were immediate consequences for the decorative arts. Art Deco furniture, in particular, reflected the influence of ancient Egyptian forms and decorative motifs, just as furniture of the French Empire period had done following Napoleon's triumphant entry into Egypt in 1798.

DOMESTIC FURNITURE

Depictions of items in everyday use by the more affluent members of society have been preserved in paintings and carvings. The most common item of furniture documented was the stool – both three- and four-legged types, with varying degrees of decoration.

The folding stool, constructed from a pair of

wooden frames and a slung leather seat, originated in the Middle Kingdom and became a staple of ancient interior design, from Aqua Sulis to Constantinople.

Another kind of stool in common use had a concave seat, supported by four upright legs linked with stretchers and reinforced with diagonal braces.



Golden Throne This throne from Tutankhamen's tomb has a wooden frame wrapped in gold and silver sheets with inlaid, semiprecious stones, and lion's head and paw decoration.

Low, straight-legged tables were used to display water vessels or the faience vases so treasured by Egyptians. Stands designed specifically for vases were constructed from timber poles terminating in a collar that supported the vessel.

Beds were usually made of timber, although metal and ivory were also used. Woven cord was suspended between the two sides of the frame to support a mattress of folded linen. There was no uniform height: many beds were low, although some were high enough to require a low step or mounting board.

WOODS

Timbers available to ancient Egyptians included native sycamore fig, acacia, and sidder, a hardwood also known now as “Christ's Thorn”. These were supplemented by woods imported from Middle Eastern trading partners, such as cypress and Lebanese cedar, which were also used for boat construction.

CONSTRUCTION AND DECORATION

The arid climate curtailed the growth of trees, so large pieces of timber were hard to come by. This led to a certain amount of ingenuity on the part of

TIMELINE 4000 BCE–31 BCE



c.4000 BCE The Egyptians discover papyrus, the precursor to modern-day paper, and guard the secret closely for thousands of years.

Sphinx in front of King Khafre's pyramid, which is in the desert region of Giza, Egypt.

c.3150 BCE The earliest known hieroglyphs, found in a tomb at Abydos, date from this period. Originally used as an accounting tool, these symbols developed into a complete and complex written language.

c.3100–2125 BCE The Old Kingdom sees the introduction of the 365-day calendar in Egypt, as well as the construction of some of the most enduring monuments ever created by man.

c.2630 BCE The world's first major stone structure, the Step Pyramid of King



Djoser, is built at the necropolis of Saqqara.

c.2560 BCE The Great Pyramid of Khufu, or Cheops, is built from some two million blocks of stone.

Ruins of Karnak temple complex and obelisk, Luxor, Thebes, Egypt.

It remains the highest building on Earth for more than 4,000 years.

c.2540 BCE Most authorities date the construction of the Great Sphinx to this period, during the reign of King Khafre, although some controversial theorists contest the Great Sphinx may be 12,000 years old.

c.2040–1640 BCE Egypt is reunited under the Middle Kingdom and trade with foreign nations is resumed.



The painting on the domed lid depicts Tutankhamen hunting lions in the desert.

This panel depicts a chariot-borne Tutankhamen defeating the Nubian army.

Painted box This box from Tutankhamen's tomb has a domed lid above a rectilinear case and is decorated all over with exquisite painted images of Tutankhamen in heroic pursuits. c.1347–1337BCE.

Egyptian carpenters, who developed many of the sophisticated panelling and joining methods that have been used ever since.

Dovetails, mortice-and-tenon joints, and even tongue-and-groove were well known, alongside more primitive techniques involving pegging and lashing. Some workshops specialized in complex intarsia designs, often painstakingly constructed from tiny slivers of the most valuable timbers. Untidy joins or poor-quality wood were frequently masked with veneer, gesso, and paint.

Surface decoration was an important consideration, and the finest furniture was sheathed in silver or gold leaf. Carved and applied decoration could be just as elaborate. The legs of a folding stool often terminated in ducks' heads or, for a higher-ranking member of

society, lion's paws. Among the finest examples known to have existed are stools with goose-head terminals, inlaid with ivory eyes and neck feathers.

Upholstery was usually limited to rolls of linen or other fabrics. Furniture was also painted and, in fact, the ancient Egyptians sowed the embryonic seeds of Western art that continue to flourish and develop today. The "frontalist" style, in which figures are depicted with the head in profile and the torso facing outwards, was a defining characteristic of ancient Egyptian culture.



Bed from the tomb of Tutankhamen This bed has a rectangular wooden frame sheathed in gold leaf, and a mat of woven cords. The bed has a headrest and is supported on animal-shaped legs, which terminate in paws. c.1567–1320BCE.



Valley of the Kings, which contains the tombs of many pharaohs, including that of Tutankhamen.

c.1470BCE Thutmose I decrees the extension of the massive Karnak temple complex, including the erection of a mighty obelisk, which still exists.

c.1550–1070BCE The warrior kings of the New Kingdom aggressively defend Egypt from foreigners and embark on a programme of consolidation and an expansion of power.

c.1540BCE The Egyptian kings abandon the necropolis at Memphis and begin to construct tombs in the Valley of the Kings. Thutmose I was the first of around 60 figures to be interred here.

c.1300BCE The Biblical account of Moses leading the Israelites from Egypt, as related in the Book of Exodus, dates from this period.

1279–1213BCE The 66-year reign of Ramesses II is characterized by great building

This wooden stool has lion supports and a lattice design. c.715–332BCE.



projects such as the Ramessuem tomb complex, decorated with exaggerated accounts of the king's achievements.

31BCE Egypt and Greece are incorporated into the Roman Empire following the defeat of Anthony and Cleopatra's naval forces at the Battle of Actium.

Statue of Ramesses and his daughter from the Karnak temple complex.



ANCIENT GREECE AND ROME

THE CITY-STATES OF ANCIENT GREECE fostered a golden age of culture that was far more sophisticated than that of Egypt. A more personal spirit of inquiry and curiosity prospered, and mankind began to seek scientific and philosophical solutions to the fundamental conundrums of life. The Minoans of ancient Crete were great record-keepers, although more substantial evidence of their culture has proved elusive, limited to excavations of palaces. The Palace of Minos, when excavated, revealed a mighty stone throne, proving that Europeans have been using chairs for 4,000 years.

THE GREEK HOUSE

The average Athenian male spent very little time at home, but devoted his attentions to civic activities at the Agora, religious commitments, and the Gymnasium. As a result, there was not a great need for furniture. A typical house consisted of two pillared courts – the *andronitis*, or men's apartment, and the *gynaeconitis*, or women's apartment, which was used as a general living room. Surrounding these courts were small cells used as sleeping quarters. The most important furnishings were the hearth, at which offerings were made to the goddess Hestia, and an altar to Zeus. Seating furniture, tables, and beds were made predominantly from

wood, and our knowledge of them is limited to depictions on vases, paintings, and carvings.

ANCIENT AND ENDURING MODELS

The *diphros okladias* was a direct appropriation of the Egyptian X-frame stool, and was certainly in use as long ago as the Aegean period. A more original Greek stool design was the *bathros*, consisting of a flat, square top supported on four legs. Similarly, the Greeks made use of Egyptian-style chairs for many years until they developed the *klismos*, a design of extraordinary longevity that is still encountered to this day.

Regarded by the Greeks as a feminine piece of furniture, the *klismos* has four curved legs that bend under the seat of the chair before sweeping back outwards as they reach the floor. The shaped back, called a *stile*, displays an awareness of



Roman strongbox This strongbox is made of bronze with plaster relief decoration. Such boxes were used to hold important household items, especially ladies' cosmetics and jewellery.

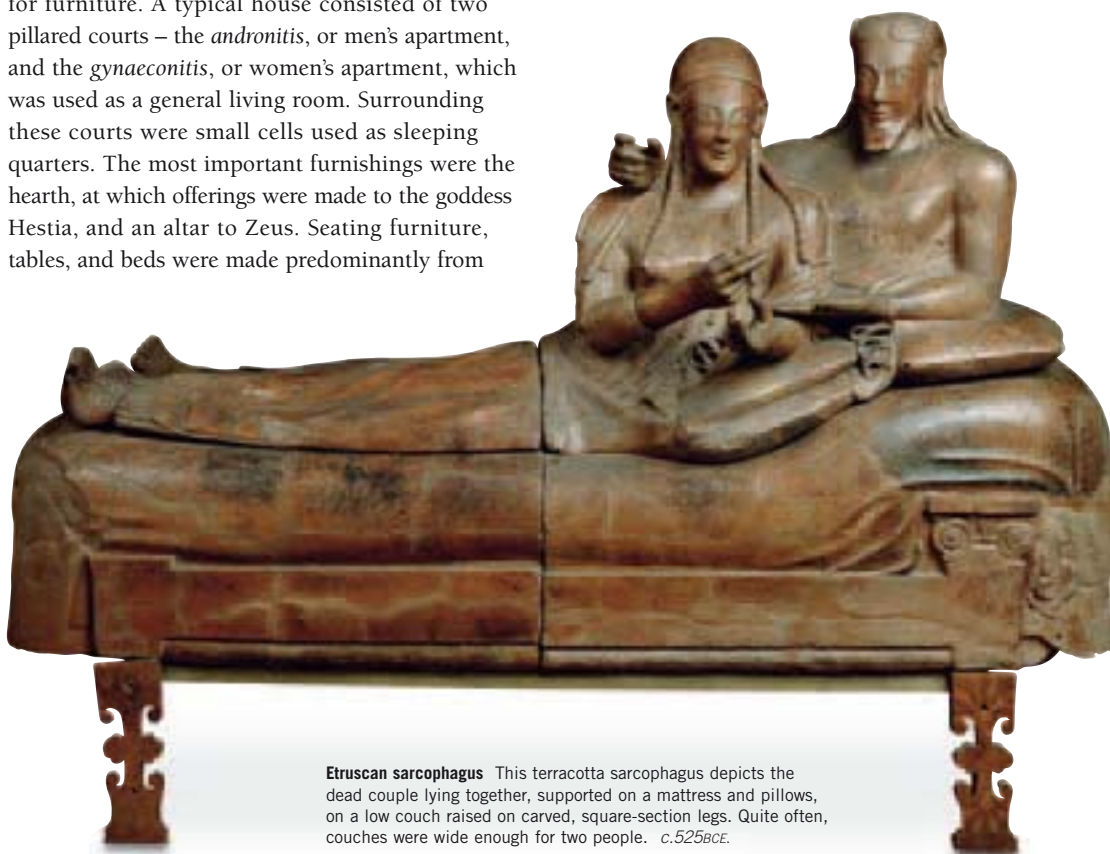
ergonomics. There is evidence that the ancient Greeks also used stools that were specifically designed to support infants.

Tables were usually constructed with three legs to aid balance on the uneven earth or plaster floors of the Greek home. The Greek word *kline*, root of the English "recline", was used to describe both beds and couches, which were used while eating. The poor made their beds on the ground, while wealthier Greeks had wooden, bronze, or ivory bedsteads on which they arranged animal skins, woollen cloths, and linen. *Kline* were raised on legs at a height that allowed the occupant to reach the dining table. A number of these couches would be present in the *andron*, or dining room, of the richest Greeks. Some were constructed from valuable imported wood, or decorated with marquetry designs or precious metal inlays.

The furniture of Etruria is known only through excavation, as no Etruscan texts survive. Immigrants attracted to the area brought with them knowledge from the flowering civilizations of Greece, Egypt, and Asia Minor. Forms from all over the ancient world, such as the Egyptian X-chair and the Greek *kline*, thus found their way to the Italian peninsula before the advent of the Roman Empire.

THE CONFLUENCE OF TWO CULTURES

Hellenistic influence spread east into Asia Minor and west into Magna Graecia, the Italian peninsula. This



Etruscan sarcophagus This terracotta sarcophagus depicts the dead couple lying together, supported on a mattress and pillows, on a low couch raised on carved, square-section legs. Quite often, couches were wide enough for two people. c.525BCE.

TIMELINE 1250BCE – 80CE



1250BCE Accounts of the wars fought by the Achaeans (a coalition of Greek forces) against the Trojans may be based on events that occurred at this time.

Chair from a tomb in Salamina, Cyprus. 8th century BCE.

753BCE This is the date most commonly given for the foundation of Rome by Romulus and Remus, descendants of Aeneas, the defeated hero of Troy.

c.530BCE Pythagoras founds a mystical order at Croton, devoted to learning and spiritual contemplation.

Bronze Roman tripod from Praeneste. 7th century BCE.



c.500BCE The development of the Ionic column represents a refinement of ancient Greek architecture.

480BCE The Greeks win a decisive victory at the Battle of Salamina, thwarting Persian efforts to conquer all of Europe.

432BCE The Greek Parthenon is completed.



Ionic capital at the top of a column, part of the Parthenon, Athens.

323BCE Alexander the Great dies, having spread the Hellenistic civilization across Europe and south Asia.

expansion led to a clash between Greece and Rome in southern Italy around 280BCE. The decisive Battle of Actium in 31BCE ushered in the period of *Pax Romana*, and spelt the end of Greek independence from Rome. Integration was swift and fruitful on both sides, and Roman influence on the Greek world eventually resulted in a rejection of asceticism in favour of a more gleeful conspicuous consumption. The people of Rome were famous *bon viveurs* – so much so that Rome was forced to make periodic legislation against more extravagant trends, such as superfluous culinary largesse and the fashion for sheer, silk fabrics. This decadence, a marked contrast to the austerity of ancient Greece, was reflected in the furnishing and decoration of Roman homes, which became increasingly sumptuous through luxury imports from Asia Minor. Furniture was made in a greater variety of forms than ever before, and decorative elements grew more refined.

ROMAN FURNITURE

The basic Roman table was circular, and was usually set on tripod legs for extra stability. The feet were regularly carved to mimic animals' feet, such as lions, just as they had been in Egypt and, later, Greece. The monopodium – a table supported by a single central pillar – was a later innovation, inspired by Eastern furniture, while a half-moon table, known as the *mensa lunata*, was designed to be used alongside a crescent-shaped sofa.

Hospitality was a salient feature of Roman life and, as a receptacle for food, the table was therefore an important possession. Maple and African citrus, and in particular the roots, were especially prized timbers that were used for the best tables.

The Latin *sella* was a chair, of which there were many types. The *sella curulis* was a chair of state and was another descendant of the Egyptian X-chair, although it was not collapsible and had a thick, cushioned seat. The *sella curulis*, or curule chair, was an extremely potent symbol of power, and depictions of these chairs can be seen on Roman coins. Beds became grander than those used

in ancient Greece, both in size and opulence. Steps were needed to climb onto the highest bedsteads. Gold and silver feet, and veneers of precious woods and even tortoiseshell, displayed the wealth of the owner. One furniture innovation that the Romans never quite developed to fruition was the glass

A Greek vase This vase is painted with images of women. One of them is sitting on a *klismos* chair, which has outswept front and back legs.

mirror. The glass manufacturers of Sidon, a port city in present-day Lebanon, failed to become as popular as the polished silver mirrors that were in widespread use.



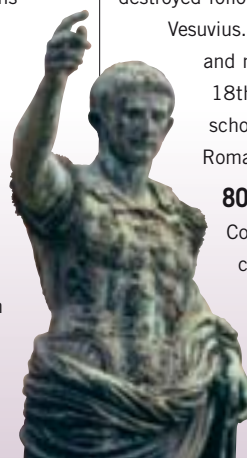
The Via Appia was built to join Rome with the southern provinces of the Italian peninsula.



312BCE The construction of the *Via Appia*, the famous Roman road, begins under Appius Claudius Caecus.

c.50BCE The military campaigns of Julius Caesar extend the Roman Empire into France and Germany. He launches the first Roman invasion of Britain.

64CE Fire rages through Rome for a week, destroying much of the city. Nero oversees the reconstruction on a grander scale than ever before.



Statue of Julius Caesar (100–44BCE).

79CE The Roman town of Pompeii is destroyed following an eruption of Mount Vesuvius. The rediscovery of Pompeii and nearby Herculaneum in the 18th century gave modern scholars a great insight into Roman society.

80CE Titus inaugurates the Colosseum in Rome with a calendar of games lasting

for 100 days. The three-tier structure was able to seat at least 50,000 spectators.



Colosseum The first stone amphitheatre built in Rome. 70–82CE.

ANCIENT CHINA

THE BEGINNINGS OF CIVILIZATION in China are unknown. What is certain is that by the 18th century BCE most of modern China was ruled by a single, militaristic dynasty known as the Shang, who had already developed a complex system of writing and a sophisticated agrarian economy.

A TRADITIONAL AESTHETIC

Wooden furniture was made in China from the earliest times. Furniture, excavated from ancient Chu sites dating back to c.250BCE, shows that wooden furniture and lacquer decoration have been in continuous use in China for many hundreds of years. However, it was not until the rise of international trade, great cities, and a wealthy elite that cabinet-makers made the great aesthetic advances that would characterize their art.

The golden age of furniture production in China began during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), when the ideal was simple furniture with clean lines and sparse decoration that was limited to latticework and open or relief carving.

During the early years of the Qing dynasty (1644–1912) this ideal remained entrenched. However, as China grew wealthy in her stability the decorative arts began to reflect a new attitude of confidence and prosperity. Pieces of furniture became larger and heavier, whilst always retaining a fundamental, simple purity. The rich carving

so celebrated in the Ming period never fell from fashion, but was transformed into something far more expressive and used ever more liberally. Chair backs or legs were often carved from top to bottom with detailed, naturalistic designs. Linear styles gave way to a more fluid approach that incorporated graceful curves and shapes.

Domestic furniture remained utilitarian and unassuming; beaded or bevelled edges and simple inlays of light metal provided an aesthetic respite from the plain, flat surfaces. Pieces made for Court use were more sumptuous: mother-of-pearl, porcelain, enamel, and even precious stones were often used as decoration on the most important palace furniture.

POPULAR WOODS

Expendable furniture was made from cheap bamboo, but Chinese cabinet-makers prized indigenous hardwoods such as rosewood above all others. These were generally sourced from the warmer areas of southern China, although imports from Indonesia and other southeast Asian nations supplemented home-grown stocks. Burr woods were also popular, but were usually used sparingly, due to cost and scarcity. The most coveted timber of all was zitan, an extremely dense and attractive variety of sandalwood that was literally worth its weight in gold.



Horseshoe chair This chair is made from huanghuali wood in a simple shape in which the back rail and arms form a continuous semicircle. The meticulous craftsmanship and construction makes use of mortise-and-tenon joints. c.1550–1650. H:97cm (38¼in); D:59cm (19¼in) (seat).

BEAUTIFUL, PRACTICAL CONSTRUCTION

Furniture components were joined by the mortise-and-tenon method – the dowels, nails, and, eventually, glues that were employed so widely in the West rarely, if ever, found favour in China. Wherever possible, curved components were cut from a single piece of timber, so that they were completely seamless. Craftsmen disguised joints and placed them in less visible areas to avoid detracting from the beauty of a piece.

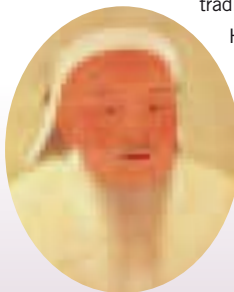
Aside from the aesthetic considerations, mortise-and-tenon joints are particularly suited to Chinese furniture for a more practical reason. The changeable and humid climate prevalent in much of the country causes wood to shrink and expand regularly. The widespread use of lacquer as a decorative treatment on furniture also had a practical application; the all-over covering helped to provide the piece with resistance to insect infestation.



Low table This rectangular table made from huanghuali wood has a carved apron and short cabriole legs, which have carved animal masks at the top and end in claw feet. c.1368–1644

TIMELINE 2800BCE – 1516CE

c.2800BCE The *I Ching*, or *Book of Changes* reputedly dates from this period and is traditionally accredited to Fu Hsi, the mythical first Emperor of China.



Genghis Khan

c.1600–1040BCE The Shang dynasty are the earliest Chinese people to leave textual evidence of their existence, in the form of “oracle bones”. Shang rulers practised

human sacrifice and expanded the borders of China to more or less their present extent.

c.470BCE The “Analects”, a posthumous collection of Confucius’ teachings and dialogues becomes the most important Chinese philosophical text.

c.210BCE Qin Shi Huang, ruler of the short-lived Qin



The Great Wall of China winding across a hilly region of China.

dynasty, consolidates defensive walls into the beginnings of the Great Wall. He is later buried with an army of 7,000 terracotta soldiers.

c.50BCE Trade along the Silk Road between China and the West

begins in earnest, paving the way for ever-greater cultural and commercial exchange between China and the rest of the world.

25CE Buddhism is brought to China by immigrants from Persia and India. The religion goes on to experience

Terracotta soldiers at the tomb of Quin Shi Huang





THE CONVENTIONS OF USE

The way the Chinese used their furniture was governed by long tradition. It was not the custom to set aside a single area of the home for dining – as people did in the West – so dining tables were often portable, so that they could be moved to different parts of the house. Convention dictated that no more than eight to ten people should be seated around a dining table, so that everyone had access to the dishes of food placed in the centre. If this number was exceeded, diners were split into smaller groups. They usually sat at stools fitted with integral footrests to keep their feet off the floor.

Due to the Chinese custom of sitting or reclining on the floor when reading or writing, lower tables were preferred for these activities. Armchairs were not widely used. They were considered symbols of power, so each family had just one, reserved for use by the head of the household.

The Chinese scholar, an esteemed member of society who devoted his time to the study of time-honoured texts, traditionally amassed various treasures that were significant to his calling. Among these numbered fine pieces of rosewood furniture, such as a desk and chair used for reading. Examples of scholars' furniture from the Ming and Qing periods are museum pieces today.

Furniture was generally arranged around the edge of a room, against the walls, in marked contrast to the Western penchant for informal clusters of furniture.

Reverse painting on glass This painting of a Chinese interior depicts a bamboo table decorated with fretwork, a bed, a ceramic rest, and a low table.

The case contains two pannelled doors.

The base of the cupboard contains three narrow drawers.

Ming Dynasty cupboard This simple, elegant cupboard is made of huanghuali, a relative of rosewood which was very popular for high-quality Ming Dynasty furniture. *Late 16th century. H:142.3cm (56in) W:54.9cm (21½in).*



times of State sponsorship and vicious repression.

610CE Emperor Yang orders a massive extension of the Grand Canal, begun during the Wu dynasty. As a result of these works, the canal stretches more than 1,000 miles across China.

868CE A Chinese translation of the Sanskrit *Diamond Sutra*, found in a sealed cave in Dunhuang, dates from this period.



Blue and white vase from the Ming Dynasty.

It is the oldest dated printed material known to exist.

1271CE Marco Polo sets out on his journey to the Court of Kublai Khan. On his return to Italy he maintains that he spent 17 years in Khan's service and travelled extensively throughout China.

1279CE Kublai Khan, grandson of the great warrior Genghis, inaugurates the Mongol Yuan dynasty, the first non-indigenous dynasty to rule China. Mongol dominion over China continues until the Ming dynasty took power in 1368.

1368–1644CE The Ming dynasty rules China, reaching a peak of power and influence at the beginning of the 15th century. The period as a whole is one of the

most prosperous in China's history.

1406CE Construction of the Forbidden City begins in Beijing. This extensive complex of buildings and courtyards houses emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties.

1516CE The Portuguese begin to use the town of Macau in southern China as a staging port for trade, thus establishing the first European settlement in the Orient.



Marco Polo

THE MIDDLE AGES

WHEN ODOACER, CHIEFTAIN OF THE HERULI, overthrew the last of the Western Roman Emperors in 476CE, it spelt the end of more than 600 years of Roman dominion over Western Europe. The ensuing territorial disputes resulted in a violent dislocation of the region's Classical inheritance, which naturally influenced the arts and, therefore, furniture.



Although the Empire persisted in the East – centred on Constantinople – its Greek Hellenistic tradition was now tempered by the Christian ideals of the Roman rulers. Christianity also informed the culture of the West, influenced by an increasingly powerful papacy. The perpetuation of the Roman Empire in Byzantium, which flourished from the end of the eighth century, created stability. The old Classical aesthetic was fused with Eastern influences, becoming more linear and taking on abstract, geometric decoration. In Byzantine interiors, mosaic was brighter and more colourful than its Roman precursor and was used as a wall decoration more often than on the floor.

BYZANTINE FURNITURE

The Byzantine furniture trade distinguished between the joiner, who made standard items for the general consumer, and the cabinet-maker, whose more architectural designs expressed the aspirations of a thriving and proud culture. The Egyptian X-frame chair abounded, complete with terminals depicting the heads and feet of animals, although it was made of heavier timber than ever before, and sometimes even fashioned from metal.

Chairs remained symbols of power and, as such, they were often monumental in both size and status – more akin to grand thrones than modern chairs. Sophisticated desks fitted with adjustable lectern tops for reading revealed a greater appreciation of function. Dining tables were very low in deference to the Classical manner of eating while reclining, supporting the diner on one elbow – a practice which is still followed in much of Asia Minor. The most common item of furniture was the chest. Lavish examples incorporated intarsia work or inlays of stones, ivory, and precious metals. Their more humble cousins were coffer with simple, flat, hinged lids that also served as beds or benches.

FURNITURE IN THE WEST

The coffer, or chest, was also the most common item of furniture in Western Europe. A basic wooden box constructed from six timber boards

The Coronation chair This chair in Westminster Abbey was made for Edward I to enclose the Stone of Scone, which was seized from the Scots in 1297. c.1300.



Two panels from a triptych on wood These two panels painted by the Master of Flemalle (probably Robert Campin) depict John the Baptist with Heinrich von Werl and Saint Barbara in medieval interiors. 1438. Each panel: H:101cm (39½in); W:47cm (18½in).

nailed together, or even a hollowed log, it was often the only piece of furniture owned by many people. The landed gentry, on the other hand, usually owned coffer by the dozen, filled with clothes, coins, and other trappings.

Many landlords had itinerant lifestyles because an often-scattered population forced them to spend a lot of their time travelling between different parts of their estates. A great deal of furniture was therefore made to be portable. Tapestries, wall hangings, and cushions were usually removed and taken from one house to another. Chests designed for the safe transport of goods had curved lids to drain away rain water, and were seldom decorated except, perhaps for a leather cover. Those that doubled as home furnishings had more comfortable flat lids and some also had feet, or even legs.

GROWING CONSTRUCTION SKILLS

As joiners steadily developed more sophisticated carpentry skills, chests were better made. The hutch chest, first recorded in the 13th century, used a primitive kind of dovetail joint reinforced with a dowel peg, making it much stronger and more durable than anything that had gone before. This superior strength did away with the need for iron banding, leaving the entire surface of the chest free for carved decoration.

TIMELINE 476–1352

476 The fall of the Roman Empire in the West is precipitated by migrating hordes of Goths and Vandals, fleeing from the Huns.

c.850 Anglo-Saxons, invited to Britain by the Celts to help fend off Viking marauders, establish

St. Mark's, Venice The building was completed in 1096 but decorative work continued until the 19th century.

themselves as dominant communities in Mercia, Northumbria, and Wessex.

910 William the Pious establishes an abbey at Cluny, France, which becomes one of the largest, most influential monastic orders of the Middle Ages.

1066 The Norman Conquest of Britain is sealed when Duke William of Normandy defeats King Harold's forces at Hastings.

1095–1270 A series of Crusades are fought in retaliation against the persecution



Illuminated Flemish manuscript that depicts St. Thomas. c.1276.

of Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land.

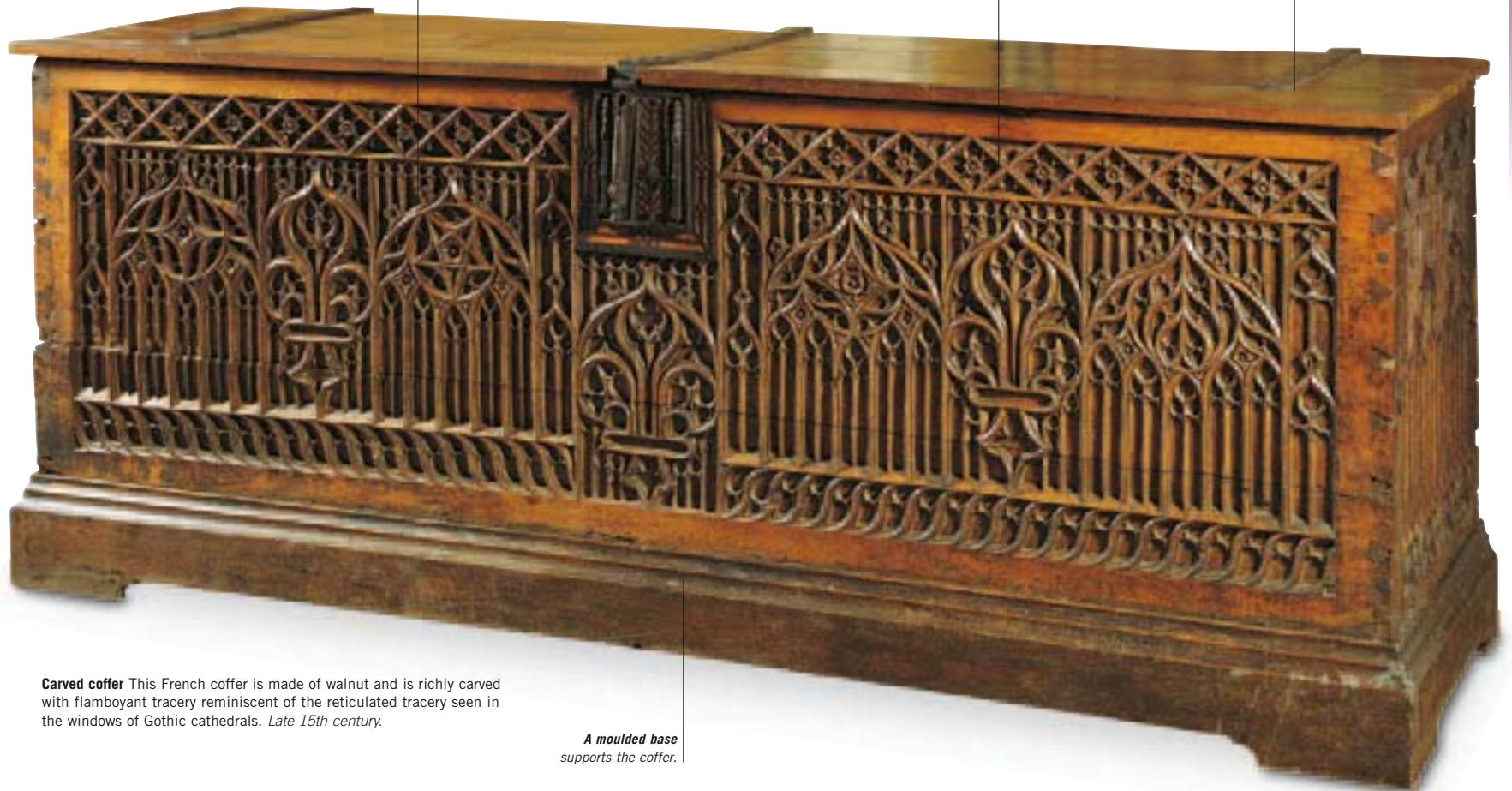
c.1100 The completion of the Basilica of St. Mark's in Venice marks one of the defining achievements of the Byzantine architectural style.

c.1200 The art of manuscript illumination flourishes across Western Europe, with the production of elaborate picture bibles containing vignettes framed with Gothic architectural devices.

The tracery decoration is similar to the design of Gothic church windows.

A geometric frieze design runs along the top of the decorative panel.

The hinged top is undecorated.



Carved coffer This French coffer is made of walnut and is richly carved with flamboyant tracery reminiscent of the reticulated tracery seen in the windows of Gothic cathedrals. *Late 15th-century.*

A moulded base supports the coffer.

THE GOTHIC STYLE

The Gothic style – the dominant aesthetic of the Middle Ages – was perceived as the antithesis of the civilized Classical world. It was a Norman innovation, fusing Carolingian and Burgundian artistic traditions with Islamic elements from Saracen Sicily. The greatest achievements of Gothic art were the cathedrals of northern Europe, and elements from this ecclesiastic architecture formed the basis of Gothic furniture design.

The Gothic style was based on the replacement of the rounded Romanesque arch with the innovative pointed arch, a feat of engineering that meant that churches could be larger, as the weight of a church's roof could be supported on a framework of open-work piers and ribs, instead of massively thick walls. This architectural structure was reflected in the

elaborate tracery of cathedral and church windows, and the trefoil and quatrefoil motifs used lent themselves equally well to the decoration of benches and tables. The upright press developed as a place to store priests' robes, and began to replace the chest as the preferred receptacle for clothing.

Another innovation of the Gothic period was the cupboard, its name derived from its original function, which was to display valuable silver-plate (cups) in wealthy households. Regional variations in the style included a predilection for linenfold panelling among English and Flemish craftsmen.

With the exception of Italy, where the prevailing fashion remained Romanesque, the Gothic style dominated Europe until the 15th century, and lingered even after the Renaissance sought to reject it in favour of a return to the Classical tradition.

MEDIEVAL INTERIORS

Contrary to the common perception of Gothic style as stuffy and dark, the interiors and furniture of the period were remarkably light and colourful. Furniture-makers usually made do with native woods – oak in England and northern Europe, pine and fir in the Alps, and fruitwoods in the Mediterranean. Surviving medieval furniture made from oak invariably looks very dark because of its acquired patina, but newly cut oak is much lighter. In addition, many items of furniture were painted in bold hues, including primary colours and gold tones. Chests in particular were often painted. Although relatively few examples survive today, it is still possible to see traces of medieval painting on the ceilings and walls of many churches and cathedrals, which were originally decorated in the same way.



11th-century Byzantine-style fresco of Christ, evangelists, and angels. The fresco is in the Benedictine Basilica Sant' Angelo in Formis, Italy.

1248 King Ferdinand III of Castille, later canonized by Pope Clement X, liberates Seville from the Saracens, converting the city's great mosques into cathedrals dedicated to the Virgin.

c.1250 Henry III orders the reconstruction of Westminster Abbey in the Gothic style. It has been the site of



Chartres Cathedral, France. Building begins in 1194.

virtually every coronation since 1066, and is also the resting place of more than 12 English monarchs.

c.1260 The cathedral at Chartres in France is completed and ushers in a new standard of Gothic

Church coffer made in France. This moulded oak coffer has fretwork and panelling. *End of 15th century.*



design that is much imitated all over Europe.

1347–1352 The infamous “Black Death” plague ravages Europe, leaving 25 million dead in its wake.

RENAISSANCE ITALY

THE INSTIGATORS OF THE ITALIAN Renaissance realized that they were entering a new, modern era even as they helped to lay its foundations. Leonardo Bruni was the first to present a tripartite view of history comprised of antiquity and the modern age, separated by an intervening middle period, or “dark age”, characterized by the neglect of Classical knowledge and accomplishments.

A SPIRIT OF ENQUIRY

In the 14th century, the affluent city of Florence in Tuscany emerged from a period of civil strife and pestilence into an age of unprecedented prosperity. The peculiarly Italian urban culture, and the republican attitudes of Florentines in particular, predisposed them to the emerging philosophy of civic humanism that informed Renaissance thinking. The universities and merchant classes began to reappraise the science, philosophy, art, and design of ancient Greece and Rome, and Florence’s great wealth brought many artists to the city – all seeking

commissions from merchants eager to display their success and good taste. The same spirit of scientific inquiry that led to remarkable discoveries by Copernicus, Vesalius, and Galileo also pervaded the arts. Andrea Palladio recommended architectural proportions that were based on models from the Classical world, and Filippo Brunelleschi clarified the laws of linear perspective. Artists jettisoned the elongated, stylized figures of medieval painting in favour of more accurate depictions of the human form, facilitated by advances in anatomy. A new realism, fused with the humanist principles of the age, took root within the fine and decorative arts.

THE EXPLOSION OF PATRONAGE

All these developments influenced the furniture of the period. The middle classes built sumptuous town houses and *palazzi*, and began to fill these opulent living spaces with furniture and decorative artworks that reflected their status. The greatest families, such as the Medici of Florence, the Montefeltro of Urbino,



Maiolica Plate Maiolica is the term used to define the characteristic white-glazed pottery of Renaissance Italy. The milkiness came from a tin oxide that was added to the glaze. This plate depicts a Maiolica painter at work. c.1510.

and the Farnese of Rome, engaged the finest designers and craftsmen to produce monumental items of furniture in marble, inlaid with semi-precious stones and decorated with family crests and emblems.

MARRIAGE CHESTS

The *cassone*, or marriage chest, was one of the most prized objects in any home and, as such, no expense was spared in its beautification. The side panels were often covered with coloured or gilded gesso, built up into relief patterns or sculpted to depict Classical figures and scenes. The best painters and sculptors in Italy were commissioned to work on these chests, and those that survive today exhibit a richness of decoration that is equalled only by the religious art of the day. The increasing secularization of the arts now made it acceptable for people to display objects with lavish surface decoration in their homes.

DECORATIVE WORK

Furniture, often made from walnut or willow, was decorated with marquetry and inlays of ivory, stone, or precious woods such as ebony, or ornate, grotesque carvings. Grotesque ornament – the word derives from the Italian *grottesco* – sought to provoke a sense of uneasy fun by blurring the boundaries between the natural and man-made worlds. A seat



The lilies in the design of the inlay are Farnese family emblems.

The table top is inlaid with marble and semi-precious stones.

At the centre of the table top are two large alabaster panels.

The table top rests on three massive, carved, marble piers, which bear the arms of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese.

Marble and alabaster table This table was made for the Palazzo Farnese in Rome, after a design by architect Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola (1507–73). H:96cm (37¾in); W:381cm (150in); D:168cm (66¼in).

TIMELINE 1324–1570



View of the Palazzo Pitti, Florence, as seen from the bell tower of Santo Spirito.

1324 Marco Polo dies in Venice, with debate still raging about the accuracy of his tales about his Oriental journey. His writings later

influenced Renaissance cartographers and explorers.

1418 Filippo Brunelleschi wins a competition to design the cupola for the cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence. His model was inspired by Greek and Roman construction techniques.

1420 After a sojourn in Avignon, the papacy



returns to Rome, bringing with it the power, influence, and wealth needed to reverse the city’s long decline.

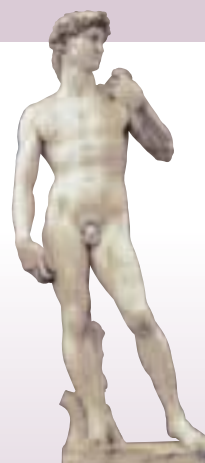
1429 The “Gates of Paradise”, the magnificent doors created by Ghiberti for the Baptistery of San Giovanni in Florence, are installed.

Gates of Paradise, Baptistery of San Giovanni The doors feature 28 gilded bronze panels carved with scenes from the Bible.

Marble statue of David by Michelangelo, which is more than twice life-size.

c.1440 Work begins on the Palazzo Pitti, first commissioned by Luca Pitti in an attempt to outshine the residence of his arch rivals the Medici family.

1469 Lorenzo “The Magnificent” di Medici





The Duke of Urbino's study at his palace at Gubbio. The walls of this reconstructed study are decorated with wood inlays in walnut, beech, rosewood, oak, and fruitwood on a walnut base. They depict open cupboards revealing the instruments of a scholar.

carved in the form of an open clam shell is both whimsical and unsettling. Decorated furniture was placed in equally decorative interiors, where walls also featured audacious trompe l'oeil designs that looked like windows, doors, shelves, or vistas.

ARCHITECTURAL INFLUENCE

Renaissance art, like the Gothic style of the Middle Ages, was primarily led by developments in architecture, and the use of columns – a staple of Greek and Roman building – was now incorporated into furniture design. Caryatids – columnar supports depicting female figures – were especially prevalent.

The chair, traditionally a symbol of status and power, underwent a process of democratization during the Renaissance that transformed it into an accessible staple of home life. The faldstool, or X-chair, made from two pairs of short beams intersecting at a central joint and linked by a stretcher, became common. The most luxurious examples were covered with a thin layer of silver, or upholstered with velvet, but most of them were more modest. The basic form of the faldstool originated in antiquity, and a leather seat slung between two X-frames was used in Renaissance Italy just as it had been in ancient Greece. A side chair called the sgabello chair was basically a stool with an octagonal seat and a long decorated back splat. Sometimes the back splat could be removed to turn the chair into a stool.



Sgabello chair This chair, from 15th-century Florence, is made of carved and inlaid walnut. 1489–91.

ascends to power in Florence. His unprecedented patronage of the arts contributes to the flowering of the city during subsequent years.

1498 Leonardo da Vinci completes *The Last Supper*, considered by many to be his most perfect achievement.

1504 Michelangelo completes *David*, after three years work. The sculpture was hewn from a single block of marble called *The Giant*.



Greek sculpture, the work of Rhodian sculptors. This marble piece features the Trojan priest Laocöon. c. 50 BCE. H: 184 cm (72 1/2 in).

1506 The rediscovery of the Laocöon group, a lost Greek sculpture, provokes jubilant scenes in Rome, and it is escorted to the Vatican amid the pealing of the city's church bells.

1532 Niccolö Machiavelli's political masterpiece, *The Prince*, written as a guide to statecraft for aspiring rulers, is published posthumously.



Andrea Palladio

1543 Copernicus describes his heliocentric model of the heavens in *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium*.

1570 Andrea Palladio publishes his seminal work *I Quattro Libri dell' Architettura*, laying out in detail the architectural principles that go on to make him a master of the art.

RENAISSANCE EUROPE

A COMBINATION OF HUMANIST intellectualism and high-society patronage eventually brought Renaissance ideals to France and northern Europe, just as it had done south of the Alps. The French claim on Naples, and its wider ambitions on the Italian states in general, led to a number of military campaigns and intermittent rule over portions of the peninsula. This served to increase intellectual and artistic commerce between France and the centres of Renaissance thought, such as Florence and Rome.

RENAISSANCE SPREADS TO FRANCE

Continued papal rule over the enclave of Avignon further promoted Italian influence within France. Many of the artists commissioned to work on the great frescoes of the Palace of the Popes came from Siena. This tradition was enthusiastically continued by François I when he invited Italian luminaries such as Benvenuto Cellini, Francesco Primaticcio, and

Gallery of François I, Château de Fontainebleau The gallery has 12 narrative frescoes, sculptural relief borders, and carved walnut wainscoting. The greatest decorated gallery in a French château, it introduced the Italian Mannerist style to France. c.1533–40.

Niccolò dell'Abbate to decorate the interiors of his new château at Fontainebleau.

A distinct school of art evolved around the prolonged activity at the château, and the Fontainebleau style was subsequently exported throughout northern Europe. This was essentially a French interpretation of Italian Mannerism: a high style that looked to the work of earlier Renaissance artists rather than to nature for stylistic cues.

The Château de Chambord, a castle built in the Loire valley by Francis I, is perhaps the finest example of Renaissance architecture in France. French Renaissance furniture was shaped to a large extent by architectural developments. Jacques Androuet du Cerceau published works that included furniture designs. Many of his engravings of architectural embellishments and details were modified for decorative use in furniture. He drew his inspiration from antiquity, and was particularly fond of acanthus leaves, plumes, and armorial motifs. Exotic and fantastical beasts were favourite themes for carved decoration. Walnut replaced oak as the favoured timber for furniture, the tight grain lending



A Caquetoire or "gossip" chair This chair, made from carved walnut has a solid X-frame with a rectangular back rail and carved scrolling arms. The seat is made of leather. 16th century. H:85cm (33½in); W:50cm (19½in); D:60cm (23½in) BEA



itself particularly well to relief carving. Human figures, often in the form of caryatids, are found more often on French furniture than on any produced elsewhere during the same period.

GERMAN-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

The ideals of the Italian Renaissance first reached the German-speaking countries through artists such as Albrecht Dürer, who had visited Italy. However, a more direct influence on the design of furniture came from the *Kleinmeister*, the designers of ornament, based in Nuremberg, Westphalia, and the Low Countries, who produced engraved or woodcut patterns inspired by Classical antiquity and Italian examples. Their patterns composed of running floral motifs, birds, animals, naked figures, urns, and trophies, were adopted by a variety of craftsmen and cabinet-makers.

However, the existence of powerful guilds in cities such as Berlin, meant that new types of furniture were much slower to develop as the approved

TIMELINE 1455–1588



Engraving of Johannes Gutenberg in his workshop showing his proofsheets.

c.1455 Johannes Gutenberg publishes his 42-line bible at Mainz, the first book to be printed using movable type.

1494 Charles VIII sends an army to capture Naples. It succeeds but is later pushed back by an alliance of Venetian, Milanese, and papal forces.

1525 Giovanni de Verrazanno sails to the Americas. He claims Newfoundland for the French crown.

c.1530–1560 The Fontainebleau School,



Martin Luther

originally founded by Francis I to decorate his new Fontainebleau château, helps to spread Renaissance ideals.

1534 The "Day of the Placards" occurs: towns in northern France are deluged with leaflets condemning the Roman Catholic mass, in sympathy with the Protestant theologies of Martin Luther and John Calvin.



The Louvre palace in Paris In 1546, work began to transform the former fortress into a luxurious royal residence. Today the building is known as a world-famous art gallery.

designs that apprentices had to master rarely altered. The cities of Nuremberg and Augsburg, which did not have guilds, became famous for their furniture-makers, such as Peter Flötner and Lorenz Stöer, who published woodcut designs for intarsia panels popular in Augsburg furniture decoration.

NEW STYLES

The structural developments of Renaissance furniture included the evolution of the throne chair, which had usually had a chest base in the Middle Ages, into a lighter style that was supported by pillars around a bottom rail. Open chair arms became more popular, reflecting the trend towards lighter furniture. The French *caquetoire* (gossip) chair was created as a reaction to changing fashions, and had a wide, trapezoidal seat that was designed to accommodate flowing skirts. Upholstery became more common, although the majority of chairs and benches still had hard, wooden surfaces.

New types of case furniture developed, such as the dresser that evolved from the medieval sideboard and was constructed from various combinations of pillars, shelving, and cabinets enclosed with doors. The cabinet, used in medieval Europe to store and display silver-plate, now became more opulent. The treasures of a Renaissance household usually included jewellery and various artistic trinkets, requiring numerous, small drawers for their safe storage. These drawers were often lined with fine cloth to protect the contents. Cupboards in southern Germany, which had originally been created by placing one chest on top of another, developed into a more useful storage space without a frieze dividing the top and bottom half, although the old form remained popular after 1600.

Long dining tables were still made from a simple top on trestles, as in the Middle Ages. There were no fixed dining areas in noblemen's houses so tables needed to remain portable.

Cupboard after Peter Flötner This massive, elaborately carved, two-part, panelled cupboard from southern Germany is architectural in form. Decoration is in the Renaissance style and features allegorical figures on the upper doors, a central leaf-carved frieze, and lower doors with stylized urns and foliage.



1539 The Edict of Villers-Cotterêts makes French, rather than Latin, the official language of France.

1543 The Flemish anatomist Andreas Vesalius publishes *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*, the first text to contradict theories presented by Galen in the second century.

1546 Work begins on Pierre de Lescot's new design for the Louvre. Francis I begins to collect paintings – still housed there today – that include Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*.



Château de Chambord, built between 1519 and 1547. This chateau is one of the finest examples of Renaissance architecture in France.

1547 The Château de Chambord in the Loire valley, commissioned by Francis I in 1519, is completed. It is thought that Leonardo da

Vinci may have visited and been involved in the design.

1552 Ambroise Paré, a great surgeon, publishes the results of his investigations into vascular ligation, which reduced the need for the painful and dangerous cauterization of wounds.

1555 Nostradamus, royal physician to Charles IX, publishes the first of ten



Nostradamus

collections of 100 mystical quatrains, claiming they prophesy future events.

1562 A massacre of Huguenots at Vassy sparks religious civil war until the 1598 Edict of Nantes.

1588 Michel de Montaigne publishes the third edition of his *Essais*, which go on to have a great impact on French and English literature.



17TH CENTURY

1600-1700

POWER AND GRANDEUR

THE 17TH CENTURY WAS AN AGE OF GREAT WEALTH AND EMPIRE BUILDING, EPITOMIZED BY A STRUGGLE FOR POWER THROUGH TRADE, WARFARE, AND THE CREATION OF POLITICAL ALLIANCES.



Bronze statuette of Louis XIV, the Sun King, on his horse.

DURING THE 17TH CENTURY, successive Popes commissioned architects and artists to build magnificent new buildings and monuments in Rome, to complete the redevelopment of the city. New churches were erected, palazzos rebuilt, and fountains and statues constructed, creating a dramatic symbol of the power and wealth of the Catholic Church.

This theatrical, sculptural expression of grandeur and luxury was expressed in architecture, painting, the decorative arts, and even in music, and became known as the Baroque style. Rulers and artists came from all over Europe to admire the city and its works of art, then returned to their own countries where they created their own interpretations of the



new, anti-Classical style. Spain, Portugal, and Germany were strongly influenced by the Baroque style, but in northern countries, such as the Low Countries and England, the style was quieter and more restrained.

EXPANSION OF TRADE

At the beginning of the 17th century, profitable trading companies were established by the Dutch and the British, opening up new markets in the Far East and creating colonies. European rulers sought exotic foreign treasures to display in their palaces, and the resulting increase in trade led to the establishment of a wealthy and powerful merchant class, which lavished vast sums of money on substantial residences to ensure that they were in keeping with the latest fashions. Inspired by the influx of exotic materials, craftsmen created flamboyant new designs, primarily for the courts of Europe.

THE SOVEREIGN STATE

During the first part of the 17th century, Europe was divided by bloodshed. By the middle of the century, many countries had gained independence from their former rulers. The Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 brought an end to the long war between Spain and the Low Countries and ended the German phase

of the Thirty Years' War. The Dutch Republic was officially recognized, as was the Swiss Confederation, and 350 or so German princes were granted sovereignty. The Holy Roman Emperor was left with diminished power. This recognition of absolute sovereignty for territories changed the balance of power in Europe. As countries gained independence, rulers and artists worked to forge their own national identities.

ABSOLUTE POWER

Louis XIV personified the concept of absolute power. When he became the King of France in 1661, he moved his court to the Palace of Versailles and embarked on an ambitious plan to glorify France and his monarchy through art and design. He ruled as an absolute monarch, and the grandeur of his monarchy inspired other European rulers. Versailles came to symbolize Louis XIV's authority in matters of art, and France became the principal producer of luxury furniture and other objects.

In 1685, however, Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes, which had granted tolerance to Protestants in France. As a result, many skilled artists and craftsmen fled the country for the protection of the Low Countries, Germany, England, and eventually North America. French-trained artisans thus worked for monarchs in other countries, ensuring the dissemination of elaborate French design throughout Europe by the end of the century.

Castle Howard, England Begun in 1699, Castle Howard is considered one of England's finest Baroque mansions. It was the creation of the patron, Charles Howard, 3rd Earl of Carlisle, and two architects, Sir John Vanbrugh and Nicholas Hawksmoor.

TIMELINE 1600–1700

1601 Gobel family of dyers sell their factory in Paris to Henri IV, who sets up 200 workmen from Flanders to make tapestries.

1602 Dutch East India Company, the first modern public company, founded in Java.

1607 Jamestown, the first English settlement in North America, established in Virginia.

1608 Samuel de Champlain founds a French settlement at Quebec.



Statue of Samuel de Champlain

1609 Tin-enamelled ware made at Delft.

1618 Beginning of Thirty Years' War. Dutch West African Company founded.

1620 Pilgrim Fathers land at Plymouth, Massachusetts.

1621 Dutch West India Company founded. The company later acquires the North American coast from Chesapeake Bay to Newfoundland.

1630 Paul Vredeman de Vries issues two volumes of furniture designs.

1640 Secession of Portugal, amalgamated with Spain for 60 years since 1580.

1642 English Civil War begins.



Bureau Mazarin (see p.36). GK

1643 Louis XIII of France dies. France is ruled under the Regency of Cardinal Mazarin until Louis XIV comes of age in 1661.

1648 Thirty Years' War ends with the Treaty of Westphalia, and Holland gains independence from Spain, becoming a Dutch Republic.

1649 Charles I beheaded and England declared a Commonwealth under the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell.

1651 Dutch settle at Cape of Good Hope.



Carved giltwood fauteuil This elegant armchair is the epitome of Louis XIV style. The frame is made of elaborately carved giltwood, with carved Classical motifs, including satyrs, shells, and rosettes. The seat and chair back would originally have been covered in silk or tapestry. c.1710.

Galerie des Glaces, Versailles The Palace of Versailles is dominated by the *Galerie des Glaces* (Hall of Mirrors), created to reflect the magnificence of Louis XIV's monarchy. The sumptuousness was originally heightened by fabulous silver furniture, 41 sparkling chandeliers, and gilded candlestands.

1660 Charles II returns from exile as King of England. The new court encourages a revolution in English taste.

1661 Louis XIV becomes King of France.

1662 Charles II's marriage to Catherine of Braganza opens up trade with Goa, the principal source of mother-of-pearl. Louis XIV begins to build the Palace of Versailles.

1663 The Great Fire of London destroys most of the medieval buildings in London, leading to a vast rebuilding programme. Furniture manufactory to supply the French royal palaces started at the Gobelins workshops in Paris.



The Palace of Versailles

1670 English settle in Charles Town (Charleston) South Carolina.

1682 The Palace of Versailles becomes the royal residence of France. The first weaving mill is established in Amsterdam.

1683 The first German immigrants settle in North America.

1685 Edict of Nantes revoked by Louis XIV. French Protestants flee to the Low Countries and England. All Chinese ports opened to foreign trade.

1688 William III of Holland and his wife Mary accede to the English throne. Plate glass is cast for the first time at Colbert's mirror glass factory in Paris. Stalker & Parker publish *A Treatise of Japanning and Varnishing*.

1697 Peter the Great of Russia sets out on a year-and-a-half journey to study European ways of life.



Plate featuring William III



King Charles II

BAROQUE FURNITURE

TWO QUITE DIFFERENT types of furniture were made during the 17th century: formal furniture for staterooms and palaces, and simpler pieces intended for domestic use.

Traditionally the aristocracy had moved from one home to another, according to the seasons, but now residences became more permanent. Furniture no longer had to be portable, and substantial pieces were designed for specific rooms, and even for particular positions within rooms. Interiors were very formal and people began to consider rooms as integrated interiors when commissioning furniture. As well as grand salons, wealthy homes had more intimate, private rooms that required smaller pieces of furniture.

LAVISH STYLE

At the beginning of the century, the Italian Baroque style was dominant in much of Europe. Baroque furniture was designed on a grand scale and intended to impress. Pieces were architectural in form, with dramatically carved sculptural elements and lavish decoration, which drew on Classical or Renaissance-style motifs.

Renaissance-style motifs.

As the century progressed, trade, especially with the Far East, provided furniture-makers with a wealth of exotic new materials, including tortoiseshell, mother-of-pearl, ebony, and rosewood.

Furniture was imported from other countries, including



Late 17th-century Dutch walnut armchair The chair seat and carved oval back are made of cane, which was a fashionable and affordable import from India.

lacquerware from the Far East and caned furniture from India, and European craftsmen created their own versions.

KEY PIECES

Most grand, formal rooms had a console or side table intended almost purely for display. The finest examples had *pietra dura* tops (see p.39) and carved and gilded sculptural bases. Advances in glass-making meant that larger mirrors could be made, and it was fashionable to place a matching mirror above each console table in a room. The design elements of the mirrors and tables were repeated in the architectural features of the room, such as door architraves, windows, and fireplace surrounds, creating an integrated sense of design. Pairs of *girandoles* or candlestands were placed in front of mirrors, so that their light was reflected in them, illuminating rooms that would otherwise have been dark.

The largest chairs were still reserved for the most important people. Chairs with high backs, sometimes upholstered for greater comfort, were highly desirable. Wing chairs were first used in France in the middle of the century, a precursor to the *bergère* (see p.77). The armchair shape was extended to create the sofa or *settee*. In 1620, an upholstered settee was commissioned for the great house of Knole, in Kent. This settee had a padded seat and back, held in position by ties on the posts. The design is still known as a Knole settee.

Silks and velvets, usually made in Italy, were phenomenally expensive, and only royalty and the wealthiest aristocracy were able to afford upholstered furniture. Cane, imported from India by Dutch traders, became popular as it provided a less expensive method of covering chair backs and seats.

THE AGE OF THE CABINET

Replacing the carved buffet popular in the previous century, the cabinet, or cabinet-on-stand, became an object of desire in wealthy households. Cabinets were primarily intended for display – a response to the new passion for collecting among the wealthy, and the need to house all of the rare and wonderful objects they had acquired. Rather than just a



German "silver" table Made by Albrecht Biller in Augsburg for the Dresden Court, this table is made of walnut covered with chased and gilt silver. It is one of the few surviving examples of the hugely expensive silver furniture of the period. c.1715. H:80cm (31½in); W:120cm (47in); D:81cm (32in).

repository for special collections, however, the cabinet itself became the showpiece, as skilled craftsmen created large-scale versions that were works of art in their own right, using precious materials. Rare panels of *pietra dura*, lacquer panels from the Orient, and veneers of ebony and ivory were all incorporated into architecturally inspired cabinets. It was the ultimate expression of wealth.

DECORATIVE ELEMENTS

The wealthiest patrons commissioned *pietra dura* tabletops or panels for their cabinets. It was also fashionable to insert exotic, patterned, lacquer panels from Japanese and Chinese cabinets into European furniture. This was, however, prohibitively expensive, so innovative craftsmen developed their own methods of imitating lacquerwork, such as japanning (see p.39). As well as actual lacquered objects, a fashion developed for Oriental scenes, known as *Chinoiserie*.

Cabinet-makers became skilled at veneering, using exotic hardwoods and inlays. The Low Countries, in particular, produced exquisite floral marquetry. French boudoirwork (see p.54) created a sumptuous decorative veneer for tables and cabinets using detailed brass and tortoiseshell marquetry.

By the end of the century, French furniture design was highly influential. Louis XIV's palace at Versailles set the style for the fashionable world. Changes in furniture style were keenly watched and interpreted by craftsmen in Britain and the rest of Europe. The finest French pieces, such as tapestries from the Gobelins workshops or cabinets by Boulle, were highly sought after in the homes of the wealthy.

BUREAU MAZARIN

The earliest known example of the bureau Mazarin was made in 1669 by Pierre Gole, who became cabinet-maker to Louis XIV. Sometimes referred to as a writing table, contemporary engravings also show similar pieces being used as dressing tables. The term "bureau Mazarin" was coined in the 19th century to reflect the importance of Cardinal Mazarin, who ruled France during Louis XIV's Regency. Cardinal Mazarin's employment of foreign craftsmen had a significant influence on the design of French furniture in the 17th century.



Cardinal Mazarin (1602–61)

French bureau This piece is made of native fruitwoods inlaid with floral marquetry and engraved brass. c.1700. H:79cm (31in); W:113cm (44½in); D:65cm (25½in). GK

CABINET-ON-STAND

Made for the Grand Duchess of Tuscany, this piece exemplifies Italian Baroque. The myriad drawers and compartments satisfied the growing interest in collecting. The fashion for architectural detail is shown in the columns and the balustrade, and the miniature sculptures reflect the prevailing interest in Classical forms. The naturalistic figures and paintings show a move away from the Mannerist style of the Renaissance.

Italian cabinet This massive piece is made of ebony, and is decorated with *pietra dura* panels and gilded bronze. The stand consists of four elaborately carved gilt figural supports, known as caryatids. c.1677. H:352cm (140½in); W:254cm (101¼in); D:74cm (29½in).



Mythological figures were often depicted in Baroque furniture. Here, Atlas supports the Earth on his shoulders.

The *pierced balustrade* terminates in volutes, typical of those seen in church architecture of the period.

The *miniature sculptures* add a Classical, architectural feel.

The *central section* of the cabinet is recessed.

The *central gilded figure* fronts more drawers.

Pairs of columns are reminiscent of Classical architecture.

Birds, flowers, and foliate motifs decorate the central drawers.

Pietra dura panels depict a Classical or biblical story.

The *shaped apron* is decorated with gilded Baroque motifs.

The *figural supports* are sculptural, realistic renditions of the human form.

ELEMENTS OF STYLE

1600–1700

The Baroque style used elaborate decoration and precious materials to create spectacular displays of wealth. Chairs, tables, and cabinets were embellished with ornate carving, gilding, and finely detailed marquetry. Rich colours, fine tapestry, marble, and semi-precious stones, set in scrolling designs, or arabesques, contributed to the sense of status and drama.

17th-century carved chair

Carved chair

The elaborately pierced splat of this English side chair shows the influence of the engraved designs of Daniel Marot (see p.45). This piece exemplifies the exquisite wood-carving skills demanded of the carvers of the era. The florid pattern and tall, formal shape are typical of the grandiose Baroque style.



Gilt gesso detail on table top

Gilt gesso

Originating in Italy, gilt gesso became fashionable in France and England. A design was carved in wood, then coated with layers of gesso (a mixture of glue and powdered chalk). Once the gesso had hardened, the design was re-carved and gilded. This technique was used to decorate mirrors, chests, and tables.



Turned oak baluster

Turned wood

Created by applying cutting tools to a rotating wooden surface, turned wood was a popular feature of the vernacular furniture of the period, such as the heavy oak baluster of this colonial court cupboard. Turned wood was also seen on legs, posts, and rungs. As the century progressed, these turnings became less heavy in appearance and more columnar.



Detail of gilded mirror

Verre églomisé

This technique imitated the sumptuous effect of gilded glass, and was often used to decorate mirrors. The design was actually painted on the underside of the glass, rather than on the front. The glass was prepared using a base of egg white and water and then gilded. Once dry, the design was engraved into the gilding before the surface was painted.



Floral marquetry panel

Marquetry

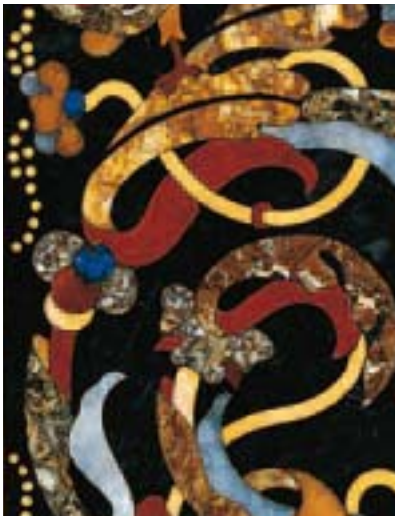
The practice of arranging small pieces of veneer into an intricate design became a speciality of the century, particularly in the Low Countries, and was much sought after. Veneers were made of exotic woods such as mahogany, as well as native fruitwoods, including cherry and plum. The veneers were used in their natural colours or stained in bright shades.



Detail of a silver table

Silver furniture

Owning silver furniture epitomized the phenomenal wealth of the privileged few. The exuberant Louis XIV of France ordered suites of solid-silver furniture to furnish his palace at Versailles. Other rulers, such as Charles II of England, imitated this lavish display of wealth with wooden furniture pieces covered with thin sheets of silver.

Detail of *pietra dura* table top

Pietra dura

Pietra dura literally means “hard stone”. Pieces of highly polished coloured stones, such as marble or lapis lazuli, were arranged in a mosaic pattern. This technique originated in Florence and was mainly used to decorate table tops and cabinet panels. The designs could be formal or naturalistic, and commonly featured animals, birds, flowers, or landscapes.



Brass drop-ring handle

Drop-ring handles

This brass drawer pull is typical of the type found on 17th-century furniture. Although the level of carving varied from simple circles to florid swags, the basic design of the drop-ring was found on both simple cabinet drawers and ornate pieces designed for the finest residences. Brass was popular for all furniture detailing at this time.



Sun King emblem in gilded, carved wood

Emblem of Louis XIV

Louis XIV of France (r.1661–1715) was renowned for the brilliance and theatricality of his Court at Versailles. Known as the Sun King, his personal emblem was a sun with rays of streaming light, echoing Apollo, the Greek god of light. This motif was used to decorate many pieces of furniture and architectural features used at the Court.



Gold and black japanning on cabinet

Japanning

The process of japanning uses layers of varnish or shellac to imitate the Oriental lacquerwork that was coveted during the 17th century. True Japanese and Chinese lacquerwork was difficult and expensive to obtain, so japanning was developed by European artisans, who used the technique to decorate the wood and metal of cabinets, mirrors, and screens in the fashionable style.



Bronze desk mount

Ormolu mounts

This term, from the French *or moulu*, meaning “ground gold”, describes the technique of gilding with bronze using mercury. Decorative details were cast in bronze then gilded with mercury before being mounted onto furniture. Ormolu mounts were often used to protect the edges of veneered pieces. In cheaper imitations the bronze was cast, finished, and then lacquered.



Detail of tapestry wall hanging

Tapestry

Country houses and palaces across Europe used tapestries for decoration, both to cover walls and to upholster chairs. Woven with wool and silk or linen, they were usually pictorial in design. Many tapestries originated from the Low Countries – in particular Brussels – England, and also from Paris, where the Gobelins workshops produced designs for Versailles.



Boullework in tortoiseshell and brass

Boullework

This form of marquetry is named after the French cabinet-maker André-Charles Boulle (*see p.54*), who was arguably its finest exponent. Boullework combines materials like an intricate jigsaw, using materials such as brass, ivory, ebonized wood, and tortoiseshell to create the effect of a painting in marquetry. Brass on a tortoiseshell ground is a popular combination.



Carved detail of oak trestle table

Carved wood

Wood carving became a specialized skill during the 17th century. Elaborate designs decorated chests, chairs, and tables. Low-relief carving, such as the stylized flower motif shown above, was used to decorate hardwoods, such as oak. Softer woods allowed carvers to create more detailed patterns, such as those seen on French and Italian furniture.

ITALY

BY THE EARLY 17TH CENTURY, Rome was once again the seat of a powerful Papacy and entered a period of unprecedented prosperity. Architects, sculptors, and artists all strove to create a city that reflected the glory of the Catholic Church, creating new buildings, monuments, and paintings on a grand, theatrical scale. The aristocracy instigated vast building schemes, creating palazzos that became renowned throughout Europe for their ornate displays of wealth and pomp. The influence of Rome spread throughout the cities of Italy, turning the country into the fountainhead of the Baroque movement.

GRAND FURNITURE

The new architectural grandeur demanded impressive furnishings. Formal 17th-century Italian furniture was sculptural and architectural. It was grand in scale and featured three-dimensional carvings of foliage and human figures that were heavily influenced by sculpture. The makers of opulent palace furniture were often sculptors by training rather than cabinet-makers, and this had a profound effect on the development of the Baroque style. In the state apartments and galleries of palazzos, sumptuous sculptural furniture, such as grand console tables and cabinets,

were displayed alongside ancient sculptures, and were regarded in much the same light – as works of art to be looked at rather than used.

The *stippone*, or great cabinet, was mainly produced in the Grand Ducal Workshops in Florence (see p.42). Thought to have been derived from the Augsburg cabinet (see p.46), it was architectural in appearance and scale, and had numerous small drawers for housing collections. Cabinets were embellished with costly materials, such as ebony, *pietra dura* (see p.42), and gilt bronze. Around 1667, Leonardo van der Vinne, a cabinet-maker from the Low

Countries, became the director of cabinet-makers at the Grand Ducal Workshops and may have introduced floral marquetry techniques.

Stateroom furniture also included console tables with massive marble tops and *pietra dura* inlays, and heavily carved gilt bases, often featuring human figures or foliage. Chairs had high backs and were frequently upholstered with rich materials, such as the fine silks and velvets made in the city of Genoa.

AGE OF LEARNING

With the new buildings and the interest in humanist learning, many wealthy



GILDED FRAME

This gilded, carved picture frame depicts the legend of Paris. It was made by Filippo Parodi, perhaps the best-known Genoese carver of the late 17th century, who worked in Bernini's studio. As well as the sculptural-style figures, the frame includes foliage and shell motifs, which were very popular throughout the 17th century. The portrait is by Pierre Mignard and shows Maria Mancini. Late 17th century.

ANDREA BRUSTOLON

THIS VENETIAN CARVER WAS RENOWNED FOR FANTASTIC CARVED FURNITURE.



Design for a carved mirror frame
Brustolon annotated this drawing to explain the symbolism in the carvings: valour, virtue, and the triumph of love. c.1695.

Andrea Brustolon (1662–1732) was a pupil of the Genoese sculptor Filippo Parodi. Originally trained as a stone carver, Brustolon took up wood carving and created many types of furniture, ranging from frames to tables and stands. He is best known for his extravagantly carved chairs, which were designed more as works of art than as comfortable seating. Few pieces have survived, but several of his drawings have.

It is likely that Brustolon travelled to Rome during his apprenticeship. In keeping with the Roman style of the time, Brustolon's furniture is naturalistic and often allegorical, with figural supports, exuberant foliage, and animals. Parodi's influence is evident. Brustolon's drawing for a mirror is very similar to Parodi's gilded picture frame (shown left).



The high back is typical of the Baroque style.



Detail of carving

The legs, arms, and stretchers are ornately carved with foliage and animals.

Armchair This armchair is made of boxwood, which has no pores, so is easy to carve. The decorative woodwork simulates tree branches combined with foliage and naturalistic renderings of animals. The upholstery is not original. Late 17th century.



WALNUT ARMORIAL CASSONE

The raised lid is carved with a design of beads, leaves, and a fish-scale pattern, while the front and ends of the *cassone* (chest) retain Mannerist features typical of the Renaissance

period – strapwork decoration and segmented panels. The *cassone* stands on paw feet and bears the coat of arms of the the Guicciardini family from Florence. These chests were often given as wedding presents. Late 16th century. H:61cm (24in); W:174cm (68½in).

patrons now had important libraries, thus requiring a new form of furniture: built-in bookcases. Influenced by architecture, these bookcases often had pilasters or columns, and sometimes featured statues or carved urns on the cornice.

GRAND BEDS

Late 17th-century Italian beds were an expression of the upholsterer's art, making use of the fine textiles that were produced locally: usually no wood at all was visible. A tester, often draped in silk or damask, would be

supported from above the head, and upholstered panels surrounded the mattress. This type of bed remained popular until the end of the 18th century so it is difficult to date them with any certainty.

EASTERN INFLUENCES

Meanwhile, the Venetians were producing lacquered furniture, a skill that local craftsmen learned through the city's trading links with the East. Green and gold lacquer became a speciality of Venice until the 18th century. Good-quality wood

was not available locally, which may explain the popularity of techniques such as lacquering, which covers the surface of the wood completely, allowing the craftsmen to make the most of the materials available to them.

VERNACULAR STYLES

In Italy there was a huge difference between the furniture made for daily use in the ordinary rooms of a palazzo or villa and that on display in the state apartments. Utilitarian furniture, such as stools, x-framed chairs, *cassone* (chests), and tables, were made by carpenters or joiners, using local walnut or fruitwood.



St. Peter's, Vatican, Rome The *Baldacchino* (canopy), the high altar, and the chair of St Peter by Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini epitomize the Baroque taste for grandeur in design, scale, and materials.



FLORENTINE CONSOLE TABLE

This table is made of carved and gilded wood, and the top is supported by kneeling mythological figures known as harpies. The figures are muscular, in keeping with the

bold, masculine Baroque style. The theme is borrowed from contemporary Roman designs, although these harpies are more restrained than examples from Rome. *c.1700. H:115cm (45in); W:180cm (71in); D:82cm (32in).*



WALNUT TABLE

The octagonal table top rests on triform supports, which terminate in male terms (stylized human figures) carved with scrolling foliage, on paw feet. The top of the supports have a square panel centred by a wine glass and an illegible inscription. *Late 16th century. H:81cm (31½in); W:120cm (47½in).*



FLORENTINE CABINET

This cabinet, produced at the Grand Ducal Workshops in Florence, is decorated with *pietra dura* panels depicting mythological scenes. The architectural influence on Italian Baroque

furniture design can be seen in the use of pilasters, arched panels, and pediments, and in the structural form of the piece. Mythology was a common theme for decoration, and the meanings would have been widely understood. *1670. H:108cm (42½in); W:90cm (35½in).*



LION COMMODE

The commode is made of walnut with exquisite inlays of ivory and mother-of-pearl, depicting images of Vanity, Justice, and other allegorical figures, surrounded by putti, flowers, leaves,

cartouches, and volutes. The sides are sloped and decorated with inlay and gilding. The front of the commode is bow-shaped and has three drawers and iron fittings. The front feet are shaped like crouching lions. *c.1680. H:94cm (37in); W:145cm (57in); D:72cm (28½in). GK*

PIETRA DURA AND SCAGLIOLA

FLORENTINE TABLE TOPS AND CABINET PANELS INLAID WITH RICHLY COLOURED, SEMI-PRECIOUS STONES WERE HIGHLY COVETED BY WEALTHY PATRONS DURING THE 17TH CENTURY.

PIETRA DURA (hard stone) involves making a mosaic of hard or semi-precious stones. The manufacture of *pietra dura* was just one of the trades that supplied furniture-makers from the Renaissance. Scagliola created a similar effect at considerably less cost.

Originating in Italy, the full name, *Comesso di pietre dure*, describes stones that are fitted together so closely that the joins are invisible. This mosaic is glued to a slate base for stability. The elaborate process of creating pictures from stone has remained the same for centuries. *Pietra dura* was used for table tops and provided a good contrast with the gilt console bases typical of the time. The rich colours and floral or naturalistic pictures not only displayed the expensive materials; the dedicated craftsmanship required to complete such work was admired and coveted by royal and aristocratic patrons.

TEAMWORK

The finest workshops produced *pietra dura* in teams. An artist or sculptor prepared the design, then other craftsmen chose the stones, polished them, and cut them into fine slices. Tracings of the design were used to cut the stones into the right shapes and these were then carefully glued and pieced together in position on a base. If the design was particularly delicate, it would be lined with slate. Finally the stones would be polished with abrasive powders.

THE GRAND DUCAL WORKSHOPS

These Florentine workshops, situated in the galleries of the Uffizi Palace, were pre-eminent in developing *pietra dura* furnishings. Other workshops sometimes poached Florentine artisans so that they could teach their skills elsewhere. In 1588, Ferdinand I de' Medici made them the Court workshop, making furniture as well as mosaics. The works were commissioned for the Grand Duke's residences as well as for important European families. Products ranged from cabinets and table tops to boxes and architectural features.

Henri IV and Louis XIII of France established their own royal workshops under the Louvre Palace in Paris (see p.50).

PIETRA DURA TABLE, CHARLECOTE PARK, ENGLAND
The centre of the table is made of an oval of onyx surrounded by floral patterns of rare and beautiful jaspers. The rest of the slab is inlaid with arabesque patterns of marble and semi-precious stones. The piece is said to have been taken from the Palazzo Borghese in Rome by Napoleon's army. 16th century.



PIETRA DURA DETAIL

This detail of a *pietra dura* parrot eating fruit demonstrates the variety of colour and texture in the semi-precious stones used. The panel is one of six from a cabinet purchased for Charlecote Park in England.

MATERIALS

PIETRA DURA USED A VARIETY OF HARD AND SEMI-PRECIOUS STONES, CHOSEN FOR THEIR COLOUR OR INTEGRAL PATTERN.



Jasper is an opaque variety of chalcedony, occurring in a variety of colours.



Lapis lazuli is a blue opaque stone, sometimes flecked with white, which has been used since Ancient Egyptian times.



Malachite is a semi-precious stone. It has light and dark green bands, which give it a unique ornamental quality.



Marble is highly valued for its colours and textures. The most famous marble comes from Carrara, near Florence.



Chalcedony is translucent grey in its pure form, but also comes in colours ranging from apple green to orange-red.



Porphyry is an igneous rock composed of large crystals. There are many types found within rocks such as granite.



Agate is a banded form of chalcedony, prized for the beautiful patterns and bands visible when the stone is sliced.

Floral motif

Foliage detail

Bird motif



Onyx cabouchon shape

Lapis lazuli detail

Jasper strapwork

Curved ribbon detail



FLORENTINE CABINET

This wooden cabinet, produced at the Grand Ducal Workshops in Florence, has pietra dura panels depicting mythological scenes. The architectural influence on Italian Baroque furniture design can be seen in the structural form of the piece.

1670. H:108cm (42½in);
W:90cm (35½in).

SCAGLIOLA TABLE TOP

Designed by Pietro Antonio Paolini in Florence, this exquisite table top demonstrates how scagliola could be used to create realistic effects, with its trompe l'oeil-style rendition of a violin, a Renaissance drawing, a map and book, flowers, and birds.

1732.
W:142cm (56in); D:68cm (26¾in).

SCAGLIOLA

Scagliola is false marble. The first documented examples of it appeared at the end of the 17th century in Germany and in Italy. *Pietra dura* panels and table tops, especially from the Grand Ducal Workshops in Florence, were prohibitively expensive, so less wealthy patrons were keen to find an alternative and commissioned craftsmen to create an imitation: scagliola.

Black and white perspective designs were popular at the time, and scagliola proved the perfect medium for realizing these. The illusion of marble pictures, engravings, trompe l'oeil, ebony and ivory inlay, and paint effects were all possible. Scagliola reached the height of perfection in the 18th century, both in furniture and architectural use, in such vast spaces as the interior of the Great Hall at Stowe, in Buckinghamshire.

THE TECHNIQUE

Scagliola is produced by grinding the mineral selenite into a powder and mixing it with coloured pigments and animal glue to produce a plaster-like substance. As with *pietra dura*, a drawing is transferred to a stone slab upon which it is engraved. Unlike marquetry or *pietra dura*, which are both inlaid, the liquid scagliola is poured into the engraved hollows in the stone, then left to set.

Additional effects, such as veining or different colour variations, are achieved by adding chips of marble, granite, alabaster, porphyry, or other stones to the mixture, or by engraving and filling the hardened plaster a second time. Once the plaster has finally hardened, it is polished with linseed oil to create the desired finish.



LOW COUNTRIES

DURING THE FIRST HALF of the 17th century, the northern provinces became a major maritime power. The city of Amsterdam grew prosperous, and the influx of exotic goods and materials brought from the Far East by the Dutch East India Company made this city a haven for artists and craftsmen.

Traditional manufacturers flourished in the southern Netherlands, which was still under Spanish Hapsburg rule at this time. Flemish craftsmen were known in particular for their luxurious tapestries, weavings, and stamped or gilt leather, used both for upholstery and wall hangings.

POPULAR STYLES

Early 17th-century furniture from the Low Countries was generally simple, although more elaborate pieces were made for wealthy patrons. For much of the century, the four-door court cupboard was the most important piece of furniture in wealthy homes. Usually made of oak, it was often decorated with intricately carved figures, or intarsia panels depicting architectural scenes. Walnut became the timber of choice after 1660 and was often embellished with inlays or exotic veneered panels. In Holland, the “arched” cupboard with two, long panelled doors remained fashionable.

LUXURIOUS CABINETS

As in Italy, the Augsburg cabinet was influential. Early in the century, Flemish craftsmen in Antwerp made small table cabinets veneered in imported ebony, and they began to use new and exotic imports as veneers, perhaps influenced by the Northern Provinces’ trade with the East. Table cabinets gave way to cabinets-on-stands, decorated with ebony, mother-of-pearl, and tortoiseshell veneers. Later cabinets had carved stands with legs made from

The Linen Cupboard, Pieter de Hooch, 1663. This interior shows a typical wealthy merchant home of the age, with its large two-door oak cupboard, housing the highly prized household linen.



The interlacing “seaweed” marquetry is more frequently seen on English furniture.

Gold lacquer is used against a black lacquer background for greater impact.

The polished skin of a ray fish reflects the trend for seeking unusual inlays to embellish furniture.

The flat cross stretchers linking the turned, squared baluster legs are typical of 17th-century furniture.

CABINET-ON-STAND

The cabinet is made of oak, and then veneered with a variety of woods: walnut, palm, and purple wood, with lacquer and ray-skin panels forming part of the inlay. The cabinet stands on six turned, squared baluster legs joined by flat stretchers. A wealthy status symbol for its time, this cabinet is the earliest known example of Dutch furniture

made using lacquer panels and polished ray-skin cut from an earlier Japanese coffer. The original piece is likely to have been imported to the Netherlands by the Dutch East India Company, but was probably no longer fashionable. The desirable exotic materials from the East would then have been removed and used to decorate a new, more fashionable, piece of furniture. 1690–1710. H:202cm (79½in); W:158.5cm (62½in); D:54cm (21¼in).



GILTWOOD PIER TABLE AND MIRROR

This is one of a pair of tables, each with a matching large mirror above. This heavily carved gilt table has a serpentine marble top and scrolled serpentine-panelled legs joined by a cross stretcher. In the centre is a carved urn. The coat of arms of the original owner is carved into the top of the mirror frame. Late 17th century. H:81.5cm (32in); W:122cm (48in); D:69cm (27in).

gilded caryatids or ebonized wood.

Later in the century, craftsmen such as Jan van Mekeren, a cabinet-maker in Amsterdam, decorated large cabinets-on-stands and tables with intricate floral marquetry, inspired by the still-life floral paintings popular at the time. The contrasting colours of ebony from Madagascar, purple amaranth from Guyana, rosewood from Brazil, and sandalwood from India were combined to create marquetry of consummate skill. Exported to France

and then England, these cabinets provided inspiration for cabinet-makers there, who developed their own styles of veneering.

EVERYDAY PIECES

Floral marquetry was not just used to embellish cabinets; side tables were occasionally decorated in the same way. More typical of the Low Countries, however, were tables and cupboards decorated with a wealth of naturalistic carving.

Chests of drawers were often made of oak, stained or polished to resemble ebony. Ebony or stained pearwood was used for mouldings.

Chairs tended to be rectangular with low or high backs. They were usually made of walnut and upholstered in leather, velvet, or cloth, with brass studs. As the century advanced, inspired by imports from India, chair seats and backs were made of cane. The legs were linked by stretchers. The artist Crispin van den Passe's *Boutique Menuiserie*, published in Amsterdam in 1642, showed elements of Mannerism in chair design, but it also included simpler chairs, with

straight backs, double stretchers, and carved arms terminating in dolphins.

FRENCH INFLUENCE

Towards the end of the century, the dazzling furniture of the Court at Versailles became a new source of inspiration, compounded by an influx of Huguenot designers and craftsmen, such as Daniel Marot (*see below*) fleeing religious persecution in France. The French influence soon became evident as Dutch furniture became more sculptural and less rectangular. Based on Marot's designs, chairs now had tall, richly carved backs with crested back rails.



17TH-CENTURY DOLL'S HOUSE

This doll's house was commissioned by Petronella Oortman, a wealthy woman from Amsterdam. She ordered porcelain objects from China and had the city's furniture-makers and

artists decorate the interior. Costing as much as a townhouse along the canal, this was not a toy for children. Its importance for the historian is in the design and placement of the furniture. 1686–1705. H:255cm (102in); W:189.5cm (75¼in); D:78cm (31¼in).



DUTCH OAK AND MARQUETRY TABLE

This table is typical of Low Countries' design, with square baluster legs and flat stretchers. Designed to stand against a wall, only the visible surfaces are decorated with marquetry. 1690–1710. H:77cm (30¼in); W:100cm (39in); D:69.5cm (27¼in).

DANIEL MAROT (1661–1752)

MAROT FLED TO THE LOW COUNTRIES TO ESCAPE RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION. HIS DESIGNS WERE INFLUENTIAL IN BRINGING FRENCH STYLE TO THE REGION.

A Parisian-born Protestant, Marot became architect and designer to the Stadtholder, later William of Orange. He decorated the apartments at the new Het Loo palace, and followed William to England in 1694. Marot is best known for his engraved designs for interiors and

furniture, which had a great influence on cabinet-makers of the period. His most lavish designs are for great four-poster State beds (*see below*), but he designed all types of furniture. His best-known designs for elaborately carved chairs with high backs were widely copied.



Design for a Bedchamber with a State Bed, from Marot's *New Book of Apartments*, 1703. Note the high-backed chairs against the walls and the four-poster State bed.

The high back with a pierced and heavily carved splat is typical of Marot's designs.

The seat is wider at the front than the back, but the upholstery is not original.

The legs are carved with bell-flowers and rosettes.

One of a set of 12 salon chairs from a design by Marot The carved top rail is decorated with double scrolls and sprays of acanthus leaves. The seats have a carved apron of pierced foliage and rosettes, and the design is echoed in the stretchers. 1686–1705. H:123cm (49¼in); W:52cm (20¼in); D:51cm (20¼in). PAR



GERMANY AND SCANDINAVIA

The end of the Thirty Years War in 1648 marked the beginning of German federalism. From then on, Germany was made up of small sovereign states ruled by wealthy princes. The most powerful nation in the Baltic area was Sweden. By 1660, under Charles XI, it had reached the height of its power.

INFLUENCES

Styles of furniture varied from one part of Germany to another, because each principality had its own court. The

Bavarian Electors built the Residenz in Munich with a style and luxury that made King Gustav Adolf of Sweden jealous. Following an exile in Brussels, Elector Max II Emanuel (1680–1724) returned to Bavaria with expensive Antwerp furniture. During his second exile, in France, he became familiar with the French Baroque and sent Bavarian craftsmen to France to study, who brought the style back home.

In Germany, by the beginning of the 18th century the heavy, opulent

Baroque style was making way for the curvaceous Rococo forms that reached their creative high point in church and castle interiors. Partly due to the guild system, the German cities were a little behind in development, generally taking the lead from the masterpieces.

PRINCELY CABINETS

In 1631, the city of Augsburg sent an ebony cabinet decorated with precious materials to the King of Sweden as a peace offering. Augsburg was the

stronghold of furniture design, and such a high number of intarsia cabinets were imported to Spain that in 1603 King Philip III introduced a ban on the importation of Augsburg goods. Curiosity cabinets, embellished with fine inlays of silver, ivory, amber, and precious stones, or with coloured engravings and porcelain plaques were sought by noblemen and emulated throughout Europe. Augsburg also produced opulent embossed and engraved silver furniture for export.



KARL VI WRITING DESK

This writing desk from Austria is made of ash veneered with maple, and decorated with marquetry in plum and myrtle woods. The desk has a long central drawer and a pull-out writing slide flanked on either side by two

smaller drawers. The top section of the desk consists of an arrangement of six drawers. The piece stands on six, square tapered legs, which are carved and partly gilded. The legs are joined by curved and interwoven stretchers. *c.1700. H:104cm (41½in); W:144cm (57½in); D:71cm (28½in).*



TYROLEAN CABINET-ON-STAND

These cabinets were intended to house collections of rare objects. The intarsia decoration (pictorial inlay using different woods) was influenced by engravings from pattern books by the Netherlandish ornamental

painter, Hans Vredeman de Vries. The perspective view of a portal with a well or fountain in the foreground and the architectural view in the background were all taken from *Various Architectural Forms* (1560). *c.1700. H:154cm (60½in); W:129cm (50½in); D:56cm (22in).*



TRAVEL CABINET

This ebony cabinet from Southern Germany is decorated with ivory inlay. The fall front opens to reveal 10 small drawers flanking a central section with a lockable door. All of the surfaces are decorated with ivory foliate inlay, and the case stands on flat ball feet. *17th century. H:46.75cm (18½in); W:54cm (21¼in). LPZ*



Detail of carving



TABLE CABINET

This *Kunstkabinett*, or table cabinet, originates from Eger, in Bohemia, which was renowned for the use of sculptural relief marquetry or intarsia panels. The cabinet has a stepped top with a sliding lid. The two doors conceal small

drawers of various sizes surrounding a vaulted central compartment with columns and a detachable cover. These relief-carved marquetry panels, showing various mythological scenes, are typical of the work of Adam Eck. *c.1640. H:51cm (20in); W:58.5cm (23in); D:28cm (11in).*

VERNACULAR STYLES

In Germany and Scandinavia massive, architectural wardrobes with heavy cornices, known as *Schränke*, remained popular in wealthy middle-class houses throughout the century. These had two doors over two drawers. In the north they were usually made of oak and were often heavily carved; in the south they were more likely to be made from local fruitwood or walnut. The chest was an important household item well into the 18th century.



SWEDISH GILDED MIRROR FRAME

This gilt-bronze beaded frame, attributed to Burchard Precht, is decorated with *verre églomisé* (an ancient glass-gilding technique). The pattern depicts gold foliage on a red ground. c.1700. H:140cm (55in); W:79cm (31in).



TILED TABLE

This small table from Friesland is similar to Scandinavian furniture and has a top made from blue and white Delft tiles. It has flat stretchers, turned, spiralled legs and bun feet. Early 18th century. H:92cm (36½in).

Upholstered armchairs with carved top rails were made for the heads of households. These had turned arms and curled, almost scrolled feet.

In Sweden and Germany suites of stools, chairs, and armchairs were upholstered in leather, or occasionally in imported silk. In less grand homes it was common to find stools and benches set around long, plank tables.

DECORATIVE EFFECTS

German craftsmen were renowned for their use of walnut veneer and, later, for ebony. Eger in Bohemia was well-known for cabinets using sculptural relief or intarsia panels.

Furniture decorated with boullework (see p.54), became popular in southern Germany at the end of the century. Augsburg craftsmen mastered the technique, and produced fine examples of the style.

Berlin became renowned for japanned furniture, especially for the cabinets, tables, *guéridons*, and cases for musical instruments with japanned decorations on a white ground designed by Gerhard Dagly. In Paris his pieces were described as “Berlin” cabinets. Cabinets decorated with red and blue lacquer from Dresden and Brandenburg were also highly coveted abroad.



The Baroque Schloss Biebrich (palace), south of Wiesbaden This three-winged palace on the banks of the Rhine is a magnificent example of the Baroque style, with its bold colour scheme and carved statues looking down from the roof.

The oval-shaped mask is a Baroque decorative motif.

Intarsia was a speciality of southern German craftsmen.

Curved, spiral columns were popular 17th-century decorations.

Carved fruit and swags are also Renaissance-style motifs.

Grotesque masks support the columns.

The brass handles are of a later style, and are not contemporary to the piece.

Bun feet support the armoire.



ARMOIRE

This exceptional 17th century armoire, a *Fassadenschrank* from southern Germany, is made of walnut, maple, oak, and ash. The moulded cornice is positioned above an inlaid frieze and a pair of doors with architectural

carvings, surrounded by a moulded fruit and mask pattern. The doors are flanked with three ball-pattern carved columns. The lower section of the armoire has two drawers and the whole stands on flattened bun feet. H:240.5cm (94½in) W:112cm (44in) D:60cm (23½in).

ENGLAND

DURING THE REIGN of James I, most furniture was made of oak and was limited to joint stools, chests, chairs with plain or spiral turned legs, and long trestle tables. Decoration was confined to elaborate carving on chairs, chests, and settles. The aristocracy of Wales and Scotland tended to follow the lead of the dominant English court style.

FOREIGN INFLUENCES

During Charles I's reign, craftsmen from France, Italy, and the Low Countries came to work on state apartments and grand houses. Influenced by designs from the Low Countries, English furniture was more restrained than Italian Baroque pieces.

Upholstered furniture was made for grand residences. Chairs generally had low, square backs, upholstered with tapestry or leather, and armchairs had seat cushions and padded arms covered with upholstery. Settees were occasionally made as part of a suite with matching chairs.

THE RESTORATION

Furniture was mostly made of plain woods such as oak, ash, elm, or beech under Oliver Cromwell, whose government did not condone lavish displays of ornament, but the situation changed after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. Charles II had spent his exile in Europe and brought back the latest fashions to England.

Court life under Charles II was less formal, creating a demand for small folding tables, card tables, and gateleg dining tables. Walnut became the most popular wood, and techniques such as veneering and caning were fashionable. Caned furniture with twist-turned frames was considered quintessentially English.

REBUILDING LONDON

A massive building boom after the Great Fire of London in 1666 led to specialization within the woodworking trades. Cabinet-makers made case furniture, tables, and stands, while joiners – and the wood carvers and gilders who worked with them – concentrated on architectural features, bedsteads, and mirror frames. Chair-making also became a specialist craft.

Trade between the Low Countries and England increased after the accession of William III and Mary in 1689. The European influence on furniture was compounded by the arrival in England of French Huguenot craftsmen, some of whom became cabinet-makers to the royal household.

SKILLED CRAFTSMANSHIP

Cabinets were now veneered with walnut, yew, maple, holly, olive, beech, and fruitwoods. Burr woods were especially desirable. Some woods were cut across the grain to create an “oyster” veneer. The most elaborate forms of veneering used floral, seaweed, or arabesque marquetry.

Other cabinets were japanned, to imitate lacquer, or were covered in patterned gesso to create a raised, gilded appearance. Chests-on-stands were replaced by bureau-cabinets, often topped with domes or pediments intended for the display of expensive porcelain. Clothes presses and livery cupboards were commonplace, as were chests of drawers and kneehole desks.

Tables ranged from oak trestles to grand console tables. These were often designed to stand beneath large, ornate mirrors. High-backed chairs with caned seats and backs were popular, as were chairs in the style of Daniel Marot (see p.45), which had long, carved or pierced back splats.

As the century drew to a close, fine furniture was no longer made solely for grand palaces. Simpler, well-crafted pieces were also being made for wealthy city merchants and the landed gentry, paving the way for the elegant styles prevalent in the 18th century.

Needlework casket Embroidered in coloured silks on a satin ground, the casket depicts romantic courtly scenes. Typical of similar caskets of the age, this one has many compartments, some secret. *Mid 17th century. W:29.5cm (11½in). Bonk*



HIGH-BACKED SIDE CHAIR

Made of imported walnut, this chair, with its carved and pierced back splat, is similar to engravings published by Marot. It has cabriole legs terminating in “horse-bone” feet, but has stretchers. *c.1710. H:121cm (47½in). PAR*



HALL CHAIR

This chair is based on the Italian *sgabello* design. The oak is carved and painted, with a shell-shaped back and pendant mask with swags on the front. *c.1635. H:110.5cm (43½in); W:69cm (27in); D:66cm (26in).*



The fall front conceals drawers and pigeonholes.

The drawers are decorated with crossbanded veneer.

Locks on the drawers indicate that the bureau would have held valuable items.

The shaped back plate and bale handles are engraved.

Ball-and-bracket feet were used at the beginning of the 18th century.

MARQUETRY BUREAU

This bureau is veneered in burr maple, but is stained to look like tortoiseshell. Burr woods such as elm and maple were often stained to resemble more expensive materials. The bureau

has rosewood and kingwood crossbanding and metal stringing. The fall front encloses an array of drawers and pigeonholes. The lower section has two short and two long drawers supported on ball feet. *c.1710. H:95cm (38in); W:71cm (28½in); D:52cm (20¾in). PAR*





JAPANESE LACQUER CABINET ON ENGLISH STAND

Designed to stand against a wall, this cabinet is only decorated on the front. Such fine lacquered pieces would have been great status symbols. The imported Japanese cabinet rests on an English William-and-Mary-style giltwood stand. *Late 17th century. H:98.5cm (37½in); W:57cm (22½in); D:15cm (6in).*



RARE PAINTED AND INLAID CABINET

This cabinet is made of pine, painted, and then inlaid with precious mother-of-pearl – an imported material from the Western Pacific. The design of the lower cabinet is inspired by imported styles, but the upper section is architectural in design. This piece was probably made in London. *c.1620.*

Arched pediment

The central carving is in the shape of a shell.

The insides of the doors are panelled with borders of burr yew wood and cross-banded with padouk wood.



The fitted interior contains shelves and small drawers and pigeonholes arranged around a central cupboard.

Each brass lock plate is engraved with a winged figure blowing a horn.

The drawer fronts each have a different design of carved gesso work.

The feet are in the shape of lion's claws.

BUREAU-BOOKCASE

One of a pair, this is a very rare and fine example of a bureau-bookcase. It is attributed to the partnership of London cabinet-makers James Moore and John Gumley, and is decorated with carved and gilded gesso incorporating

strapwork with scrolling foliage and floral detail. An arched pediment with a carved shell sits above arched doors with bevelled glass, which open to reveal a fitted interior. The lower part, with a sloping fall front, encloses a bureau interior. The base contains drawers with drop-ring handles. *c.1720. H:240.5cm (94½in); W:112cm (44in). MAL*

FRANCE: HENRI IV AND LOUIS XIII

THE EARLY 17TH CENTURY was a time of increasing prosperity in France, after a long period of war. Henri IV ruled a country in which styles had changed little since the Renaissance. Keen to encourage new skills, however, he established a workshop for craftsmen in the Louvre Palace in 1608. The craftsmen he employed were Italian and Flemish (French craftsmen were sent to serve an apprenticeship in the Low Countries) and, protected by royal patronage, they were allowed to work in Paris without being subject to the punitive membership restrictions of the medieval guild of joiners and furniture-makers.

TRADITIONAL FORMS

Most furniture was made of oak or walnut during the reign of Henri IV. The massive double-bodied cupboard, with an upper section that was narrower than the lower section, doors with geometric panelling, and bun feet continued to be popular well into the 17th century. Tables had elaborate, heavy bases and chairs were architectural in form, which made them rather stiff and uncomfortable.

FOREIGN INFLUENCES

After Henri IV's death in 1610, his Italian wife Marie de Medici was appointed Regent to the young king.

During her reign, there was a building boom in Paris and the nobility and a growing middle class began to furnish their apartments in grand style.

Marie was influential in furniture design. She employed many foreign craftsmen, including Jean Macé, a cabinet-maker from the Low Countries, who probably first used veneering in French furniture design, and Italian craftsmen, who introduced brouillure (see p.54) and *pietra dura* inlays (see p.42). In particular, Marie de Medici encouraged the manufacture of cabinets inlaid with ebony, which were made in Paris from about 1620 to 1630.

GRAND DESIGNS

Furniture during the reign of Louis XIII was monumental and heavy in style. The cabinet, usually on a stand and housing numerous small drawers, was the most important piece of furniture of the time. Generally made of walnut or ebony, it was decorated with panels, columns, and pilasters.

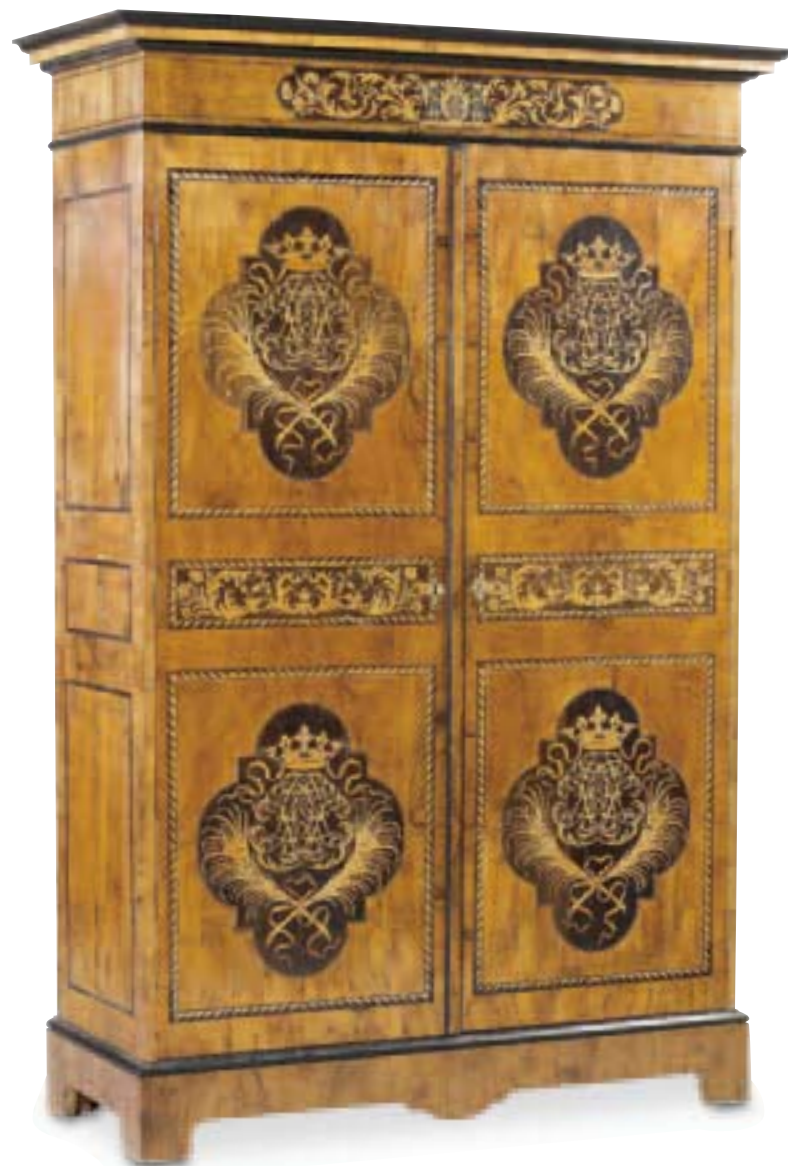
Ebony-veneered cabinets made late in Louis XIII's reign are embellished with flat relief carving, carved flowers, and twisted columns. They were inspired by the Augsburg cabinets made in Germany (see p.46), which used ebony and other exotic materials in a decorative fashion.



PROVINCIAL CUPBOARD

The top section of this carved walnut cupboard has two doors decorated with moulded panelling and is crowned by a moulded cornice. There is a long drawer in the centre of the

frieze, which is flanked by two short drawers. The frieze is supported by four spiral-turned columns and a recessed cupboard in the lower section. The whole cupboard is supported on a moulded plinth base and four bun feet. *Early 17th century. W:110cm (43½in).*



ARMOIRE

This armoire originates from the Grenoble region. The pediment and the centre of the two panelled doors are profusely inlaid with floral marquetry of various woods, depicting flowers

and leaves. The panels also bear the monogram and coronet of the Barras de la Penne family. The panel design is continued on the sides. The armoire would originally have been supported on either turned feet or a moulded base. *Early 17th century. H:209cm (82½in).*

The cupboard or buffet was popular at this time, especially in the provinces. This form slowly evolved into an armoire, which was used for storing linens, rather than for the display of expensive household items, such as silver plate or ceramics. Fall fronts were added to cabinets, as seen on the typical *vargueños* (see p.56), producing an early form of bureau.

Small tables intended for the less formal rooms of a house were made in many shapes, but were mostly oblong, with turned legs. Dining tables now had tops that could be extended,

either with hinges or by the use of telescoping leaves. The table bases were usually turned, and H-stretchers provided a popular method of linking the table legs.

Chairs became more comfortable towards the end of Louis XIII's reign, as seats grew lower and wider, and the backs of the chairs became higher. There was a greater emphasis on textiles in Louis XIII furniture, although upholstery was so expensive at this time that only the finest pieces of furniture were covered with textiles. Cushions were used for additional

comfort on wooden seats, and chairs made for the upper classes were often covered with fashionable upholstery. Velvet, damask, needlework, and leather were all used. The fabric was fixed into place with rows of brass tacks, which also served as a decorative element of the chairs. Fringe was added below the back seat rail and along the lower chair rail as an extra embellishment. Armrests were usually curved and sometimes incorporated an upholstered pad. Chair legs were carved in a sculptural way, similar to the elaborate legs of Brustolon's chairs (see p.40), or they were turned.

DECORATIVE DETAIL

The Low Countries, especially Flanders, had a strong influence on French furniture of the period. Two features typical of Louis XIII furniture were inspired by Flemish furniture: the heavy, moulded panelling in geometric patterns and elaborate turning on legs and stretchers.

Turning was an essential feature of Louis XIII furniture, both in formal and vernacular pieces. It was now no longer used simply for legs and stretchers, but also to create decorative details on cupboards and cabinets. A piece of furniture would often feature more than one turned design.



OAK CHEST

This heavily decorated chest has a plain top, attached to the case by interior hinges. The three heavily carved panels on the front of the case are divided by stylized pilasters. The base

of the chest contains a long, shallow drawer, which is decorated with carved, architectural elements. The piece stands on straight feet. *Late 16th century. W:85cm (33½in). EDP*



OAK CHEST

This chest is made of oak and is decorated with five gilded and studded metal straps, cut in a wavy pattern over the front, back, and domed lid. The piece has two gilded handles

on either side to enable the piece to be carried. The chest retains its original lock and key. Unlike many chests of the period, this piece does not have feet. *Early 17th century. H:74cm (29½in); W:142cm (56in); D:69cm (27½in). PIL*



The seat back is embellished with a gold thread pattern.

The chair arms are scrolled in shape.

A turned H-stretcher joins the legs.

Baluster legs are typical of the period.

LOUIS XIII DINING CHAIR

This carved armchair is one of an impressive set of 12 side chairs and two armchairs, which may have been added to the set at a later date. It has an arched, padded back and seat, covered

in close-nailed velvet and decorated with gold thread. The exposed frame is made of walnut and consists of scrolled arms on turned supports and baluster legs, which are typical of the period. The legs are linked by turned H-stretchers. *17th century.*

FRANCE: LOUIS XIV

IN THE SECOND half of the 17th century, the reign of the flamboyant Louis XIV (1643–1715), known as the Sun King, led to the creation of sumptuous palaces and furnishings that were emulated throughout Europe.

In 1662, a year after becoming King in his own right, Louis installed many of Europe's finest craftsmen in the former tapestry workshops of the Gobelins brothers on the outskirts of Paris. Modelled on the Grand Ducal Workshops in Florence (see p.42), these centres of excellence created

furniture and fittings for the royal palaces and were responsible for developing a unified design style that celebrated the glory of the King.

ROYAL SPLENDOUR

In 1682, Louis moved the French court into the Palace of Versailles. His favourite designer was Charles Le Brun, whose exuberant designs greatly impressed the King. Le Brun was responsible for many of the greatest rooms in Versailles, including the Hall of Mirrors (see p.35). Louis took a

personal interest in the decoration and furnishing of his palace and much of the furniture was embellished with visual references to him. The most common motifs were two interlaced "L"s, the fleur-de-lys, and the sunburst, Louis XIV's personal emblem.

THE EDICT OF NANTES

In 1685, Louis revoked the Edict of Nantes, thereby ending religious tolerance for Protestants. Many French designers and craftsmen, including Daniel Marot and Pierre Gole, fled abroad. This exodus helped spread the influence of French design to the rest of Europe and North America.

POPULAR STYLES

Louis XIV furniture was an expression of the wealth and power of the king, and lavish materials were used, such as exotic woods, silver and gilt, *pietra dura* panels, imported lacquer, and Boulle marquetry. Motifs drew on Renaissance decoration, including mythological creatures, grotesques, arabesques, and flora and fauna.

Etiquette changed and comfort became more important. Chair backs were lower and most seats had a wooden frame with leather or cloth upholstery fixed in place with brass-headed nails. The *fauteuil*, an armchair with open sides, became popular, as



The drawers are inlaid with floral marquetry on ivory.

The flat door is surmounted by an ebony architrave and opens to reveal three ebony drawers inlaid with flowers. The inside of the door has a marquetry floral display.

A capital in gilt bronze caps each leg.

The fluted legs are also veneered in ivory.

The stretchers are flat and are decorated with floral marquetry.

IVORY-VENEERED CABINET-ON-STAND

This piece is attributed to the Dutch cabinet-maker Pierre Gole (c.1620–84) for the *Cabinet Blanc* (the White Room) in the Palace of Versailles. Veneered with ivory, which acts as a background for floral marquetry in tortoiseshell and various woods, this cabinet is testament to the technical

expertise of the maker. The upper section consists of a series of drawers on either side of a central recess. Within the recess, enclosed by doors, are three more drawers, all profusely inlaid with marquetry on ivory. The cabinet stands on six fluted legs, also veneered in ivory, which have ball feet and are joined by flat stretchers. c.1662. H:126cm (50½in); W:84cm (33in); D:39cm (15½in).

CARVED GILTWOOD FAUTEUIL

This giltwood armchair, also known as a *fauteuil*, has a wide, low back embellished with carved and gilt moulding. The frame, arms, arm supports, seat rail, and cabriole legs are decorated with carved scrolls, shells, foliage, flowers, and rosettes. Satyr's masks with feathered headresses adorn the tops of the legs, and the feet are curved hooves. The upholstery is not original. c.1710.



LOUIS XIV GILTWOOD CANAPÉ

The shaped arms and supports of this gilded *canapé* are wrapped with carved acanthus leaves and have strapwork decoration. The six scroll legs with matching decoration are joined by a double x-stretcher surmounted by urn finials. The *canapé* would originally have been upholstered in needlework or figured velvet. c.1700. H:91cm (36in); W:159cm (62½in).



did the *canapé* or couch. The arms and legs of chairs incorporated more carved detail than previously, displaying the carver's skills and showing that he was familiar with the latest designs.

Guests were received in the bedroom. The finest beds had a plume of feathers, known as *panache*, at each corner, and a balustrade separated the occupant from the visitors. Louis XIV's bed (see left) was raised on a dais.

Towards the end of the century, the buffet, a two-tiered cupboard with four

doors, two above and two below, evolved into the *armoire*, which had two tall doors. The chest, or coffer, was replaced by the commode, a case piece on short legs with either doors (two) or drawers, which became more formal towards the end of the century.

The console table was very popular and was generally heavily gilded. It was decorated on three sides, but not at the back, as the table was usually placed against a wall.

Smaller tables, often made of fruitwood, were sometimes painted. Their uses varied: some of them held candlesticks or writing paper; others were used as informal dining tables.

Part of a Gobelin tapestry This panel depicts Louis XIV in his formal bedroom receiving visitors, according to the etiquette of the time. Note the State bed and the sumptuous surroundings. c.1670. H:180cm (72in); W:210.5cm (84½in).



RED BOULLEWORK COMMODE

The top of the commode is inlaid with designs in the style of Louis XIV's chief designer, Jean Bérain (see p.55), showing human figures, birds, arabesques, and foliage. The rope twist handles are ormolu (see p.39) and the handle

plates have Renaissance-style male masks. Elaborate escutcheons are set down the centre and pierced swags of flowers beneath female masks and shells decorate the rounded shoulders. Scroll-shaped mounts terminate in hoof feet. 17th century. H:84cm (33in); W:118cm (46½in); D:67.5cm (26½in). PAR



BUREAU PLAT

This *bureau plat*, designed by André-Charles Boulle (see p.55) for the Palace of Versailles, is decorated with fine marquetry in tortoiseshell, bronze, and ebony and has three shallow drawers. There are elaborate ormolu mounts of women's busts at the four corners of the desk and the legs terminate in lion's paws. c.1708.



LOUIS XIV CABINET EN ARMOIRE

This *contre-partie* cabinet is veneered with brass, pewter, and tortoiseshell and decorated with foliage and strapwork patterns. The breakfront cornice sits above a frieze inlaid with engraved roundels. The central door is inlaid with caryatids and foliate urns. The lower section has two long drawers above cupboard doors. The interior is decorated with marquetry and mirror-glass and contains various drawers. c.1680. H:220cm (86½in); W:145cm (57in); D:60cm (23½in).

BOULLE MARQUETRY

THIS ELABORATE MARQUETRY, USUALLY BRASS INLAID INTO TORTOISESHELL OR EBONY, OR VICE VERSA, WAS NAMED AFTER ANDRÉ-CHARLES BOULLE, CABINET-MAKER TO LOUIS XIV.



PREMIÈRE-PARTIE

This form of Boulle marquetry has brass inlaid into a dark background, usually made of ebony or tortoiseshell. This is one of a pair of cabinets from the Châteaux de Versailles and Trianon, each with two doors decorated with marquetry depicting the seasons of autumn and spring. Late 17th century. H:112cm (44in); W:90cm (35½in); D:43cm (17in).

BOULLE MARQUETRY originated in Italy during the 10th century, where it was known as *tarsia a incastro*, meaning a combining of materials. Italian craftsmen are thought to have introduced the technique to France in around 1600 when they produced work for Marie de Medici, Henri IV's second wife. Pierre Gole, a cabinet-maker from the Low Countries, is also credited with first using the technique in France.

MATCHING PAIRS

Furniture decorated with boullework was often made in pairs, mainly because the process of cutting out the materials resulted in two complete sets of the marquetry design. Boulle marquetry was very time consuming, and making one set of designs, the *première-partie*, also produced an opposing set, the *contre-partie*. The examples most commonly seen are pairs of matching cabinets (see above and right).

CONTRE-PARTIE

The second part of the pair is decorated with the reverse form of Boulle marquetry. This is created when dark marquetry, usually made of ebony or tortoiseshell, is inlaid into a brass or pewter background.

Late 17th century. H:112cm (44in); W:90cm (35½in).

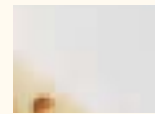


MATERIALS

MANY EXOTIC MATERIALS WERE USED AS INLAIDS IN BOULLE MARQUETRY.



Bone and horn Bone is naturally pale, while horn varies from white to black. They were painted or dyed to imitate other materials.



Ivory This expensive, hard, white material comes from the teeth and tusks of animals. Traditionally the term applies to elephant tusks.



Metal The most common metal in Boulle marquetry was brass. Copper, pewter, and silver were also used.



Tortoiseshell This was usually the shell of the Hawksbill turtle. The shell becomes malleable in hot water.



Mother-of-pearl Rare in Boulle marquetry, this hard material cut from the lining of shells has an iridescent, lustrous sheen.

Arabesque scrolls were very popular motifs on Boullework pieces.

Chinoiserie motifs were European interpretations of the Orient, rather than authentic designs.

Red tortoiseshell is created by dyeing the shell or pasting reflective foil underneath.



The top of this commode has a tortoiseshell and brass panel set within a moulded and chased border.

Brass inlaid designs were often highlighted by engraving and etching designs into them.

The *bérainesque* designs include figures, birds, arabesques, scrolling, and foliage.

LOUIS XIV COMMODE, ATTRIBUTED TO BOULLE
This intricately decorated commode has two short and two long drawers, all with similar decoration to the top, rope-twist ormolu handles, and elaborate escutcheons. Pierced swags of

flowers beneath female masks and shells decorate the shoulders, which develop into scrolls at the bottom and terminate in hoof feet. 17th century. H:84cm (33in); W:118cm (46½in); D:67.5cm (26½in). PAR

ANDRÉ-CHARLES BOULLE (1642–1732)

CABINET-MAKER TO LOUIS XIV, ANDRÉ-CHARLES BOULLE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR MANY OF THE INTERIOR FITTINGS AND MUCH OF THE FURNITURE AT THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES.

Born in Paris, Boulle trained as a cabinet-maker, an architect, a bronze worker, and engraver and obtained the royal privilege of lodging and working in the Louvre. Perhaps his most spectacular work was the design and creation of the mirrored walls, parquet floors, inlaid panelling, and Boullework furniture at the Palace of Versailles. As well as Louis XIV, his patrons included many French dukes, King Philip V of Spain, and the Electors of both Bavaria and Cologne.

Boulle excelled at the marquetry that eventually took his name, although he was not the only cabinet-maker developing this technique. His later designs were influenced by those of Jean Bérain, an engraver who was also working at the Louvre, and it is often difficult to tell the work of the two craftsmen apart. Bérain usually incorporated swirling scrolls (arabesques) alongside figural images. His designs also have a more fanciful element than those of Boulle, with small grotesques and monkeys amongst the scrolling patterns. Very few pieces of furniture can definitely be attributed to Boulle himself.

Boulle was largely responsible for the development of new types of furniture, including the bureau and the commode, designs for which were published under the title *Nouveaux Dessins de Meubles* (New Designs of Furniture) and became widely known.



Louis XIV Boulle commode
This commode is one of a pair made for Louis XIV's bedchamber at Trianon. It is veneered with ebony inlaid with brass. 17th century.

THE TECHNIQUE

To create Boulle marquetry, a design was first drawn up. Any wood being used, such as ebony, was cut into thin slices to form a veneer – a decorative surface area. Tortoiseshell was flattened, then polished and sometimes painted on the underside for colour. Any other materials were flattened in the same way, then cut into sheets the size of the marquetry pattern.

The tortoiseshell was then glued to a sheet of metal, such as brass or pewter, and wedged between two sheets of wood, like a sandwich. The design was glued to one side of the “sandwich” and the pattern was cut out of both the tortoiseshell and metal with a fretsaw. When the materials were separated from each other, the pieces of tortoiseshell and metal were sorted to form two marquetry sets: the brass details were set into the tortoiseshell background, known as the *première-partie*; and the tortoiseshell details were set into the brass background to form a reverse pattern, known as the *contre-partie*.

Once the marquetry veneer had been applied, the brass was engraved to add depth and detail. It was then rubbed down with sharkskin, which has a similar texture to sandpaper, and polished with a mixture of charcoal and oil. This process filled in the hollows of the engraving, making the design more pronounced.

The inner and outer panels of doors were frequently decorated in the same way. Sometimes Boulle used a mixture of both types of Boullework on the same piece of furniture. The parts not decorated with Boulle were often veneered in ebony, creating a striking contrast to the rest of the piece.

FINISHING TOUCHES

Boullework furniture was usually finished with gilded and engraved bronze mounts (known as *ormolu*, see p.39). This was partly to protect the edges, legs, feet, and locks, which were the most vulnerable areas, and partly for decoration. The mounts were not usually made by the cabinet-makers themselves, but by specialist foundries, which cast and shaped the metal before it was gilded.

JEAN BÉRAIN (1638–1711)

A draughtsman, designer, painter, and engraver from the Low Countries, Jean Bérain was appointed designer to Louis XIV in 1674. His Louvre workshop was near to that of Boulle, for whom he created many designs. During Louis XV's reign, Bérain provided designs for furniture, weapons, theatrical costumes and sets, and even funeral processions. Marquetry patterns with arabesques, scrolled foliage, or fanciful scenes were features of his work, and, like André Boulle, he was inspired by Renaissance and Classical designs. The term “*bérainesque*” was coined to describe designs based on his inimitable style.

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

AT THE BEGINNING of the 17th century, Spain was very powerful and ruled over Portugal and many other parts of Europe. By the end of the century, however, Spain had lost much of her wealth and power, whereas Portugal, now independent from Spain, was enjoying a period of peace and economic stability.

Spain and Portugal were separated from the rest of Europe by the Pyrenees, so influence was predominantly North African, or Moorish. Both countries also had strong economic and political ties with the East, and Oriental and Indian influences can be seen in Iberian furniture. Indo-Portuguese

furniture was made in Goa for Portuguese clients, and also by Indian craftsmen working in Portugal, mainly in Lisbon. Towards the end of the century, the influence of Portuguese furniture had spread to Britain and the Low Countries because of strong trading links between the countries. The Spanish practice of placing furniture in specific places in a room was also widely adopted.

SPANISH FURNITURE

The Spanish nobility led a relatively nomadic existence, so furniture had to be portable. Most furniture was made of local walnut. Cabinets, or *vargueños*,

had handles on the sides so that they could be lifted on or off stands. During the 16th century, *vargueños* had been luxury items, but they became more common during the 17th century. Early 17th-century *vargueños* often had geometric decoration, but later in the century they featured architectural motifs and twisted Baroque columns. As in northern Europe, cabinet-makers began to incorporate exotic ebony veneers and ivory and tortoiseshell inlays. Chests were replaced by cupboards or trunks. Trunks usually had domed tops, covered in velvet or leather, with pierced metal mounts and elaborate stands.

The folding Renaissance x-frame chair was still popular. Towards the end of the century, craftsmen made their own versions of Louis XIV fauteuils. These had high, shaped backs and elaborately carved stretchers with interlaced scrolls and turned legs. They were usually upholstered in fabric or stamped leather, and the upholstery was fastened in place with decorative brass studs. Spanish chairs usually had scrolled feet rather than the ball feet typical of French chairs.

Plain trestle tables, often covered with textiles, remained popular. Spanish side tables had turned legs and distinctive, curved, iron stretchers



Small drawers were used to hold either rare items or papers.

Elaborate metalwork is often found on Portuguese or Indo-Portuguese furniture.

This marquetry pattern is known as "seaweed" or "arabesque" (named after the interlacing designs and dense arabesques).

The spiral-turned legs and stretchers are typical of Portuguese furniture.



Ring-pull drawer handle



Detail of marquetry

INDO-PORTUGUESE CABINET-ON-STAND

The cabinet-maker used native woods – teak and rosewood – for the carcass of this *contador*, which was then inlaid with ebony and ivory. The bottom

panels have a seaweed marquetry design. The rosewood stand has turned, spiral legs and stretchers, and terminates in bun feet. The cabinet was made in India, probably in Goa. *Late 17th century. H:126cm (49½in); W:95cm (37½in); D:46cm (18in).*



INDO-PORTUGUESE BUREAU

This bureau is made of walnut and inlaid with ivory. The shape of the piece is basically the same as a bureau Mazarin (see p.36) with drawers set into a box frame at the back of the writing surface. *17th century.*



SPANISH CARVED ARMCHAIR

This walnut chair has square, rather than turned, legs, and a pierced front stretcher. The chair is upholstered in velvet embroidered with gold thread. *1615–25.*

joined to the cross-bars between the table legs. Many of these tables could be folded, making them portable. Another type of side table had turned, columnar legs joined by low stretchers and an overhanging top.

Spanish and Portuguese beds differed from those in the rest of Europe. Heavy bed curtains were not popular, as Spain and Portugal have a warm climate, so the bedsteads themselves were decorative and often had triangular, carved backboards with turned columns or spindles.

PORTUGUESE STYLES

As in Spain, Portuguese furniture remained traditional until mid-century. Chestnut was the most popular native wood, but as the century advanced, imported Brazilian rosewood, or palisander, became popular – the first American tropical wood to be used by European cabinet-makers. Rosewood is easy to work, and cabinet-makers produced turned legs and stretchers in bulb and saucer shapes and lavishly turned and decorated bedsteads.

Cupboards and vast chests of drawers, originally intended for

monastic churches, were the most highly decorated pieces of Portuguese furniture at first, with carvings that imitated the geometric decoration on Moorish tiles. The mid-century cabinet or *contador* was one of the most characteristic pieces of Portuguese furniture. A *contador* was a cabinet placed on a highly elaborate stand, which was decorated to match the upper cabinet.

High-backed chairs were similar to Spanish versions, with stamped and gilded leather upholstery held in place by brass studs. This remained the standard covering for seats and backs well into the 18th century.

In about 1680, a new type of chair developed. It had a high, shaped back, turned legs and arms, and a heavy, scrolled front stretcher. The ancient motifs of shells and garlands often decorated the backs of the chairs.

Furniture made by Portuguese craftsmen in the colonial empire contained elements of European and local styles. In Goa, European-style, low-backed chairs were made in indigenous ebony. The heavy, spiral-turned stretchers used on colonial Portuguese, or Indo-Portuguese chairs, chests, tables, and bed frames drew inspiration from Indian cabinet-making traditions.



CARVED SPANISH SIDE TABLE

This plain, rectangular table is made of walnut and rests on trestle supports in the form of fluted square legs. Tables were made in a similar style for centuries, although the style of decoration often reveals the age of a piece. The strapwork decoration on the stretcher is typical of styles seen during the Renaissance, but it

has the relatively shallow carving typical of the 17th century. These tables were found in urban and rural homes, and were often used as stands for cabinets. 17th century. H:80.5cm (31½in); W:148cm (58½in); D:94cm (37in).



Ivory inlay detail

INDO-PORTUGUESE CABINET

The top and sides of this rectangular cabinet-on-stand are inlaid with ivory in a geometric stringing pattern. The two doors open to reveal 15 long and short drawers. The central wide drawer has a steel lockplate, inlaid all over with stylized leaf sprays within geometric borders. The stand is English and dates from around 1760. Early 18th century. H:114cm (45in); W:67cm (26½in); D:42.5cm (16¾in).



SPANISH VARGUÑO

This cabinet is made of walnut, decorated with bone, ivory, gold sheet inlays and paint. This type of furniture was produced in the southern Spanish city of Vargas. The fall front is

decorated with intricate iron mounts, typical of the Spanish decorative tradition. The top section opens to reveal drawers and pigeon holes. The bottom section displays strong Arab influences, including the geometric inlay pattern. Early 17th century. H:150cm (59in).

EARLY COLONIAL AMERICA

DURING THE 17TH CENTURY, the American colonies (excluding the Canadian provinces) were governed by Britain. Between 1630 and 1643, about 20,000 English men and women emigrated to colonial America seeking opportunities in a new land. Design influences emanated from the styles the colonialists favoured from home.

While the southern colonies were largely populated by the English, New York and the middle colonies were mainly settled by German, Dutch, and Scandinavian immigrants.

Most activity was concentrated in the port towns, especially on the eastern seaboard, where the

fashionable commodities of the new arrivals were enthusiastically embraced. Boston became the centre of colonial trade. However, it took time for these furniture developments to reach the rural outlying areas of the colonies.

Many of the early settlers with woodworking skills were joiners rather than cabinet-makers (although the term cabinet-maker became more common as the century progressed). No formal reception furniture was made in America. Colonial American furniture resembled the vernacular furniture made in Europe, rather than Baroque court styles.

DOMESTIC STYLES

Chests and simple tables were common in colonial homes. Chests were mainly used for storing expensive textiles, such as the finest household linens. Most homes had two principal rooms, and the furniture was simple and functional. Chests, or blanket chests as they were known in the colonies, had a lid that lifted to reveal a single space for storage and often a “till” on the side – an additional, smaller storage space with a cover. Many cupboards were of simple plank construction, but others had tongue-and-groove panelling with carved and painted decoration.



Red oak joint stool A standard form of vernacular furniture, the joint stool was common in colonial America, where European settlers greatly influenced furniture design. c.1640. H:52cm (20 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); W:43.5cm (17 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); D:34.5cm (13 $\frac{3}{4}$ in).



RED OAK AND RED MAPLE COURT CUPBOARD

This cupboard, made in the Boston area, has architecturally inspired, ebonized, applied pilasters, turned baluster supports, and geometric, framed panels. The panels in the top section are recessed, leaving a surface on which the owner can display silver or ceramics.

The top would have been covered with fabric, probably imported. The lower section has two drawers above two cupboard doors. The timbers used are indigenous, common to the woods of New England. This type of cupboard was made in New England for longer than its counterpart survived in the Low Countries or England. 1667–1700. H:387cm (152 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); W:320cm (126in); D:150cm (59in).

BOSTON JAPANNED FURNITURE

THE CRAZE FOR ALL THINGS “ORIENTAL” REACHED THE COLONIES, ESPECIALLY THE PROSPEROUS SEAPORT OF BOSTON.

Japanning was the art of imitating Oriental lacquerwork. English merchants imported fashionable commodities, and japanned objects were brought to Boston in great quantities, as these items were considered a mark of status for wealthy colonials. At least a dozen Boston japanners were

working by the first half of the 18th century. Usually American japanning was done on white pine. Imitating lacquerwork required ingenuity: vermilion was applied to the surface with lampblack to achieve the effect of tortoiseshell.



Flowers, birds, and landscapes are typical decorations on japanned furniture.

Oversized animals are depicted amongst the trees and temples.

The base can be separated from the top of the cabinet.

The turned legs and flat stretchers are typical of the colonial style.

High chest of drawers This chest is made of maple and pine and is made up of two pieces: a top section of drawers and a stand on legs. 1710–30. H:156.25cm (62 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); W:98.75cm (39 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); D:53cm (21 $\frac{1}{4}$ in).

Case pieces included the cupboard (or “court cupboard”), which is closely related to the English buffet. It served a similar purpose in the New England colonies – the display of silver plate – and would have been covered with an expensive textile. Later cupboards had drawers below, rather than doors. These evolved into chests with two or three drawers, and, by the 18th century, became chests of drawers in the style that we recognize today.

Chairs and stools, made by joiners and completed by upholsterers, were produced in Boston from around 1660. Day beds and couches were also made, but only for the wealthy. By the early

18th century, these were being exported to other colonies. Great chairs were important household items. These high-backed chairs had a turned front stretcher. Some were upholstered in leather, the brass tacks anchoring the leather serving as decoration; others had a simple rush seat. Sometimes these chairs are called “Brewster” chairs, named after one of the prominent Puritan elders.

The linen cupboard, or *kas*, a typical Low Country or German piece, was made in New York and New Jersey, but rarely in New England or the south. Usually made of local woods, the *kas* mirrored popular architectural

styles and was often painted. Early examples had ball feet, while later cupboards had bracket feet.

Little southern furniture from this period survives, owing to the hot, humid climate, but historians do know of several forms. Southern joint stools were made in walnut rather than the traditional oak favoured in England and the rest of the colonies. Carved chests were used, and some joined chests made of walnut survive. A carved chest made specifically for church use by Richard Perrot dates from the late 17th century. Chairs were made of turned wood, with leather or rush coverings.

NATIVE WOODS

Owing to the different climates of the colonial states, the types of wood used varied tremendously. Furniture-makers in the north used maple, oak, pine, and cherry, while those in the middle and southern colonies used tulipwood, cedar, southern pitch pine, and walnut.

Immigrant joiners and craftsmen along the eastern seaboard gradually began to use local woods, as these were less expensive than imported timbers. The choice of wood is important in determining the origin of colonial furniture, especially as the style of many pieces closely resembles English furniture of the time.



OAK CHEST

This chest from Massachusetts is made of red and white oak. Chests like this were common in the best rooms of houses. This chip-carved floral and leaf design is closely related to English vernacular work, particularly chests made in the Devon area of England. This piece would originally have been painted blue and

red, as colour was a very important feature in the 17th-century American interior.

1676. H:80.5cm (32 $\frac{1}{4}$ in); W:126cm (50 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); D:57.5cm (23in).



OAK AND MAPLE GREAT CHAIR

This leather-upholstered “great chair” with a low back is virtually identical in shape to upholstered chairs made in London at the time. It was made in Boston, Massachusetts. Such examples are extremely rare today. Oak and maple were both common in the northern colonies, so furniture made from these would have been fairly common in the area. The cushion is an authentic reproduction of the type of luxurious textile that would have been used on the chair to increase its comfort. Brass tacks were used not only to fasten the leather covering in place, but also for decorative effect. The wooden frame is relatively simple, with turned front legs and a stretcher to add decoration. 1665–80. H:99.5cm (39 $\frac{1}{4}$ in); W:59.5cm (23 $\frac{1}{4}$ in); D:42cm (16 $\frac{1}{4}$ in).

Fruit motifs on the doors represent fertility and marriage.

Pendants and festoons resemble European Renaissance motifs.



Painted decoration simulates the carved designs popular in Europe at the time.

GUMWOOD KAS

The cupboard, *kas*, or *schrack*, was brought to New York by German settlers from the Rhine valley. Like all settlers, they made furniture in the style to which they were accustomed. This painted example features *grisaille* decoration rather than the more usual carving. The quince and pomegranate paintings on the doors

represent fertility, so this cupboard may have formed part of a bridal dowry. The ball feet of earlier examples have been replaced with simpler bracket feet, and the piece is much smaller in scale than previous cupboards. This is a simplified version of the traditional, imposing examples seen in Germany. 1690–1720. H:156.2cm (61 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); W:153cm (60 $\frac{1}{4}$ in); D:58.4cm (23in).

CASE PIECES

ONE OF THE most common forms of case furniture in the 17th century was the cupboard. At the beginning of the century, most cupboards had an open area above a closed lower section, but gradually, the form changed so that both sections were enclosed.

Generally the upper portion had two doors, while the base had doors or drawers below, depending on the use of the piece. By the end of the century, this style had evolved into the armoire, or wardrobe, which had two long doors from top to bottom.

Many armoires were influenced by architectural designs. They were often

massive, highly decorated pieces with overhanging cornices. The carving gradually became less detailed, and by the end of the century, the principal decoration took the form of simple geometric patterns on the doors. These armoires had a lower section containing drawers, and most of them had ball feet. The common terms for them were *kas* (in the Low Countries), or *schränk* (in Germany).

Two-part cupboards made in urban areas were less imposing. The cornice was smaller and decoration was provided by veneers of different coloured woods rather than carving.

DUTCH OR FLEMISH CUPBOARD

Made of oak, this cupboard is carved and embellished with architectural elements and caryatids. With its framed panels and ball feet, this cupboard retains many features of the Renaissance *buffet à deux corps*.

Early 17th century.



Detail of carving

Carved figures appear to support the top of the cupboard.

The framed panels are typical of early 17th-century cupboards.



Ball feet were popular on all types of cupboard.

Fluted columns were common architectural features.



CABINET-ON-STAND

This cabinet is actually made up of a Spanish cabinet on top of a later, English, mahogany base. The upper section has ripple moulding, ebony banding, ivory stringing, and metal mounts surrounding tortoiseshell and painted panels. The pierced metal escutcheon on the base would have been added to provide a visual link to the top section.

Early 18th century. H:174cm (68½in). L&T 5



Pierced metal escutcheon

DOWER CHEST

Probably made in New York, this chest with a drawer below shows an early stage in the development of the chest of drawers. It has geometric, raised fielded panels on the front and sides. The drawer has two inverted sections with diamond-shaped decoration. Turned ball feet support the front, while the back has simple plank supports. It was probably made as a wedding, or dower, chest. c.1715.



ARMOIRE

This armoire from Madeira is made from mahogany and laurel, both native woods of Madeira. The armoire has geometrical, fielded panels on both sets of drawers and on the sides of the piece. The top and bottom sections are separated by two narrow, central drawers. 17th century.



LOW COUNTRIES CUPBOARD

This two-door cupboard has a writing slide. It is decorated with floral marquetry in walnut, rosewood, and fruitwoods, which were popular on cupboards from the Low Countries. The piece stands on flattened ball feet. This form is also known as a *buffet à deux corps*. Late 17th century. H:183cm (72in). LPZ 5



SWEDISH CUPBOARD

This cupboard displays Germanic influences, with its architectural features, carved panels, and long drawers. The upper section consists of two doors carved with a raised geometric design within square panels. The base has two drawers with an elongated, carved panel design and simple cast-metal pulls. The turned feet are flattened and very wide. *Late 17th century. H:168cm (67¼in).*



RUSSIAN CUPBOARD

This pine cupboard has features typical of the architecture of the period, with applied split balusters dividing the two doors, top and bottom, from each other. The large hinges that hold the doors in place form part of the decoration. Large architectural pieces stayed fashionable in Russia longer than in the more fashionable societies of France and Italy. *Early 18th Century. H:141cm (55½in); W:78cm (30¾in); D:47cm (18½in).*



GERMAN CUPBOARD

This simply decorated walnut cupboard from the Brunswick area has a heavy architectural cornice and mouldings, but the overhang is smaller than it would have been on earlier pieces. The decoration is provided by veneers and bronze fittings. The two doors sit above three full-width drawers. The piece is supported by ball feet. *Early 18th century. H:213cm (84in); W:139cm (54¾in); D:51cm (20in). AMH 5*



CUPBOARD

This massive cupboard is made of walnut. It has an overhanging cornice that is stepped in the centre, with a heavy, applied geometric design positioned in the centre of the doors. The flat pilasters that flank the two doors are capped with carved cherub heads, reminiscent of Renaissance-style architectural motifs. The cupboard stands on six flattened, turned ball feet. *Early 18th century. WKA 6*



SWISS WARDROBE

This wardrobe is made of a softwood covered with walnut veneer, and the front and sides are decorated with rounded fielded panels. The moulded base mirrors the shape of the overhanging cornice. The piece is supported on six turned ball feet. Swiss furniture is similar in style to German pieces of the period. This wardrobe was made in Zurich. *1701. H:230cm (92in); W:219cm (87½in); D:85cm (34in). LPZ 5*



GERMAN WARDROBE

Made in Saxony, this walnut and burr-walnut wardrobe retains the stepped-back square cornice popular on early 17th-century pieces, but it overhangs the later, two-door wardrobe form. The piece is decorated with carved moulding and flat pilasters, as well as veneers applied in geometric patterns and bands. Like many large pieces of the time, it stands on six ball feet. *c.1710. H:242cm (96¼in); W:225cm (90in); D:83cm (33¼in). VH 6*

CABINETS

IN ITS SIMPLEST FORM a cabinet is a piece of furniture with drawers or compartments for storage. Until the 17th century, collector's cabinets for precious items were owned only by the wealthy, and were viewed by a select number of people in private rooms. Dutch cabinets were also used for storing linen, and were important status symbols in the Low Countries.

As the century progressed, however, the cabinet became a grand piece of furniture that dominated a room, a showpiece both for the consummate skill of the cabinet-maker, and for the exotic materials used, including ivory, amber, ebony, *pietra dura*, and

exquisite marquetry panels. Cabinets from Augsburg, Antwerp, Naples, or the Orient were especially coveted.

There were many types of cabinet – from Iberian *vargueños*, which were originally portable writing desks, to exotic Oriental pieces. Imported lacquer cabinets from the Far East were immensely fashionable. In England, carvers created ornate gilt stands to display the cabinets.

Still-life and floral paintings in the Dutch style were reproduced in marquetry, and actual paintings were incorporated as panels on cabinets.

Colonial pieces incorporated stylistic scenes from their native sources.

The floral marquetry is similar in style to Dutch flower paintings.



The cabinet stand is decorated with marquetry.

CABINET-ON-STAND

This oak-veneered cabinet from Amsterdam is attributed to Jan van Mekerem. The exquisite marquetry panels are made from diverse imported woods, including kingwood,

tulipwood, rosewood, ebony, olive wood, and holly, reflecting the naturalistic still-life paintings of flowers popular at the time. The squared legs and flat stretchers of the stand are also decorated with floral marquetry. 1700–10. H:178.5cm (70½in).



Detail from door panel

CABINET-ON-STAND

This cabinet from the Low Countries is made of oyster walnut and decorated with marquetry. It has a moulded cornice above panelled doors. The stand has a long frieze drawer on spirally turned legs and ebonized bun feet.

H:208cm (82in).



LACQUERED CABINET

This exquisite cabinet has a floral pattern on the inside of the doors that reflects the style of Dutch paintings of the period. The elaborately carved and gilt stand would have been made in England after the piece was imported. c.1680.



QUEEN ANNE CABINET

Rather than having a stand, this English black and gilt japanned cabinet is supported by a chest of drawers on ball feet. The brass hinges on the upper case continue the Oriental theme of the piece. c.1700.



GERMAN TABLE CABINET

This inlaid collector's table cabinet is made of a number of woods, some stained to provide additional colour. It originates from the town of Neuwied, which was famous for exquisite marquetry. The cabinet has two doors, which

open onto eight small drawers and a central architectural tabernacle door. The front of each drawer depicts a richly painted landscape scene with stylized birds and animals. This small cabinet would have been placed on top of a table or a stand. 17th century. H:36.5cm (14¼in); W:44cm (17¼in); D:29cm (11½in). 3



Columns imitate Bernini's style

**VARGUEÑO-ON-STAND**

The fall flap of this Spanish writing cabinet conceals carved drawers and small cupboards. The tiny columns give an architectural feel and imitate spiral Baroque columns. The cabinet sits on a stand with spirally carved and fluted supports. 17th century. H:151cm (59½in); W:112cm (44in); D:45cm (17½in).

**AUGSBURG CABINET**

This cabinet is made from indigenous walnut, elm, maple, and fruitwood, and is decorated inside and out with intarsia, depicting architectural and floral motifs. The two-door base is similar to a buffet. c.1600. H:159cm (63¼in); W:112cm (45in); D:45cm (18in). 7

**PORTUGUESE OR COLONIAL CABINET-ON-STAND**

One of a pair, this cabinet is veneered in tropical rosewood, sometimes called jacaranda. The body is decorated with an inlaid "seaweed" pattern of arabesques and the front has an

arrangement of panelled drawers with pierced-brass mounts. The stand contains a panelled drawer and has bobbin-turned tapering legs, joined by carved stretchers, which are typical of the Portuguese style. This piece may have been made in Portugal or in the Portuguese colonies in India. 17th century. H:154cm (60½in).

**GERMAN CABINET**

This ebony and pine cabinet is finely carved with cartouches and flowers. The design incorporates a number of red-brown tortoiseshell panels. The top of the cabinet has one drawer above a richly carved plinth. Behind

two doors, the architecturally inspired interior of the lower section has one central door with two small drawers above and below, and is flanked on either side by columns with Corinthian capitals and a further five drawers, one above the other. c.1700. H:90cm (35½in); W:98cm (38½in); D:42cm (16½in). 4

**FLEMISH CABINET**

Panels depicting a variety of rural landscapes have been set into this ebony cabinet. The piece has a rectangular hinged top, and two doors at the front. The interior has nine drawers around a columned door

with a broken-arch pediment, behind which is a mirrored interior. The rippled ebony mouldings framing the painted panels are typical of those seen on picture frames of the period. This piece is attributed to Isaac van Ooten. 17th century. H:101cm (39½in); W:106cm (41¼in); D:38cm (15in).

TABLES

ONE OF THE MAJOR innovations in 17th-century furniture design was the console table, which was found in the formal reception rooms of fashionable residences. Console tables were made to display wealth, and were not intended for any practical use. They were typically heavily carved and gilded. Roman console tables often had massive supports that were very architectural in design.

Utilitarian tables were made for private, family rooms and for less wealthy homes. Large utilitarian tables with rectangular plank tops above turned legs joined by stretchers are often described as “refectory” tables, named after the monastery dining halls in which they were commonly used. Stools or benches were used for seating. Massive, bulbous turnings of the legs become less pronounced towards the end of

the 17th century, while Louis XIV’s influence is evident in the turnings, which were more square in shape and were often carved.

Smaller tables for different purposes appeared in the 17th century, largely because houses were being designed with rooms for specific uses, demanding new types of furniture. This coincided with the new fashion for coffee drinking and the growing trend for small, portable pieces.

Some tables could be adjusted in size by the use of drop leaves and extendable tops. This was not a new development; records of tables that could be raised and lowered date back to the 14th century.

Centre tables became popular. These were finished on all four sides (rather than having a plain side to face a wall), and would have been placed in the centre of a room.

The frame of the table is covered in carved, gilded gesso.

The cipher of the owner is positioned in the centre.



The squared, tapered legs indicate the date of the piece.

GESSE CONSOLE TABLE

Attributed to the cabinet-maker James Moore, the oak and pine frame of this console table is decorated with gesso and gilt. The elaborate carving incorporates scrollwork and shells on the top and apron, and acanthus leaves on the

square, tapered legs. The central flat section of the stretcher may have held a vase originally. The patron, Richard Temple, Baron Cobham, had his cipher added to the central part of the design. Small console tables would have been placed against the walls in formal rooms. *c.1700.*



ITALIAN TABLE

This Italian refectory table would probably have been used in a large, rural home, or even a monastery. Such a large table would not have been moved often. The frieze is decorated on all four sides with carving, indicating that the

table was intended to stand in the centre of a room. The eight legs are comprised of heavy, bulbous turnings, which suggests the table originates from early in the century. Wide, flat stretchers connect the legs both side-to-side and front-to-back. *Early 17th century. H:105cm (42in); W:350cm (138in); D:96cm (38in).*



TUSCAN TABLE

Instead of having turned supports and exterior stretchers, this walnut refectory table has waisted square supports. A flat central stretcher is pegged into the main supports and the platform feet, making the table more

comfortable to sit at than those that have stretchers around the edge. The stretchers are pegged into place, probably indicating that the table could be dismantled for storage or moved to a new location if required. *17th century. H:82cm (32½in); W:350.5cm (138in).*



FRENCH TABLE

This substantial table is made of fruitwood. It has a rectangular top slightly overhanging a frieze. The narrow drawers in the case are decorated with fielded front panels. There are carved roundels at the junctions where the legs

are pegged into the frame below the top provide additional decoration. The six turned legs are quite straight with moulding at the tops, but without the earlier balusters. The stretchers connect to the legs at square bases, and the piece terminates in ball feet. *Late 17th century.*



GATELEG TABLE

This English, William-and-Mary style table is made of oak. The gateleg mechanism enables the top to fold down. The bobbin-turned legs are joined by square stretchers. This style was popular well into the 18th century, so such tables are difficult to date. *Late 17th century. H:70cm (39½in); W:100.5cm (27½in). EP*



ENGLISH TABLE

This English refectory table is made of oak. The low stretchers indicate that the table has probably been reduced in height, which happens when the legs suffer termite or water damage. It was possibly made for a manor house in Cornwall. *17th century. H:78cm (30¾in); W:203cm (80in); D:68cm (26¾in). L&T 3*



ENGLISH TABLE

This Charles II table has a deep frieze without drawers, and carving that incorporates a Tudor rose. The cup-and-cover supports are typical for its date, but the four-plank top has been added later. Reeded cross stretchers are positioned between chamfered block feet. *c.1665. W:302cm (119in). FRE 2*



FLEMISH TABLE

This centre table is made of oak inlaid with ebony. The legs have massive bulbous turnings, and the top has a pull-out flap on each side to extend the length of the table. The table has square stretchers above flattened bun feet. *Mid 17th century. H:75cm (29½in); W:113cm (44½in); D:71cm (28in).*



SWISS TRESTLE TABLE

This small table has a plain top, but the visual interest is provided by the highly decorative lower section. The slender, turned legs are complemented by the wavy pattern of the trestle. The piece terminates in pad feet. *17th Century. H:95cm (38in); W:76cm (30½in); D:63cm (25½in).*



RUSSIAN EXTENDABLE TABLE

This table is made of oak, decorated with carving and inlay. The top has a pronounced overhang and is made of two layers; the bottom layer pulls out to extend the top. The stretchers are set quite high on the legs. This piece would have been made for an aristocratic home. *Early 18th century. H:71cm (28in).*



SPANISH TABLE

A more vernacular version of a refectory table, this one lacks wooden stretchers but instead is supported by chamfered leg supports and a turned iron rod. Metal supports were a popular feature of furniture from the Iberian peninsula.

There are a number of narrow drawers under the table top, indicating that this table would have belonged to a relatively affluent home. A more basic table would have had a flat top. Spanish furniture was often easy to take apart, reflecting the fashion for moving home according to the season. *17th century.*



SPANISH TABLE

This sturdy table has a single drawer in the case, separated visually into two sections, and decorated with fielded panels. It has turned baluster legs decorated with carved acanthus leaves, which fit directly into the case.

The legs are connected with three carved stretchers. The absence of a front stretcher allows a chair to be pulled up to the table, and may indicate that the table was used for writing. *17th century.*

CHAIRS

DURING THE 17TH CENTURY, chairs, as opposed to stools and benches, were only found in the homes of the wealthy. The chair evolved from the simple joint stool. Changing fashions, the import of exotic examples, and the introduction of new materials and techniques, meant that this was a crucial time in the chair's development.

There were two major types of chair: the low chair with a rectangular back, and the high-backed chair. The low chair or "back stool" is often referred to as a Cromwellian chair, a Jacobean, or Farthingale chair. The introduction of smaller, private rooms to the 17th-century home meant that chairs were used in more different ways. High-

backed chairs, particularly those with caned seats and backs, were often used in halls and along the walls. By the end of the century, several variations of the high-back were being made.

The most elaborate high-backed chairs were designed by Daniel Marot for the French court. These chairs were made in suites, and were used in the bedchamber.

Upholstered chairs were signs of great wealth and status, as the materials used to cover the seats and backs was incredibly expensive. In Spain and Portugal stamped-leather upholstery was popular. Cane seats were fashionable by the end of the century.

CARVED ARMCHAIR

This type of chair, made of solid ebony, was imported by the Dutch East India Company from India, Ceylon, and the East Indies. Carved on all surfaces, it has turned legs, terminating in small bun feet. This chair inspired Horace Walpole's furniture for his London house in the 18th century. *Late 17th century.*

Ebony is a very hard wood and carving it required great skill from the maker.



The cane seat is a typical feature of Indian furniture.

Turned stretchers were popular.



MEXICAN ARMCHAIR

The shape of this chair is similar to high-backed chairs popular in Spain. The piece would have been made for an important member of society. The imported leather is gilt and painted with a floral design popular in marquetry and paintings. *17th century.*



ENGLISH ARMCHAIR

This English chair is made of oak and is upholstered on the back and seat in an expensive *gros point* needlework. When the chair was made it probably had a fringe along the seat rail. The chair has turned bobbin legs. *1650–80.*



ENGLISH SIDE CHAIR

This chair is made of indigenous beech, and has been japanned with Chinese symbols. It shows an early use of the caned seat, and illustrates the appeal of Oriental design. The curved legs resemble the cabriole legs popular in the 18th century. *c.1675.*



CARVED ENGLISH SIDE CHAIR

This carved, tall oak chair has a pierced back and stretcher, and is the epitome of the Baroque style. The seat is upholstered in tapestry and has a shaped apron. This chair resembles designs by Marot (see p.45), which showed similar chairs in bedchambers. *17th century.*



NEW ENGLAND SIDE CHAIR

Upholstered in imported leather, this chair is made of native maple. This form is properly termed a “back stool”, and is very similar to English examples, although these would have been made of oak. 1650–90. H:91.5cm (36in); W:46cm (18½in) D:44cm (17¼in).



SPANISH ARMCHAIR

This Spanish chair is made from walnut and would have been made for an important client. The owner's status is indicated by the heraldic symbols carved onto the wooden chair back. Originally the seat would have been covered with a cushion. 17th century.



GERMAN ARMCHAIR

This impressive-looking high-backed armchair has a relatively plain frame, which is decorated with some relief carving. It is covered on the back and seat with elaborate upholstery. The piece sits on straight square feet with vats. 17th century. H:126cm (50½in). NAG



SPANISH CHAIR

This solid walnut chair is decorated with carved rosette motifs, used all over the front of the chair. The back comprises two rows of spindles separated by a central rail, and the spindle design is continued with another row below the chair rail. 17th century.



SPANISH ARMCHAIR

This walnut armchair has a wide, high, arched back and deep scrolled arms. The stamped leather upholstery, held in place by brass tacks, is typical of Iberian furniture of the period, as are the turned stretchers and carved, arched main stretcher. 17th century.



AMERICAN ARMCHAIR

This armchair is made of maple and red oak, two woods that are common in New England. The shape and style make it difficult to distinguish from English examples without identifying the wood. 1695–1710. H:135cm (53¼in); W:61cm (24in); D:70cm (27½in).



ENGLISH SIDE CHAIR

This English walnut chair is a less expensive interpretation of a high-backed chair, with its caned seat and back. The turned legs are joined by carved stretchers, and the medial stretcher is arched. Originally the seat would have had a cushion. 1695–1705.



FRENCH CHAIR

This is one of a pair of *fauteuils*. The front legs are turned, and linked with H-stretchers. The seat and back are covered with tapestry depicting characters from the Old Testament. Late 17th century. H:123cm (49¼in); W:69cm (27½in); D:62cm (23¾in). BEA



EARLY 18TH CENTURY

1700-1760

EXUBERANT LUXURY

IN THE EARLY 18TH CENTURY, COUNTRIES VIED WITH EACH OTHER TO EXPAND THEIR EMPIRES AND THE ARISTOCRACY EMPHASIZED ITS POSITION WITH LAVISH DISPLAYS OF WEALTH AND LUXURY.

THE FIRST HALF of the 18th century was a time of transition, as the absolutist rule of monarchies diminished, paving the way for the rise of the wealthy middle classes. The end of the War of Spanish Succession in 1713 changed the balance of power in Europe, and ushered in a period of relative peace. This and greater wealth gave the aristocracy more time to pursue their interests in education, science, and the arts.

SHIFTING POWER

By the start of the century, Italy had lost much of her power and was no longer the cultural

leader of the western world. The influence of the Low Countries and Spain had also waned. France became politically less influential after the death of Louis XIV in 1715, so the stage was set for new powers to emerge. Britain was building her empire, not only expanding her American colonies, but establishing a stronger presence in India and throughout Asia. The resulting trade meant that the aristocracy and an increasingly wealthy merchant class indulged their tastes for expensive country houses and foreign travel, leading to a golden age of British design later in the century.

NEW BUILDING

Following extensive travels to the cultural centres of Europe, Peter the Great of Russia westernized his Court and began building the city of St. Petersburg, using the finest European craftsmen and designers. Portugal grew wealthy on the spoils of the abundant diamonds and emeralds mined in its colony of Brazil. As a result, the Portuguese embarked on a massive programme of palace building and redecoration designed to glorify the monarchy, just as Louis XIV of France had done years before.

The accession of Frederick the Great of Prussia in 1740 heralded the Prussian rise to dominance in Northeast Europe. Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, America began to emerge from the shadow of Britain and the Low Countries and started to develop a national identity and style of its own.

AGE OF REASON

While Europe was mostly free from widespread wars, this was, nonetheless, a time of great change. It was the beginning of the Age of Enlightenment, when writers and philosophers appealed to human reason and began to challenge traditional views on the Church, the monarchy, education, and science. Louis XIV's concept of the monarch as God's representative on Earth was replaced by more liberal views, resulting in a wealth of radical new ideas in the sciences and a burst of creativity in the arts.

CHANGING STYLES

The more liberal cultural climate, compounded in many countries by an influx of craftsmen and designers from France, following the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, ushered in a period of social change. As well as lavish royal palaces, smaller mansions were built for the minor aristocracy and the rising middle classes, and there was an increased demand for more informal, elegant, and comfortable interiors.

The grandeur and austerity of the Baroque style gradually gave way to the more eclectic tastes of the early 18th century, resulting, in many countries, in the lighter, more delicate Rococo style that originated in France. Rooms were now decorated with wood panelling, delicate, swirling stucco work, and pale colours highlighted with gilding and mirrors.



An Italian giltwood girandole mirror
c.1770. H:86.5cm (34in). NOA



Exterior of the south facade of the Palácio Nacional, Queluz, Portugal
Work on the palace began in 1747, and it was designed both as a lavish display of wealth, and, as was fashionable, as a comfortable family home. It is often referred to as the "Versailles of Portugal".

TIMELINE 1700-1760

1703 Peter the Great lays the foundations of the city of St. Petersburg.

1707 England and Scotland united as Great Britain.

1709 Roman ruins discovered at Herculaneum, Italy.

1710 Jakob Christoph Le Blon invents three-colour printing. Kaolin clay found in Germany, allowing porcelain to be made for the first time at Meissen.



Peter the Great

1714 Queen Anne of Britain dies. She is succeeded by George Louis, Elector of Hanover, as King George I.

1715 Louis XIV of France dies. He is succeeded by Louis XV (who was five years old) under the regency of Philippe, duc d'Orléans.

French commode
This commode made of exotic inlaid woods is an exquisite example of Régence furniture. GK.



1715 English translation of Palladio's *Four Books of Architecture* published.

1718 England declares war on Spain. New Orleans founded in America by the French.

1719 France declares war on Spain. Ireland declared inseparable from England.

1720 France prohibits the export of walnut, with repercussions for English cabinet-makers. German architect Johann Balthasar

Neumann starts work on the Residenz, a Rococo palace for the prince-bishops of Würzburg.

1721 Britain abolishes taxes on wood imported from the American colonies.

1723 The teenage Louis XV becomes King of France.



The Residenz in Würzburg

The Throne Room of the Palacio Nacional in Queluz, Portugal This room is the epitome of Rococo style, with its light stuccoed ceiling decorated with gilded, scrolling garlands and foliage. Glass-panelled doors, mirrors, and chandeliers reflect glittering light and add to the impression of exuberant luxury.



Giltwood console table This marble-topped Italian table continues the use of 17th-century motifs such as masks and strapwork, but is smaller in scale, reflecting the 18th-century taste for lighter, more feminine furniture. The carving incorporates Classical elements such as the acanthus and guilloche. c.1745. H:95.5cm (37½in); W:148.5cm (58½in); D:79cm (31in).

1727 George I of England dies and is succeeded by his son, George II. William Kent publishes *The Designs of Inigo Jones*.

1729 Baltimore founded in USA. North and South Carolina become crown colonies.

1730 Height of Rococo period in European art and architecture.

1732 Georgia, last of the 13 colonies, founded in America.



King George II

1734 François de Cuvilliés designs the Amalienburg Pavilion for the gardens of the Nymphenburg Palace near Munich.



The circular hall of mirrors at the Amalienburg Pavilion, designed by François Cuvilliés.

1738 Excavation of Herculaneum begins.

1740 Accession of Frederick II of Prussia.

1741 Bartolomeo Rastrelli builds the Summer Palace, St. Petersburg.

1748 Roman ruins are discovered at Pompeii.

1751 Tiepolo paints ceiling of Würzburg Residenz.



Neptune and Amphrite An intricate mosaic from a wall of a house in Herculaneum, Italy, depicting the mythological King and Queen of the sea.

1753 Foundation of British Museum, London. Thomas Chippendale opens his first furniture shop.

1755 Lisbon earthquake kills 30,000 people.

1756 Britain declares war on France. Porcelain factory founded at Sèvres, France.

1759 Josiah Wedgwood founds his English ceramics company.

ROCOCO FURNITURE

IN THE FIRST HALF of the 18th century, furniture design was mainly influenced by France, and it was here that the Rococo style reached its height in the exuberant pieces of Juste-Aurèle Meissonier, Nicolas Pineau, and François de Cuvilliés. Meissonier decorated Louis XV's bedchamber with fantastic, asymmetrical designs featuring waterfalls, rocks, shells, and icicles. The new style took its name from the French word for rockwork: *rocaille* (rococo in Italian). Its features included flowers, arabesques, C- and S-shaped scrolls, cupids, Chinese figures, and scallop shells. Pineau, a Parisian wood carver and interior designer was Meissonier's contemporary. Their engravings influenced all the decorative arts



This chest-on-chest is typical of the English style. It has a pierced cartouche at the centre of the pediment, and flowers and fruit suspended from griffin's beaks either side of the upper drawers. The writing surface is behind the bottom drawer. The lower case comprises three drawers. c.1725. H:222cm (88½in). PAR

and were copied in other publications and by other craftsmen, spreading the Rococo style far and wide.

In keeping with the latest demands for more informal and comfortable interiors, new types of room were designed for specific functions: drawing rooms (salons) both large and small where people could converse; and rooms for music, games, and reading. Reflecting the increasing social importance of women, the boudoir also first appeared at this time. Rococo design included all the elements of a room, not just the furniture, to create an integrated interior. The decorative features of the furnishings would mirror those in the wood panelling, doors, and chimneypieces.

THE NEW STYLES

Rococo furniture was interpreted in many different ways throughout Europe and America, but they all had certain features in common. Pieces of furniture were smaller, lighter, and more curvaceous in form than earlier styles, often with curved cabriole legs and pad or claw-and-ball feet. Women, such as Louis XV's mistress, Madame de Pompadour, were very influential and coveted small, decorative pieces that were suitable for intimate salons and appealed to the 18th-century taste for informality and leisure.

Many new types of chair appeared, reflecting the demand for greater comfort and the interest in conversation. The high-backed chair, typical of Louis XIV's reign, gave way to chairs with a lower, slightly shaped back, a lighter frame, and visible wooden framework, including arched crest rails. Upholstered furniture was more widely available than before. Stretchers disappeared or were reduced to two cross pieces in X-formation with restrained moulding, although they were still occasionally used in Scandinavian and Spanish furniture.

Apart from console tables, which remained much the same, tables changed in various ways. Free-standing tables no longer had cross-stretchers, and baluster and pedestal legs were replaced by cabriole legs with a double S-curve. Scrolled or ogee bracket feet were common. Commodes first appeared at the

This *duchesse brisée* has sumptuously upholstered cushions and a stool to support the legs. A new desire for comfort made the upholstered chair more popular.



beginning of the century, while the chest of drawers was added to a frame and then placed on top of another chest to produce a chest-on-chest. Many similar storage pieces developed, often designed for specific uses and positions within a room. By mid century, many chests had built-in writing surfaces.

Mirror frames were the most flamboyant expressions of early 18th-century style (see pp.118–21). This relatively new discipline allowed makers to indulge their wildest tastes, as frames did not have the same practical restrictions as other forms of furniture.

DECORATIVE INFLUENCES

Decoration was derived from Classical architectural motifs, Oriental patterns, and, in England, from Gothic designs. Oriental screens and lacquerwork were popular throughout the period. In colonial ports, japanning continued into the 1740s, while in France and England, lacquer panels were cut out of 17th-century furniture and incorporated into mid 18th-century pieces. Motifs depicting Chinese figures and willow trees appeared in all the decorative arts, but particularly in mid-century mirror frames, when the Rococo style was at its peak.



This bureau cabinet has a typically English shape, but the inlay around the drawers, the construction and the decoration suggest it was made by a German maker. c.1725. H:246.5cm (97in). PAR

IMMIGRANT CRAFTSMEN

There is a long tradition of immigrant craftsmen disseminating styles and techniques. Not only had many Huguenot craftsmen left France following the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, but many other craftsmen went abroad to work for European monarchs. In turn, monarchs sent their own craftsmen to Paris to learn the latest styles. As a result, many pieces have characteristics of more than one country. They adhere to the style popular in the country they were designed for, but use techniques more common to the maker's country of origin.



This bureau plat is attributed to Jean-Pierre Latz, a German working for Louis XV. German makers were renowned for their fine marquetry. c.1740. H:80cm (31½in); W:143.5cm (56½in). PAR

THE COMMODE

Commodes first appeared at the beginning of the century at the court of Louis XIV. The form was quickly adopted by other countries and adapted to their particular needs. The term itself comes from the French word for greater convenience, *commodité*. The two-drawer commode on tall legs was the first version, but by the Régence it usually had three or more drawers on short feet (*commode à la Régence*).

During Louis XV's reign, the two-drawer chest on two curved legs with curved sides was favoured. The façade was treated as a single decorative unit and the division between the drawers was ignored. Commodos were frequently made with a matching pair of corner cupboards known as *encoignures*. Pieces with a vertical curve were known as "*bombé*", while horizontal curves were called "serpentine".

This two-drawer commode is covered with black lacquer and decorated with Chinoiserie motifs and fine floral bouquets and leaves. It has a cambered form with a curved apron and stands on high curved legs. This fine-quality piece was made in France and would have been the work of a very important maker. c.1750. W:96.5cm (38 1/2 in). GK

Ormolu mounts are asymmetrical, in line with Rococo fashions.

The marble top is variegated in colour.



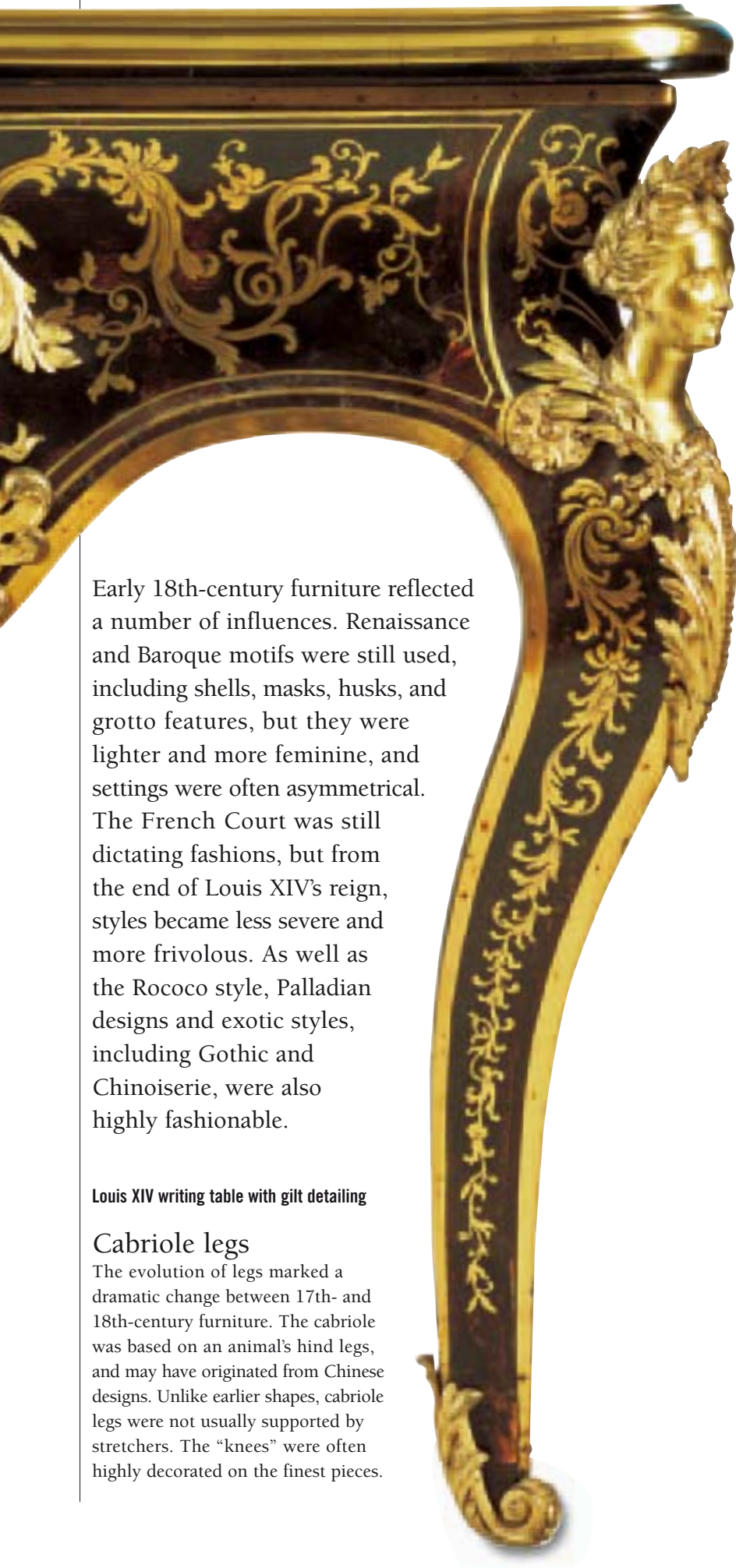
Ormolu mounts form a frame to the Chinoiserie image.

The inlay depicts a bouquet of flowers in a vase, creating a striking contrast against the black lacquer.

The serpentine skirt shape is emphasized by an ormolu mount in an asymmetric shape.

The feet are protected by decorative ormolu mounts in a foliage design.

ELEMENTS OF STYLE



Early 18th-century furniture reflected a number of influences. Renaissance and Baroque motifs were still used, including shells, masks, husks, and grotto features, but they were lighter and more feminine, and settings were often asymmetrical. The French Court was still dictating fashions, but from the end of Louis XIV's reign, styles became less severe and more frivolous. As well as the Rococo style, Palladian designs and exotic styles, including Gothic and Chinoiserie, were also highly fashionable.

Louis XIV writing table with gilt detailing

Cabriole legs

The evolution of legs marked a dramatic change between 17th- and 18th-century furniture. The cabriole was based on an animal's hind legs, and may have originated from Chinese designs. Unlike earlier shapes, cabriole legs were not usually supported by stretchers. The "knees" were often highly decorated on the finest pieces.



Leather stamping on Portuguese hall chair

Stamped leather

Fine leather upholstery was made in Spain and Portugal and exported throughout Europe. It was often embossed or stamped with patterns, and also decorated with paint or gilt. Leather was used not only for upholstery but also for wall coverings, although this latter use became less popular in the 18th century.



Carved and gilt shell on Italian console table

Shell motif

The shell was used as early as the Renaissance, and represented Venus and love. During the Rococo period, shell motifs were used on tables, case furniture, chairs, and mirror frames. Rococo shells used curves to represent movement. This Italian shell curves under and sideways, and has incised gilding to add a sense of movement.



Claw-and-ball foot on English tea table

Claw-and-ball feet

This carved foot was usually the terminus for a cabriole leg. The design may be derived from the Chinese motif of a dragon's claw clasp a pearl. Early pieces tended to have wide-spaced claws, revealing much of the ball beneath, but on later pieces the ball was almost entirely hidden by the foot. At the start of the 18th century, pad feet were more common.



Female mask mount on commode

Ormolu mounts

Mounts made of cast bronze, with a fire-gilt finish, were integral to formal French furniture. Originally designed to protect veneer, mounts were also decorative. The mounts were fixed in place with pins. Craftsmen used the Classical Palladian and Rococo motifs of the time, as well as traditional motifs, such as this Renaissance masque.



Detail from the top of a Régence commode

Floral marquetry

Elaborate pictorial designs in wood inlays were used as a decorative feature of furniture throughout the 18th century, although English cabinet-makers discarded marquetry in favour of carved ornament around 1730. The floral motif, derived from Dutch and Flemish paintings, remained popular in European furniture throughout the period.



Carved putto

Mythological figures

Mythological figures, such as this putto, decorated all sorts of furniture, and sometimes referred to a specific place. Cabinet-makers in Naples, for instance, used the symbol of Neptune in their work, which referred to their city. Cherubs and putti reflected the increasingly feminine influence on furniture design.



Walnut side chair with solid back splat

Chair splat

The back splat of a chair is a good indicator of the chair's date and country of origin. A solid splat, as shown in this example, generally indicates a date between 1720 and 1740; the carved embellishments and rosettes suggest that this chair is closer to the later date. Pierced splats appeared later when, generally, the back became squarer in shape.



Needlework panel from seat of Louis XV chair

Needlework

Thomas Chippendale stated that the backs and seats of his French design chairs “must be covered with Tapestry, or other sort of Needlework”. French needlework was more formal than English designs. In England, pastoral scenes in *gros point* or *petit point* were popular. Unlike other needlework, tapestry was created on a loom.



Japanning on secretaire cabinet

Chinoiserie

Trade with the Orient provided numerous designs and techniques suitable for furnishings – known as Chinoiserie. Oriental figures and scenes adorned everything from porcelain to carved mirrors, while japanning, the European version of Oriental lacquer, was popular throughout the century. This scene is one of many similar panels on a rare, white-japanned, English bureau-bookcase.



Carved and gilt wooden table leg

Carved wood

Softer woods such as pine, beech, or lime wood were easier to carve than oak or walnut, so were particularly suited to the elaborately curved designs of the 18th century. Generally, these cheaper, “inferior” soft woods were covered in gesso and gilt. The carving under the gilt-gesso layer was incised to give greater definition.



C-scrolls on a tripod table base

Tripod table base

Cabinet-makers combined elements of different styles to great effect during the 18th century. Here the central upright finial combines an acanthus plant base with a pine cone top – both symbols from the Ancient world. The tripod support is fashioned from elongated C-scrolls terminating in carved foliage – elements defining Rococo. A fluted column serves as a support for the table.



Escutcheon on American mahogany chest

Escutcheons

Decorative keyhole surrounds often embraced fashionable styles more recognizably than the pieces of furniture themselves. This gilt metal cast plate was designed as an asymmetrical piece of foliage with an S-curve on the base, which is typically Rococo. Tiny gilt brass pins attach the plate to the case.

FRANCE: THE RÉGENCE

WHEN LOUIS XIV DIED in 1715 he left the throne to his young great-grandson, the future Louis XV, who was not legally permitted to become king for another eight years. Therefore, Philippe, duc d'Orléans, was appointed Regent from 1715 to 1723, a period known as the Régence.

The duc d'Orléans moved the court to his Parisian home, the Palais Royal, where he initiated a more informal court style. He hired the architect, Gilles-Marie Oppenord, to supervise the massive interior redecoration of the Palais Royal. Oppenord, the son of a cabinet-maker, had lived in the Louvre and then trained in Italy, where

he studied architecture and copied Classical monuments. He designed the *Salon à l'Italienne* at the Palais Royal, with panelled walls and doors influenced by the innovative decorative panelling, known as *boiserie*, which Robert de Cotte had used in the Louvre, during Louis XIV's reign. Oppenord's flamboyant, sinuous designs incorporated naturalistic carved flowers, leaf fronds, mythical figures, and mischievous animals, and the carving was deliberately asymmetrical, with decoration flowing freely over the edges of the panels. This extravagant, curvilinear style foreshadowed the blossoming of French Rococo.

Charles Cressent worked as both a sculptor and cabinet-maker for the duc d'Orléans, and carried out many of Oppenord's designs. Cressent made grand, marble-topped commodes with ormolu mounts, elegant writing desks, and many other pieces in the Rococo style. He also made furniture for Dom João V of Portugal and Charles Albert, Elector of Bavaria.

THE NEW STYLE SPREADS

The Court's move to Paris meant that Paris became fashionable, and the French nobility began to prefer city life to the isolation of their country residences. They refurbished their

grand homes in Paris and built new ones, and the merchant classes followed suit. Rooms remained sparsely furnished, with most of the furniture arranged symmetrically around the walls, to show off the highly polished, wooden parquet floors. Furniture followed the significant changes to design and elements of Régence style that the refurbishment of the Palais Royal had introduced. Instead of having straight legs, cupboards, tables, and chairs were now slightly curved,

COMMUNE "A FLEURS"

This large commode is made from walnut, veneered in exotic woods, and inlaid with ivory. The workmanship is exquisite, with a detailed floral and foliage pattern running across the shaped drawers. The imagery on the top of the commode is asymmetrical and depicts a vase of flowers with a bird to one side. The piece has three long drawers with bronze mounts, and stands on short cambered legs.

c.1710. W:130cm (52in). GK



Simple bale handles with circular back plates serve as drawer pulls.

The escutcheons have a stylized shell and foliage design.

The edge of the top is decorated with an ormolu mount.



Short cambered legs covered in ormolu mounts support the case.

The shell and foliage mount relates to the elaborate marquetry of the piece.

The side panels are veneered with diamond-shaped panels decorated with inlaid flowers.



CARVED MIRROR

The arched mirror glass has an elegant giltwood frame, carved with flowers, foliage, and scallop shells. At the top is a female mask, carved in relief, on a cartouche of wave motifs and scrolling acanthus. At the base is a carved scallop shell and foliate sprays. c.1720. H:221cm (87in); W:31cm (51½in).



CONSOLE TABLE

This Parisian table has a *brocatello Siciliano* – coloured marble – top resting on a gilded openwork apron, carved with a central mask, flowers, and leaves. The four, cambered scroll supports are joined by a similarly carved cross-stretcher. c.1730. W:138cm (55¼in). GK

echoing the contour of a crossbow (*contour à l'arbalète*). Veneers, including broussellework (see p.55), were still popular, and thin bronze inlays were used to frame drawers, panels, edges, corners, and legs of furniture.

The commode evolved from the chest of drawers, and had curved legs and an exaggerated curved case, described as *bombé*. Pairs of commodes with pier glasses, or console tables, often flanked windows, and stools were designed to fit window

embrasures. The most popular variation was the commode developed by Cressent. This piece had two drawers – one above the other – a serpentine front and a shaped apron, supported on cabriole legs. The *bureau Mazarin* was replaced by the *bureau plat* – a writing table with three shallow drawers. These pieces were usually veneered in expensive woods and had ormolu mounts on the edges of the cases and feet, forming “shoes” known as *sabots*.

FASHIONABLE INFLUENCES

The new interest in salons, where people could gather for conversation, was led largely by women, and meant that elegant, less formal rooms became popular. Women also influenced chair design. This had changed little until about 1720, when the fashion for hooped skirts led to chair arms being shortened. Chair backs were lowered to accommodate the elaborate coiffures of the day. A desire for greater comfort brought about the creation of the

bergère, an armchair with upholstered panels between the arms and seat. The *fauteuil*, an upholstered armchair with open sides, had many variations: the *fauteuil à la Reine* rested against the panelled wall of a room; while the smaller *fauteuil en cabriolet* could be moved to the centre of a room. In reception rooms, the shapes of sofa and chair backs echoed the wall panelling, and the seating was upholstered in matching fabrics, usually costly woven silks.



COMMODOE

This cherry-wood, three-drawer commode originates from the southwest of France. The main decoration of the piece is provided by the colour of the polished wood, but the shaped sides and apron of the case are

carved with cartouches, foliage and *rocailles*. The piece terminates in scroll feet. The escutcheons and drawer pulls are made of brass, and the locks are asymmetric in design; typical of the Rococo style. *Early 18th century. H:98cm (39¼in); W:123cm (49¼in); D:99cm (39¼in). ANB*



TAPESTRY-COVERED FAUTEUIL

This walnut armchair has padded arms with scrolling carved supports. The cabriole legs are joined by a cross-stretcher and have outward pointing toes. *c.1715. H:107cm (42in); W:73.5cm (29in); D:91.5cm (36in). PAR*



PAINTED COMMODOE CHAIR

This provincial chair is made of beech and has a cane seat and back, curved arms, and gently sweeping legs. The whole piece is painted, and has a floral decoration in relief on the front. *c.1760. H:90cm (35¼in). CDK*

ORNAMENTAL MOUNTS

ORNAMENTAL MOUNTS WERE USED AS DECORATIVE DETAILS ON FURNITURE, AND ALSO SERVED TO PROTECT THE EDGES AND VENEER OF A PIECE.

A mount is an ornament attached to furniture. Generally mounts were made of gilt bronze, or ormolu. The term ormolu means “ground gold” and is derived from the French term *bronze doré d'ormoulu*.

Molten bronze was poured into a sand cast and the resulting rough bronze was cleaned and cut then burnished or polished. The finished surface was then decorated with mercury and gold. Mercury gilding provided exquisite mounts, but the process was highly toxic.

Charles Cressent worked as a sculptor and ébéniste for the Regent, Philippe II, duc d'Orléans, and created some of the finest ormolu of the period. His gilt-bronze mounts

decorated his signature commodes, and featured naturalistic female figures, known as *espagnolettes*. These figures resemble the women in the paintings of Jean-Antoine Watteau (see p.78).

On larger case pieces such as commodes and bureaux, the design of ormolu mounts often signalled a change in fashion. Due to the small size of the mounts, ormolu makers could create mounts to reflect the latest fashions.

Commode “aux bustes de femmes” The *bombé* form of this kingwood commode is enhanced by the gilt-bronze mounts. Cast as female busts, they follow the curves. Gilded mounts have also been used to give shape to the scroll feet. *c.1720. H:130cm (52in). GK*



Escutcheon



Ormolu mask

FRANCE: LOUIS XV

THE PREVAILING STYLE during Louis XV's reign (1723–74) became known as Rococo, and was fashionable from about 1730 to 1765. The style was a composite of influences, including exotic Chinese design, *rocaille*, based on shell-lined grottos; and fanciful arabesque and grotesque motifs popularized by Jean Bérain (see p.55).

Craftsmen in France worked within a strictly controlled guild system. Between 1743 and 1751, they had to stamp their initials on their work, followed by the letters J.M.E. (*juré des menuisiers et ébénistes*). As a result, much French furniture can be attributed to specific makers.

LE STYLE MODERNE

With origins in Régence design, Rococo, also known as the *style moderne*, ignored the rules of Classical architecture and was, essentially, a fantasy style with scrolls, shells, grotesque ornament, and foliage rendered in an unnaturalistic style. Ormolu mounts and carved decorations were very popular.

The style became sought after by the French nobility and spread through Europe, owing to the influence of artisans such as Juste-Aurèle Meissonnier, a designer of gold and silver items. Along with Jean Baptiste Pillement, Meissonnier developed the

genre pittoresque (the original term for Rococo). Pillement's engravings were used for marquetry as well as textiles and ceramics, and featured Oriental motifs including stylized Chinese figures, swirling foliage, and flowers.

DECORATIVE INFLUENCES

The sculptor and architect Nicolas Pineau published designs for carved decoration for walls, ceilings, fireplaces, console tables, and torchères, which were widely used by cabinet-makers such as Charles Cressent. These engravings spread the Rococo influence across the continent.

The paintings of Jean-Antoine Watteau introduced a new decorative feature, the *fête galante*. These garden scenes, showing aristocratic couples in amorous pursuits, were depicted in marquetry, painted furniture, and tapestries and textiles.

COMFORT AND INFORMALITY

New styles accommodated the desire for comfort and intimate conversation,



The brass gallery prevents items on the top from falling off the table.

The interior of the desk reveals the original colour, protected from daylight.

The adjustable, silk-covered writing surface is supported by a bracket.

The cabriole legs are pierced and decorated with ormolu mounts.

LADY'S WRITING TABLE

This lady's writing table was made for Madame de Pompadour, Louis XV's mistress, by the German-born maker, Jean-François Oeben. It is made of oak and veneered with mahogany, kingswood, tulipwood, and various other woods, and it is decorated with gilt-bronze mounts. The top displays marquetry patterns reflecting

Madame de Pompadour's love of the arts, including a vase of flowers, as well as designs representing architecture, painting, music, and gardening. Elements from the owner's coat of arms are included on the gilt-bronze mounts on each corner. When the top slides back to reveal the workings of the writing table, the surface area is almost doubled. c.1762. H:69.8cm (27½in); W:81.9cm (32¼in).



SECRÉTAIRE À ABATTANT

This serpentine-fronted *secrétaire* is veneered in tulipwood, inlaid on the diagonal. The upper section opens to reveal a writing surface and six drawers. Ormolu banding frames the marquetry panels. The sabot feet have scrolling foot mounts. c.1758. H:114cm (45in); W:93cm (39½in); D:39cm (15½in). PAR



CARVED GILTWOOD BERGÈRE

This is part of a four-piece suite. All the woodwork is carved with flowers and foliage. The bergère has a shaped rectangular back with a carved and shaped back rail, and is upholstered with silk damask. The curved seat rail leads into cabriole legs. c.1745. H:97.5cm (38¼in); W:72cm (28in); D:67cm (26¼in). PAR



while existing forms evolved to fit new decorative schemes. Console tables were usually gilt or painted, and were highly carved, often in a softwood, such as pine. Motifs included foliage, shells, and C- or S-scrolls.

Chairs were designed to sit against walls, and reflected the panelling and architecture of the room. The upholstered sofa, or *canapé*, was, essentially, an elongated arched-backed *fauteuil à la Reine* (see p.52). Like bergère chairs, *canapés* were decorated

Interior of the Château de Bataille This elegant reception room is furnished in the comfortable, feminine style favoured by wealthy French patrons of the period. Gilding and upholstery are much in evidence.

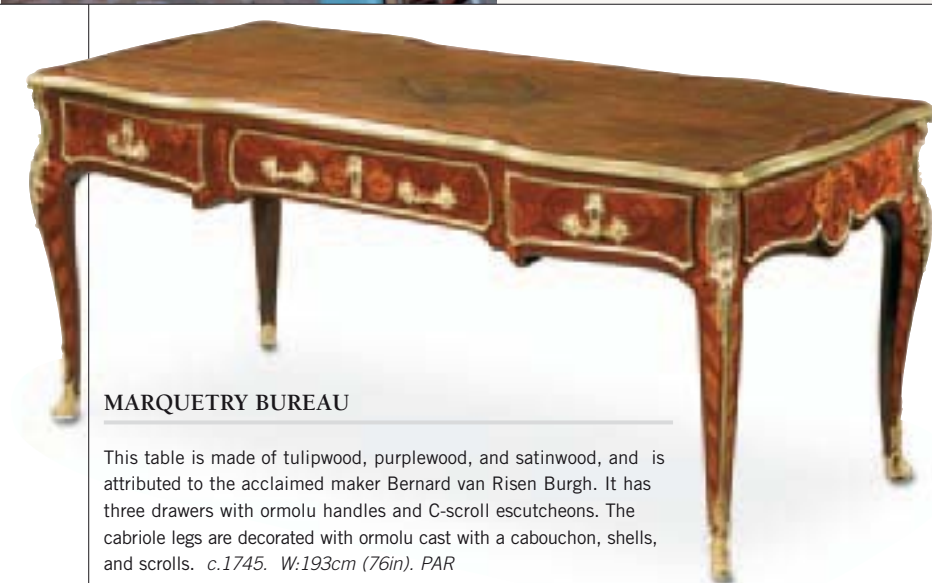
in light Rococo colours, such as sea green, pale blue, yellow, lilac, or white, and enriched with gilt. Carved flowers often adorned chair frames.

WORK-RELATED FURNITURE

Wide writing tables, bureaux, were used in the bedchamber. They usually had three drawers at the front and back, although the back drawers were false. The decorated backs indicate that the pieces were designed to be used in the centre of rooms. Homes often had rooms dedicated to work. The desk, or *secrétaire*, evolved from the medieval *escritoire* to become a case piece with a fall front.

THE COMMODE

Commodes were the most prestigious and expensive pieces of furniture and were lavishly ornamented. They were used in different rooms, including the bedchamber, although they were not used in reception rooms until later in the century. *Commodes à encoignures* (corner cupboards) had display shelves at either end. The commode en console appeared around 1750, and had a single drawer and long legs, designed principally in the Louis XV style. The commode à vantaux, which had two tiers of drawers behind two doors, was most popular during the reign of Louis XVI (1774–92).



MARQUETRY BUREAU

This table is made of tulipwood, purplewood, and satinwood, and is attributed to the acclaimed maker Bernard van Risen Burgh. It has three drawers with ormolu handles and C-scroll escutcheons. The cabriole legs are decorated with ormolu cast with a cabouchon, shells, and scrolls. c.1745. W:193cm (76in). PAR



MARBLE-TOPPED COMMODE

This commode has two drawers, decorated with kingwood marquetry inlaid on a tulipwood ground. The central spray of flowers is positioned within a pierced ormolu cartouche. Pierced scroll and foliate mounts run down the cabriole legs and end in Rococo sabots. c.1750. W:108cm (42½in). PAR



RED LACQUER ARMOIRE

This is an example of a two-door armoire, which began to replace the four-door buffet during the second half of the 18th century. This piece shows the fascination for lacquerwork and Chinese decoration that was rife throughout

Europe at the time. The bright vermillion lacquerwork is decorated with floral motifs and butterflies in the Chinese style. The stand has a shaped apron, decorated with a gilt motif, and terminates in bracket feet. c.1750. H:157cm (62¼in); W:138cm (55¼in); D:55cm (22in). PAR

ITALY

DURING THE FIRST HALF of the 18th century, most of the Italian states came under the control of Spain and Austria. Only Venice, Genoa, and Lucca remained independent, although the republics of Venice and Genoa declined in power and population.

ITALIAN ROCOCO

Italy was no longer a cultural leader in Europe. The noble landowners who built large palazzos were conservative on the whole and the Baroque style was favoured for longer than elsewhere. The only concession to changing

fashions, however, was that furniture for the main reception rooms was now conceived as an integral part of the interior.

Gradually, during the second quarter of the 18th century, as interiors became less formal, the lighter and more graceful Rococo style became more prevalent, reaching the height of its popularity from 1730 to 1750. Italian Rococo furniture was mainly influenced by French Régence and Louis XV styles, but it was embellished with decorative lacquerwork, colourful paintwork, and extravagant carved

details. Styles of furniture varied considerably from one region to another. Craftsmen in Piedmont were strongly influenced by neighbouring France, and Genoese furniture was renowned for its skilful construction. Furniture from Lombardy was more sober and severe, whereas Venetian furniture was theatrical and colourful.

NEW FORMS

Italian chairs were often inspired by the French *fauteuil*, but had higher, fan-shaped backs, which were ornately carved and often gilded. Unpainted furniture was usually made of walnut, but fruitwoods were also common.

Side chairs, in the English style, had pierced splats with a central carved and pierced cartouche, and restrained cabriole legs. Some had flat stretchers. These chairs were often upholstered over the seat rail, rather than having slip-in seats. Caned examples also existed and more vernacular versions had rush seats.

Sofas, stools, and daybeds followed French fashion, although long settees with joined chair backs looked more like English examples. These settees were designed for specific reception rooms, such as the ballroom or the long rooms that ran from the front to the back of a palazzo.



SICILIAN COMMODE

This painted commode with its two drawers, subtly curved sides, and shaped legs, reflects the cabinet-maker's knowledge of French fashion. The paintwork on the panels of the sides and drawers is a simplified interpretation

of the arabesques, scrollwork, and foliage decoration seen on French commodes, and is influenced by the designs of French *ébénistes*, such as Jean Baptiste Pillement, who developed the *genre pittoresque* (see p.78). Paint is also used to simulate an expensive marble top. c.1760. W:153cm (60¼in). GK



CARVED CONSOLE

This console has only two legs as its back would be attached directly to the wall in a reception or stateroom. It is made of carved and gilded lime wood that was originally silvered. It features a grotesque mask flanked

by scrolling foliage – a popular motif from the 16th century until the mid 18th century – but the carving on this table is less ponderous and the face less threatening than on earlier examples. 1720–30. H:101cm (40in); W:165cm (65in); D:84cm (33in). LOT

PIETRO PIFFETTI (1700–70)

CABINET-MAKER TO THE KING OF SARDINIA, PIETRO PIFFETTI WAS ARGUABLY THE FINEST ITALIAN CABINET-MAKER OF THE 18TH CENTURY.



Chest of drawers with bookshelves This imposing piece is decorated with Piffetti's characteristic marquetry in ivory and mother-of-pearl. The scenes are based on engravings of the siege of Troy. c.1760. H:308cm (123¼in).

The illustrious artisan, Pietro Piffetti was trained by the architect Filippo Juvarra, which is reflected in his very sculptural furniture. Piffetti worked with Juvarra to create dazzling rooms, with every surface covered in lavish Rococo decoration.

At a time when much Italian work was considered inferior in quality to French furniture, Piffetti was a virtuoso amongst the artist-craftsmen of Italy. His work is renowned for its detail and quality, even rivalling the great *ébénistes* of France.

Piffetti's furniture included highly intricate marquetry work in exotic woods and precious materials such as tortoiseshell, mother-of-pearl, and engraved ivory. His effusive style was more decorative than practical, and he became known for his "confectionary furniture". This frivolous style featured theatrical motifs, including scrolls and marquetry, and was the zenith of the flamboyant Rococo period.



Serpentine commode with scrolling foliate arabesques in mother-of-pearl and ivory inlay. It has gilt-bronze handles and escutcheons. c.1735. H:99cm (39in); W:135.5cm (53¼in); D:64cm (24¼in).

Most tables had attenuated, curved legs. Console and side tables were still heavily carved and gilded. The marble tops were inserted or framed rather than resting on top of the table. Tables were now made for specific rooms: the *trespoli*, for example, was for use in a bedroom where it would support a dressing mirror. *Guéridons*, small tables often made in pairs, were popular and tended to have a single, rounded, carved support above a tripod base. Larger tables had carved stretchers, often with a cartouche or decoration at the junction in the middle.

Writing tables had been used since the 16th

century, but new forms now appeared. The bureau, or bureau-cabinet, became quite common. The sides of a bureau were often squared and the central section serpentine in shape. Bureaux were veneered in complex geometric shapes, generally of walnut, or tulipwood in Genoa, or decorated with lacquer and paint.

The *credenza*, or cupboard, was made of fruitwood and had elongated bracket feet that extended from the front of the piece around to the side.

The bureau-bookcase, inspired by English versions, often had an exaggerated crest on top. The lower case had

serpentine drawers, squared at the ends, and short bracket feet. Bureau-bookcases were usually made of walnut veneers, or were lacquered, gilded, and painted.

The French-style commode was also popular, though Italian versions often had shorter legs. While they rarely had gilt-bronze mounts, they were generally lacquered, and adorned with intricate veneer and paint.



ARMCHAIR

This chair, probably from Genoa, is derived from the French *fauteuil à la Reine* but its back is wider at the top and the crest-rail cartouche is more exaggerated. The upholstery is not original. c.1760. H:94cm (37in); W:60cm (23½in). GK



BUREAU

This walnut bureau is inspired by an English kneehole desk, but its slope and upper drawer overlap the smaller drawers. It has wider, shorter, bracket feet, and its geometric veneer is more flamboyant. H:104cm (41in); W:119cm (47in). GK



Japanned panels depict pastoral scenes.

The central mirror hides shelves and drawers.

Red japanning covers the whole piece.

The slope opens to reveal pigeonholes and drawers.

Classical landscapes in lacca contrafatta – lacquer work – cover the visible surfaces.

The canted corners and sides terminate in scrolled acanthus and carved feet.

BUREAU-CABINET

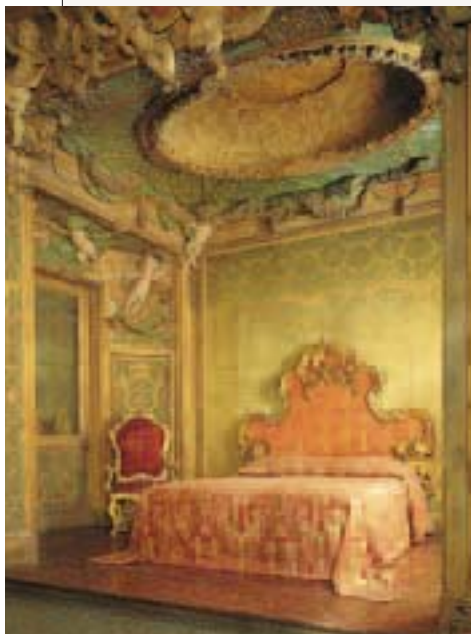
This extravagant bureau-cabinet made in Rome for Pope Pius VI is decorated with japanning, lacquerwork, and gilding. The figures on the top represent the four seasons. Early 18th century. PAR

ITALY: VENICE

DURING THE 18TH CENTURY, Venice faded as a trading republic and was politically isolated from the other regions. However, the cosmopolitan Venetian Republic excelled as the capital of taste, fashion, and luxury, rivalling the reputation of Paris.

A GRAND PALAZZO

The grand palazzi faced directly onto the larger canals, and it was here that the finest furnishings were enjoyed by Venice's wealthiest citizens. Huge anti-chambers measured around 36m (120ft), and special furniture was created for these rooms. A long *bergère* with an upholstered back, the *pozzetto*, was designed to be placed against the walls, as was the exaggerated *divani da portego*, a long settee.



Bedchamber from the Sagredo Palace, Venice, c.1718
The furnishings relate to the overall architectural theme. The sculptural quality of the ceiling is reflected in the ornately carved headboard.

The family bedchambers and associated rooms were furnished in luxurious velvet and damask, often fringed or laced with gold. The floors were laid with marble or scagliola (see p.43), and the frescoes on the skirting boards and ceilings added more colour. At times, the overall effect could be overpowering, and the furniture and decoration competed for prominence.

FURNITURE STYLES

Much Venetian furniture was brightly painted or decorated with lacquer, silver, or gilt, and ornately carved.

Venetian design was the embodiment of the effusive Rococo style, which remained fashionable in Venice after its popularity had waned elsewhere. Although the furniture retained the sculptural qualities of the Baroque, the carving was lighter and more delicate. Scrolls, serpentine outlines, and *bombé* shapes were common. Cabriole legs were often decorated with Rococo carving. New types of furniture included girandole mirrors, and *guéridon* tables that had a candlestand base supporting a marble top. Even large pier tables had carved and pierced frames that were gilded or painted in the Rococo style. In addition to pier mirrors or glasses placed over pier tables (see p.120), other mirrors were introduced, that often contained coloured panels of glass interspersed with the mirror glass.

Chests of drawers ranged from the French commode to smaller pieces such as the *cassettoncino*, typically with three serpentine-shaped drawers with square ends. These were often veneered in walnut, and supported on ball or bracket feet. Pairs of small chests, *comodini*, painted or veneered in walnut, had a single door, sometimes with a drawer above, and were raised on short, curved or scrolled feet. Another popular form was a small, *bombé*-shaped, two-door chest.

In addition to the grand *pozzetto* and *divani da portego*, the Venetians created carved, lacquered armchairs with shaped crest and seat rails.

As well as painted or lacquered furniture, pieces made solely of walnut or walnut veneer were fashionable, including summer versions of the long *pozzetto*, with caned backs and seats.

LACQUER

Lacquerwork was highly popular in Venice, and was used to adorn everything from commodes to armchairs. Chinoiserie designs imitated imported Far Eastern lacquer, but Venetian craftsmen incorporated whimsical floral motifs, often with foliage. It often took 20 layers of varnish to complete the lacquer process. Although the outsides of pieces were effusively decorated, the interiors were often relatively plain. Light colours were popular for lacquer, especially yellow, gold, and blue.



VENETIAN COMMODE

Venetian cabinet-makers favoured lacquered furniture throughout the 18th century. This Venetian two-drawer, black-lacquered commode is inspired by Louis XV styles, but is wider and bulkier than French examples. There are two

long drawers and the drawer division is emphasized by gilded moulding. The legs are less sinuous than French examples and the case lacks ormolu mounts. The black lacquer is highlighted with a delightful series of *Chinoiserie* motifs with landscapes, fantastic creatures, and stylized flora. c.1750. GK

The sides of the cupboard are canted.

The triangular top is made from Levanto Rouge marble.

The carcass is decorated with Rococo motifs.



The cupboard door is decorated with Chinoiserie motifs.

Five cabriole legs support the piece.

CORNER CUPBOARD

One of a pair, this polychrome cupboard is decorated all over with sprays of flowers and scrolling foliage on a light blue-green background, and carved with stylized shells and *rocaille*. The marble top sits above a concave

moulded frieze. The cupboard door depicts an Oriental figure, but the interior of the cupboard is plain. The sides are canted and the piece terminates in five short cabriole legs, one of which still retains its paper label. Mid 18th century. H:86cm (34in); W:65cm (25½in); D:54.5cm (21¼in).



GILDED PIER TABLE

This pine table is gilded and silvered. The top is painted to simulate marble: the rear edge is so realistic it appears to have the mason's saw marks where the unfinished marble would be placed against the pier. The exaggerated scroll

of the legs is emphasized by inner knee scrolls. The table has an interlaced stretcher with a central carved cartouche, and the legs terminate in stylized hoof feet. *c.1760. H:93cm (36½in); W:136cm (53½in); D:66cm (26in). JK*

UPHOLSTERED ARMCHAIR

One of a pair, this armchair is made in the style of a French design, although the cartouche-shaped back is wider and higher than those on French examples. The frame of the back is moulded and the central cartouche more exaggerated than is typical of French chairs. The frame is carved all over rather than highlighted with carved floral elements. The scrolled legs and pierced seat rail illustrate the Rococo love of fluid curves and movement. *c.1745.*



Detail of the crest rail

LACCA POVERA

THIS INNOVATIVE DECORATIVE TECHNIQUE, WHICH IS NOW OFTEN REFERRED TO AS DÉCOUPAGE, ORIGINATED IN VENICE IN THE MID 18TH CENTURY.

Lacca povera (poor man's lacquer) is also known as *arte povera* (poor man's art), or *lacca contrafatta* (fake lacquer). In mid 18th-century Venice, the taste for lacquerwork was so great that artists developed *lacca povera* as an alternative in order to meet the demand. This new, and relatively inexpensive, technique evolved alongside traditional lacquerwork.

THE TECHNIQUE

Craftsmen used engravings to decorate furniture and other objects. These images were often obtained from specialist firms who produced sheets of engravings especially for *lacca povera* decoration. These were then coloured, cut, and pasted onto a prepared surface. Several layers of varnish were applied to create a surface that resembled the high gloss effect of traditional lacquerwork, and the best examples resembled imports from the Orient. Initially, craftsmen favoured Chinoiserie designs, but European motifs

also became popular, as seen on this bureau-bookcase. The influence of the painter Jean Watteau (*see p.78*) and the designer Jean Bérain (*see p.55*) can be seen. The printed scenes varied from extravagant *rocailles* to maritime and pastoral themes. On the finest *lacca povera*, details were picked out in gilt or engraved once the varnish had dried. The most common colour for the background was red. Rare white *lacca povera* is now highly prized. Desks, chairs, tables, cabinets, and screens were all decorated using this technique.

DÉCOUPAGE

The centre of professional production was Venice, but the technique became popular throughout Europe. In France the technique was renamed *découpage*, from the French word *couper*, meaning to cut. This skill was taught to ladies in the 18th century, and was mainly used on smaller, decorative objects, as it is today.

Gilt mouldings with arabesque decoration surround the doors.

The mirror plates on the doors are replacements.

The upper section opens to reveal drawers and pigeon holes.

The slant-front desk and narrow drawer are part of the upper section.

The lower drawers depict period carriage scenes and pastoral landscapes.



Decorated interior.



Detail of the lacca povera.

Bureau-bookcase This piece is profusely decorated with *lacca povera* on a cream ground depicting mythical beasts, lions, camels, Classical gods and Father Time, and floral and heraldic motifs. 1735. *H:210cm (82½in); W:102cm (40in); D:55cm (21½in). MAL*

GERMANY

GERMANY AT THIS TIME was made up of over 300 principalities, loosely bound into the Holy Roman Empire. Only three of the German states were large enough to compete as powers on a European scale: Bavaria, Saxony, and Brandenburg-Prussia. The princely rulers vied with each other for power and prestige, building magnificent Baroque palaces and Rococo pavilions at enormous cost.

FRENCH INFLUENCE

The most clearly defined German styles of the time were Bavarian and Frederician Rococo. Under the patronage of Maximilian II Emanuel, Elector of Bavaria, and King Frederick the Great of Prussia, architects and cabinet-makers were encouraged to take inspiration from France.

A French designer of particular significance was François Cuvilliés, who was employed by the Elector of Bavaria. Cuvilliés's spectacular interiors at the Residenz and the Amalienburg Pavilion in Munich represent the height of German Rococo. Swirling, gilded, carved wood decorations covered the walls and furniture of Cuvilliés's interiors, with motifs ranging from pure rocaille to sculptural figures, masks, and animals.

GERMAN ROCOCO

Early 18th-century German furniture was heavier in style than French or Italian pieces. Commodes and cabinets, in particular, were massive and were decorated with typical Rococo motifs, such as scrolls, shells, cartouches, and fantastic foliage. Enormous bureau-bookcases were serpentine in shape and had scrolled legs and tiny scrolled feet. Glass-fronted display cabinets were painted in pale Rococo colours, such as white and gilt, and decorated with shells, foliage, and scrolls. Commodes had exaggerated curves.

As in France, furniture, usually carved and gilded or painted, was designed for an integrated interior. Special rooms or themes, such as the garden, often influenced the decoration. The desire for informality inspired new types of furniture. Fire screens, couches and settees, writing tables, and carved and gilded console tables were made for the wealthy.

Typical 17th-century furniture, such as the two-part cupboard and the wardrobe, was still made well into the 18th century. Carving tended to emulate French *boiserie* panelling, and great emphasis was placed on the woods chosen for veneers. Walnut, engraved ivory, fruitwoods, sycamore, and green-stained softwoods were used for both marquetry and veneers. Lacquerwork was still popular, and exquisite cabinets and tables, often made in Berlin, were decorated with fashionable chinoiserie patterns and *fêtes galantes* (see p.78).

Unlike French furniture, which is usually stamped with the maker's name, German furniture of this period is rarely attributed to specific makers. This is because in Germany at this time, the best cabinet-makers were employed by the Courts and worked directly for their employers. They lived in the grounds of palaces, had their workshops there, and were often salaried.

THE UTILITY OF SPLENDOUR

These Court workshops (which housed carpenters, sculptors, plasterers, upholsterers, and gilders) now delivered complete arrangements for newly refurbished state apartments. During the 18th century, simple rooms evolved into specific ones designed for a particular activity. Antechambers tended to be very sparsely furnished, perhaps with just a pier table. In the formal entertaining room – the focus of Court events – the Prince's armchair would be raised on a carpet-covered platform. Although by far the most elaborate chair in the room, its style would be matched by the remaining chairs. Desks and commodes could be found in private reception rooms.

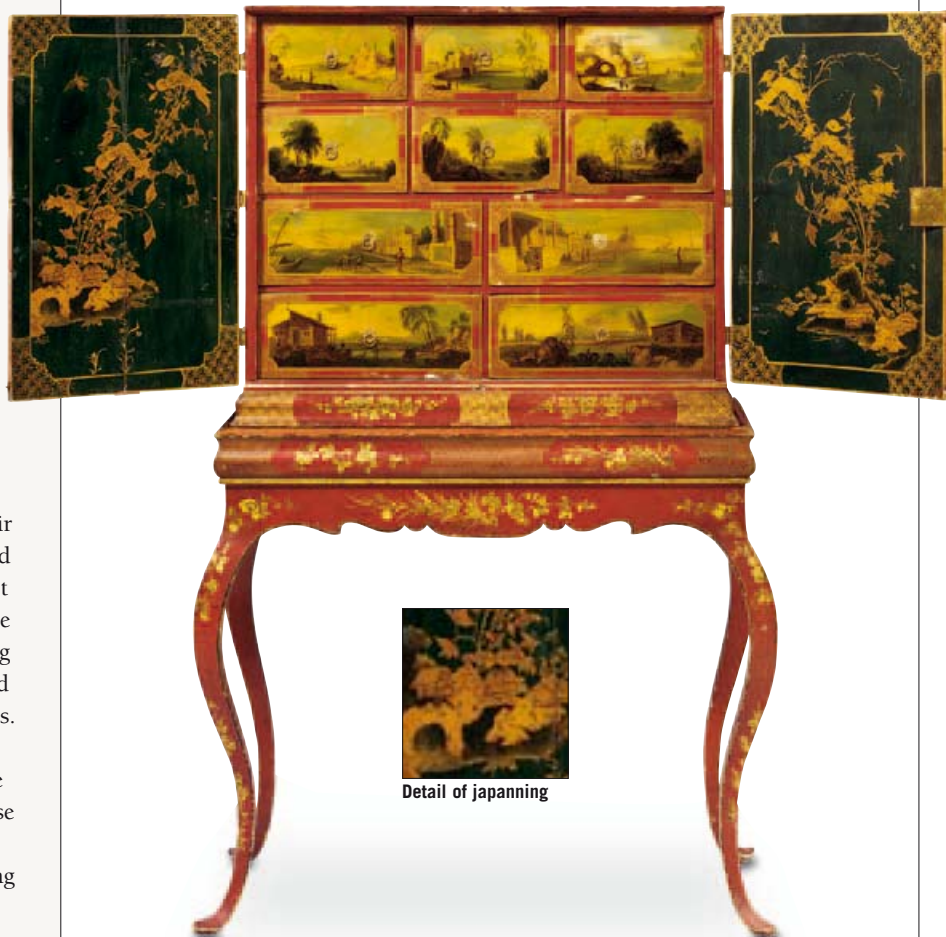
The *chambre de parade* became the highlight of social activity, where the nobility would meet and converse or play cards. From around 1720, these rooms had large, floor-to-ceiling windows. These allowed light to flood into the room, which was then reflected in huge mirrors on the facing walls. In the wealthiest homes furniture was gilded, as were the candleholders on mirror frames and the elaborate panelling on the walls and ceilings.



FRANCONIAN COMMODE

This commode has a carcass of lacquered lime wood, and is decorated with carved and gilt mouldings and escutcheons. The drawers are edged with curving rocaille borders and the escutcheons are surmounted by shells and scrolling foliage. The curved apron has a shell

in the centre. The scrolled feet are also typically Rococo. It was probably commissioned by the Prince-Bishop of the Würzburg Residenz in Franconia and is, unusually for German furniture, attributed to specific cabinet-makers: Johann Wolfgang van der Auvera and Ferdinand Hund. c.1735. H:80cm (31½in); W:145cm (57in); D:63cm (24¼in). PAR



Detail of japanning

CABINET-ON-STAND

This cabinet-on-stand, which possibly originates from Berlin, is covered in red and black japanning, decorated with gold. The interior of the doors are covered with black japanning and open to reveal ten drawers, painted to resemble the work of the celebrated French artist Jean-

Antoine Watteau who painted elaborate parties held outdoors, known as *fêtes galantes*. The front and sides of the piece are decorated with similar patterns. The stand has a shaped apron and elegant, slim cabriole legs, also decorated with red japanning and gold. Early 18th century. H:46cm (18in); W:90cm (35½in); D:40cm (15¾in).



CONSOLE TABLE

This elegant console table has a red and white rounded marble top. The frame of the table consists of highly carved wood, which has been gilded and painted. The intricate, open-work frieze depicts floral and foliate motifs, and leads into similarly styled cabriole legs. *Early 18th century. H:92cm (26¼in).*



Detail of seat rail



GARDEN CHAIR

Made of carved, gilded, and painted linden wood, this chair is part of a suite of "garden furniture" made for the Schloss Seehof in southern Germany. The frame and legs are decorated with carved trellis, leaves, and flowers. The seat is covered in green velvet, completing the garden theme. *1764. H:112cm (44in).*

The open pediment is carved with volutes.



The cabinet interior

The mirrored doors have bevelled glass plates.

The fall front is serpentine in shape.

The concave drawers have canted and rounded edges.



Detail of the locks

Gilt-metal and ormolu mounts decorate the whole piece.



The inside of the doors



DRESDEN BUREAU-CABINET

This imposing cabinet is made of rosewood and burr elm and decorated with ormolu and gilt-metal. It has a volute-carved open pediment above mirrored doors, framed by foliate and rocaille clasps. The fitted interior has 15 walnut-lined drawers around a central compartment flanked by Classical-style columns. The

compartment is decorated with an ivory, ebony, and rosewood parquetry floor and mirrored sides and back. The fall front opens to reveal seven drawers arranged around a central mirrored compartment. The four concave-fronted drawers are decorated with gilt volutes, cabouchons, rocaille, and foliage. The piece stands on a stepped and moulded plinth. *c.1740. H:236cm (93in); W:141cm (54½in); D:79cm (31in).*

ROCOCO INTERIOR

THE ELABORATE DESIGN OF THIS SUMPTUOUS HUNTING PAVILION DISPLAYS THE SPLENDOUR OF GERMAN ROCOCO INTERIOR STYLE AT ITS VERY BEST.



Gilded cherubs playing musical instruments adorn the walls of the grand pavilion.



Musical instruments were popular motifs, both as interior decoration, and also on pieces of furniture.



German *fauteuil* (see p.117)

BY THE SECOND quarter of the 18th century, modern French manners, and with them the delicate, playful design of the Rococo, were the height of fashion. The aristocracy and the upper middle classes, aspired to status and a refined lifestyle, inspired by the Court of Louis XIV.

A HOME FIT FOR A KING

It was against this backdrop that Max Emanuel, the Elector of Bavaria, redesigned his Munich Residenz and extended his summer palace at Nymphenburg. He employed Joseph Effner, who became the chief Court architect and furniture designer, and the French-educated architect François Cuvilliés. Both were influential in introducing the light, intimate Rococo style to the Elector's estates. Their designs cast aside the formality of Baroque architecture in favour of a freer, more intimate feel. In 1735, Cuvilliés started work on the Amalienburg pavilion in the palace gardens at Nymphenburg. Built as a hunting lodge for Electoress Amelia, the interior became the epitome of Bavarian Rococo.

The magnificent centrepiece of the Amalienburg, the mirror room, is ringed by ornately framed silver-gilt mirrors and lit by elaborate chandeliers. The pale bluish-green walls enhance the feeling of delicacy and light and provide a perfect backdrop to extensive silver stucco decoration. A closer look at the applied design work reveals an array of Rococo motifs and scenes; naturalistic birds fly above asymmetrical floral swags hanging from borders of cherubs, lyres, and scrolling leaves. Expansive panelled mirrors, framed by shells and S-curves, reflect and multiply the overall effect of movement and vivacity. This room would have been used for entertaining, including banqueting and lavish celebrations.

The Amalienburg style spread through Germany. The Elector of Mainz transformed the interior of his Baroque Würzburg Residenz with an almost overwhelming Rococo interior. Ornate stucco was added to Balthasar Neumann's staterooms, including an elaborate mirror room enhanced by painted portrait cartouches.

REGIONAL VARIATIONS

Interpretations of Rococo varied greatly from one region of Germany to another. The furniture produced to compliment fashionable interiors was particularly diverse. Although many pieces were fairly conservative in form, as a result of the influence of the guilds, decoration was elaborate, and typically included naturalistic motifs and scrolling lines. Furniture from Munich was often heavily carved and gilded. Although inspired by a French movement and diverse in style, Rococo furniture at the highest end of the market, and the interiors of the Amalienburg, Würzburg and other fine palaces, are distinctly German in their elaborate nature and grand scale.





THE LOW COUNTRIES

WHEN WILLIAM, Prince of Orange and King of England, died in 1702, he left no adult heir. For the following 45 years the Low Countries were ruled by councillor pensionaries and regents. The first half of the 18th century was a period of stability. Dutch trade and shipping maintained the levels reached during the 17th century and money was ample.

SOMBRE DESIGN

Furniture design reflected the prevailing attitude of conservatism and there was little innovation. Many forms imitated British examples, the major differences being not in design, but in the choice of woods and the use of marquetry. While marquetry was no longer fashionable in Britain, it continued to flourish in the Low Countries.

Chairs were similar to British designs, although the seat rails tended to be more serpentine in shape, and some chairs had a serpentine blocked seat rail with a shaped lower central section. Settees were also similar to British models, with high backs and wings with curved armrests, but stretchers remained fashionable well into the 1740s, unlike in Britain.



Dutch armchair, made in a typical George II style, but decorated with floral marquetry. The cabriole legs terminate in claw-and-ball feet, but as with many mid-century pieces, the chairs lack stretchers. c.1750. DN

SIGNATURE PIECE

The bureau-cabinet, which developed in Britain around 1700, was common throughout much of the 18th century. Versions with two doors were often fitted with mirrors, a feature that was used throughout the century.

The china cabinet was also popular. Similar in shape to the bureau-cabinet, the upper section had glazed doors in front of display shelves. There were several different designs for the lower section, each distinctive of furniture from the Low Countries. If the piece had straight sides, the corners were chamfered and extended outwards in heavy, overgrown scrolls. Otherwise the lower section was designed in a *bombé* shape. Drawers were rounded, blocked, or serpentine.

Both the bureau-bookcase and the china cabinet illustrated the desire in the Low Countries for versatile, dual-purpose furniture. Generally, the upper case was used to display books or ceramics, while the drawers in the lower section provided storage for household linens, or even clothes.

UNIQUE ELEMENTS

The commode did not become popular until the middle of the century. It was similar to British examples until about 1765, tending to have four drawers or doors covering shelves. The choice of wood, the use of imported mounts, and the heavier shape of commodes from the Low Countries help to differentiate them from British versions. Burr walnut was the veneer of choice in the Low Countries. It was not until the 1730s that mahogany – a wood commonly used in British furniture – was used in Rotterdam, a city in which British influence was particularly strong. From the mid 18th century, the Low Countries exported ornamental mounts to Britain.

As there was no reigning monarch, the highly ornate styles of the French Court were not as influential in the Low Countries as elsewhere in Europe, and British design was the style of choice.



DUTCH COMMODE

This mahogany, serpentine-shaped commode is influenced by English style, having two doors that open to reveal an interior fitted with shelves. This piece has little decoration,

although originally the case may have been embellished with ormolu mounts and escutcheons. The pierced gilt-brass gallery at the back is a later addition. The piece stands on outswept bracket feet. c.1770. H:89cm (35in). DN



CHEST OF DRAWERS

The four-drawer chest of drawers is veneered with figured and burr walnut, which has subsequently been framed in bands of tulipwood. The top and the waved apron are

also shaped to reflect the curves of the case. The chamfered corners of the chest extend into heavily scrolled sides and legs and terminate in scrolled feet. This style is typical of furniture from the Low Countries. c.1750. H:82cm (32¼in); W:87cm (34¼in); D:53cm (21in).



GILTWOOD MIRROR

This mirror is made up of two pieces of plate in a frame with asymmetrical cartouches at the top and base. Its pilaster sides are wrapped in foliage. C-scrolls flank a pediment with two carved birds. c.1760–70. H:180cm (71in); W:97cm (38in).



BUREAU-BOOKCASE

This bureau-bookcase, of softwood and oak, is veneered in walnut, with rosewood fillets. The lower case has a serpentine front, *bombé*-shape, and sits on high volute feet. It is crowned with a phoenix and has an interior mirror. c.1760. H:290cm (114in). LPZ

The double-domed top is influenced by architecture and British bookcases made around 1715.

Cast finials adorn the domed top. Pieces of cast brass were generally imported from England.

The interior shelves, inlaid with a geometric pattern, were designed to display ceramics or perhaps books.

The case is inlaid with marquetry.

The fall front is curved to fit the shape of the bureau-bookcase.

Chamfered and scrolled edges were typical of the Low Countries.

Short feet in the shape of animal paws support the case.

The central pendant is serpentine and inlaid to match the case.

BUREAU-BOOKCASE WITH FLORAL MARQUETRY

This bookcase is typical, in both shape and design, of furniture from the Low Countries. As a bureau-bookcase it serves the triple purposes of providing a writing surface, a display cabinet, and storage. The piece has graduated drawers below a serpentine fall

front: each drawer gradually increases in size from top to bottom. Covered in floral marquetry and some pictorial marquetry depicting exotic birds, cherubs, urns, and scrolling foliage, this bureau-bookcase also has Chinoiserie-style escutcheons. The attached curved scrolls are often seen on case furniture from the Low Countries. 18th century. H:207.5cm (81½in). FRE

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

STYLE DEVELOPMENTS IN Spain and Portugal were influenced by royal marriages and also by the success of Louis XIV of France. Philip V of Spain's marriage to Italian-born Elizabeth Farnese, and his son's marriage to the daughter of Dom João V of Portugal both brought stylistic influences from abroad.

THE LEGACY OF VERSAILLES Philip V remained in awe of the achievements of his grandfather,

Louis XIV, while Italian influence came from his wife's use of architects and painters from Italy, notably Filippo Juvarra and Giovanni Battista Sacchetti.

Dom João V's reign coincided with the discovery of gold and diamonds in colonial Brazil. He used his fabulous wealth to develop a national monarchy modelled on the absolute rule of Louis XIV, and, like Louis, wanted art and literature to glorify his rule as sovereign. To this end, he spent vast sums on Parisian furniture, and commissioned

Charles Cressent (see p.76) and Juste-Aurèle Meissonnier (see p.78) to design furniture. He ordered his marital bed from Holland, made to a design by Daniel Marot (see p.45).

A STYLE OF ITS OWN

Furniture from the Iberian Peninsula was unique. Although inspired by designs from France, Italy, and – through trade links – England, it also incorporated colonial references and materials, such as Brazilian hardwoods, jacaranda, pausanto, and rosewood. Portuguese furniture was

particularly heavy due to the density of the woods used. Japanning, which had gone out of favour in France and England, was still popular, and English cabinet-makers capitalized on this, exporting cabinets japanned in vivid colours such as scarlet, yellow, and gold to their wealthy clientèle.

Chairs were based on the French *fauteuil*, with high backs, leather upholstery, and carved upper rails with a central stylized shell. They often had gilt carving, ball-and-claw feet, and square stretchers. The fashion for pannier dresses, with their wide skirts, led to a demand for chairs with broader seats, and arms that curved



A central cartouche is positioned on the carved frieze.

The stretchers are joined by ornate foliate carving.

The cabriole legs are decorated with carving.

Scroll feet support the piece.

SPANISH CONSOLE TABLE

One of a pair, this ornate console table is carved, gilded, and silvered. It has a serpentine, faux marble top, above a carved frieze decorated with *rocaille* and foliage, and a cartouche at its centre. The top is mounted

on carved cabriole legs, joined by a cross-stretcher. The carving is less flamboyant than that found on Italian pieces of the period. The curve of the leg is not very pronounced, and is heaviest where the leg meets the table frame. c.1750. H:78cm (30 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); W:127cm (50in); D:63cm (24 $\frac{1}{2}$ in).



SPANISH WARDROBE

This fruitwood *armario* is a vernacular piece. The cornice is decorated with small, tooth-shaped blocks, known as "denticulation". It is less heavy than earlier styles. Early 18th century. H:185.5cm (73in); W:124.5cm (49in). MLL



PORTUGUESE TABLE

This drop-leaf table is made of jacaranda. The end drawer has a brass lock and drawer pull above a carved apron. The table stands on six slender, cabriole legs – two of which swing out to support the leaves. Mid 18th century. H:77cm (30 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); W:103cm (40 $\frac{1}{2}$ in).



CONSOLE TABLE

This Portuguese carved, mahogany console table has an inset marble top above a serpentine frieze. The corners are carved with stylized shells, and the whole table is decorated with *rocaille* and foliage. The piece stands on cabriole legs and terminates in claw-and-ball feet. Early 18th century. H:87.5cm (34 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); W:115cm (45 $\frac{1}{2}$ in).



outwards. These chairs usually had an English-style splat, with gilt edges, which flowed into a carved upper rail and stiles. The legs were cabriole and had gilt leaves carved on the knees.

The 18th-century folding chair was similar to earlier versions with straight legs, but its stretchers were either flat or turned. The chair back was now shaped, with a central carved shell or a vase-shaped back splat.

In Portugal, Brazilian rosewood was often used, and the upper panel

The Royal Bedroom in the Hall of Don Quixote, Palacio Nacional, Queluz, Portugal Rococo-style elements include the parquet floor, parquetry decorated bed, and the French-inspired *boiserie* room decoration.

and seat were upholstered in leather, stretched across the top of the rear legs, to allow the chair to fold inwards. The settee, made up of a number of chair backs, was more common than the French *canapé*.

Cupboards, commodes, and bureaux were large and relied on the grain of the wood for decorative effect. Scrolled feet, while in proportion, were wider and lower than on furniture made elsewhere in Europe.

Portuguese pier tables were usually made of carved and gilded pine or rosewood. Rococo motifs were

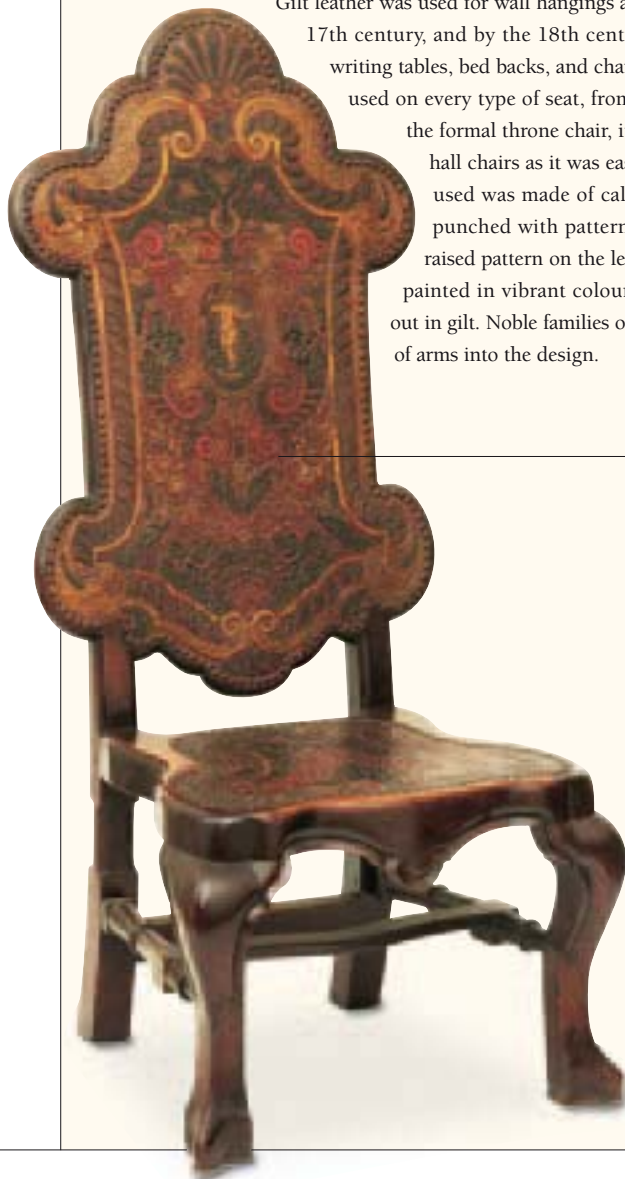
applied around the rectangular frame of the matching mirror that was positioned above the table. Portuguese tables were often larger than Italian versions. Multi-purpose tables, with tops that lifted to reveal various surfaces for writing and playing cards, were a speciality of Portuguese cabinet-makers.

Ormolu mounts and veneering were not often used on Spanish furniture of this period, but elaborate, often engraved, brass and silver mounts were a common feature of Portuguese furniture.

GILT LEATHER

GILT LEATHER WAS ORIGINALLY AN ISLAMIC TECHNIQUE AND IS OFTEN CALLED “SPANISH LEATHER” ON ACCOUNT OF THIS ORIGIN. “SPANISH LEATHER” IS EMBOSSED OR PUNCHED WITH PATTERNS, PAINTED, AND GILDED.

Gilt leather was used for wall hangings and chair covers during the 17th century, and by the 18th century it was being used for writing tables, bed backs, and chair backs. While leather was used on every type of seat, from the basic folding chair to the formal throne chair, it was particularly useful on hall chairs as it was easy to clean. The gilt leather used was made of calves' skin, which had been punched with patterns, or embossed to create a raised pattern on the leather. The pattern was then painted in vibrant colours and details were picked out in gilt. Noble families often incorporated their coat of arms into the design.



The embossed leather upholstery on the seat and back is original.



Detail of painted and gilt leather

Portuguese chair This leather-upholstered chair may have been used for ceremonial purposes, which could explain the lack of wear. *c.1720. H:104cm (41in).* JK



PORTUGUESE COMMODE

This marble-topped commode is one of a pair and closely follows French style: the *bombé* shape of the commode, and the arrangement of three drawers mounted above shaped feet with

imported ormolu mounts. The case is covered in parquetry, similar to that found on French pieces. This fine piece would have been made for a very wealthy client. *c.1715. H:89cm (35in); W:139.5cm (55in); D:71cm (28in).* PAR



SPANISH DINING CHAIRS

These dining chairs are thought to be part of a set supplied to King Ferdinand VI (r.1746–59). English Chippendale-style furniture was popular in Spain and Portugal. Unlike British chairs of

this style, which were usually mahogany, these chairs are made of walnut. Decorative highlights are created by gilding some of the carved areas, a feature known as *parcel gilt*. The legs are linked by stretchers with a shaped upper edge. *Mid 18th century.*

SCANDINAVIA

IN THE EARLY 1700s, Sweden, previously the dominant Protestant power of continental Europe, had lost major lands and her position in the Holy Roman Empire.

However, by 1727, plans for a grand royal palace in Stockholm, that had first been drawn up in the 1600s, were re-instated. The design for the palace's façade remained Roman Baroque, but the interior followed the French Rococo style. During this project, French and Italian sculptors, painters, and craftsmen worked in Stockholm and many pieces of French furniture were imported. The French style also influenced the nobility's choice of

furniture, although British and Low Country designs were also widely imitated by chair and cabinet-makers. The Scandinavian use of indigenous softwoods led to much of the furniture being painted, and gave Scandinavian furniture a distinctive look of its own.

NORWAY AND DENMARK

Norway remained part of Denmark during the 18th century, and was closely linked to northern Germany. Furniture-makers were heavily influenced, therefore, by the German form of Rococo, and the guilds in both Denmark and Norway were based on the system in Germany. Furniture was

also influenced by designs from Britain and the Low Countries, mainly because of the large amount of furniture being imported.

SCANDINAVIAN CHAIRS

Chairs were made in a variety of styles and were often painted. Side chairs had cabriole legs and a solid splat, often with a "keyhole" pierced through the upper section, just under a central shell carving in the crest rail. Like British examples, the stiles were curved, becoming straight at the junction of the back legs. Designs tended to be conservative, and, in Denmark especially, high-backed chairs with

stretchers remained popular well into the 18th century.

Between 1746 and 1748, the government banned the import of chairs that had been made abroad. This stifled innovation and meant that less fashionable styles of British chair, like those seen in the reign of George I, remained popular.

Towards the middle of the century, chairs like the French *fauteuil*, but with low upholstered backs and turned legs, became popular. Sofas in the shape of two or three chairs placed together were common, as were stools with legs and carving that matched that of the chairs. Sometimes these pieces were



Marble tops were often used on expensive console tables.

Lion's heads were popular motifs throughout the 18th century.

The cabriole legs are decorated with half-human, half-bird figures.

The centre of the frame is heavily carved with natural motifs.

Scroll feet support the piece.

A stylized shell motif with a foliate clasp forms the cartouche.

SWEDISH GILT TABLE

Influenced by Louis XV tables, this gilt table is made of *Griotte Svedois*: a type of cherry wood, covered in layers of gesso and gilt. The top is made of marble, further indicating that this would have been an extremely expensive piece

of furniture. The table is heavily carved with half-human, half-bird figures depicted on the tops of the cabriole legs, which terminate in scroll feet. This magnificent table may be the work of a French-trained carver working in Stockholm. c.1760. H:99cm (39in); W:56cm (22in); D:88cm (34½in). GK



SWEDISH CUPBOARD

This cupboard shows how the standard Germanic form was adapted to suit changing fashions. Its upper case shows the influence of Low Country style, and is less heavy than earlier architectural models. Its curved cornice

has less of an overhang. The drawers and doors are cross-banded with veneer and the grain of the veneer gives movement to the piece. Bracket feet, rather than turned balls, support a base with straight drawers, which shows the influence of British style. c.1760. H:225cm (88½in); W:156cm (61½in). BK

painted, but solid beech or walnut chairs were also made. Elongated, upholstered sofas appeared in the 1750s. These were often painted in light colours, with gilt details.

CABINET-MAKERS

Massive linen cupboards were modelled on northern German examples. These were made with heavy cornice mouldings and bun feet for some time, but gradually bracket feet – as shown in the engravings of Chippendale and others – replaced the bun feet and the cornices became lighter and less pronounced.

Chests of drawers were influenced by the commode: a typical version had four drawers on slightly curved legs terminating in animal feet. The façade was sometimes blocked, making it similar to pieces from the Low Countries. A new form of furniture, the glazed cabinet, mounted on a frame with slender turned legs, was popular for displaying collections of Chinese porcelain.

The cabinet-on-chest was an important piece in Scandinavia during this time. Massive in size, it incorporated a chest of drawers in the lower section with either one or two doors

above. These doors opened to reveal numerous small pigeonholes or shelves. The pediment was architectural in design, and later versions had pierced, carved, and gilt decorative features. The guilds that existed in Stockholm until the late 18th-century required a master cabinet-maker to make a cabinet-on-chest before he could be admitted, thus perpetuating the form.

Tables ranged from carved pine and gilded pier and console tables with marble tops, to dressing tables with three drawers below a top on cabriole legs.

High-style pier and console tables followed elaborate French fashions and were heavily carved and gilded with expensive marble tops. Dressing tables tended to be based on English examples and some were decorated with japanning. The fashion for tea tables, card tables, and small portable tables also followed English and French trends.



SWEDISH ARMCHAIR

One of a pair, this chair is French in design but has shorter cabriole legs than most French examples. Its staid shape consists of a square back, slightly shaped crest rail, and arms set straight outwards. Its carving is restrained, and the upholstered seat has no additional cushion. *c.1750–60. BK*



PAINTED DRESSING TABLE

This elegant dressing table is covered in red japanning. The moulding on the drawers and the drawer pulls are picked out in gilt, and the decoration beneath the central drawer is also gilt. Two pendants flank a central kneehole. The piece rests on slender cabriole legs. *Mid 18th century.*



ELONGATED SWEDISH SOFA

Designed by Johan Erhard Wilhelm, this sofa is painted in a light colour. The carved decoration is highlighted in gold, and features sinuous foliate and floral motifs beneath a geometric frieze. The back, side, and seat cushions are covered in a pale material with gold stripes, giving the whole piece a restrained,

quintessentially Scandinavian look. It is typical of Swedish furniture with its solid back – rather than one formed of numerous chair backs, which was common in English settees. These elongated sofas were made for reception rooms and were often made en suite with chairs. *c.1760. BK*



DANISH WALNUT CABINET-ON-CHEST

This cabinet-on-chest, with gilt fretwork on top of the cornice, is architectural in character. The carved and gilt-mirrored door gives the illusion of an actual mirror hanging on a wall. The serpentine lower case has three drawers above a pierced base and rests on scroll feet. *c.1750. H:231cm (91in); W:108cm (42½in); D:23.5cm (9¼in). PAR*

BRITAIN: QUEEN ANNE AND GEORGE I

THE MAIN CHANGE TO FURNITURE during the reign of Queen Anne (1702–14) was the increased use of walnut-veneered oak for less expensive pieces. The cabriole leg, another dramatic development of the early 18th century, was introduced to Britain during this time. The Dutch-style chair with a rounded back, solid vase-shaped splat, and cabriole legs with pad feet is widely known as a Queen Anne chair, and continued to be made long after her death.

Case furniture and chairs made during the reigns of Queen Anne and George I (1714–27) are often veneered with walnut and are sometimes

crossbanded or featherbanded. This change and the waning popularity of elaborate floral marquetry began around 1700 in England. Spiral, baluster-turned supports were also replaced by cabriole legs. On cabinet pieces, bun feet were common until around 1725, when bracket feet became prevalent.

One of the most popular case pieces was the bureau-bookcase, which developed from the writing cabinet with a fall front. Walnut bureaux and bureau-bookcases suited architectural interiors and were placed against the wall between windows. Less expensive versions were made of oak.

Dressing tables, or lowboys, now usually with three drawers, were used in bedchambers and, like bureau-bookcases, stood between windows. Dressing tables were usually made of walnut, either solid or veneered, but some were made of pine and were japanned. A few dressing tables were still made with turned legs and stretchers, but cabriole legs became more common as time went on.

GEORGE I

During the reign of George I, war with France, and the resulting animosity towards the French, inspired

the British to develop their own style of furniture rather than follow French fashions. With a growing empire and valuable trade links, Britain grew wealthy and the merchant classes became increasingly powerful and influential.

ARCHITECTURAL INFLUENCES

The Classical style of ancient Greece and Rome was the height of fashion. In 1715, the Scottish lawyer and architect Colin Campbell published *Vitruvius Britannicus*, surveying the growth of the English country house. The architects and designers who read the book created the Palladian style of



GEORGE I KNEEHOLE DESK

This top of this walnut dressing table/writing desk is decorated with crossbanded veneer and the long drawer at the top of the desk is featherbanded. Six smaller drawers flank the central kneehole, which has both a frieze drawer and a cupboard door. c.1725. H:70cm (28in); W:69cm (27½in); D:48cm (19¼in). L&T



WILLIAM III SIDE TABLE

This walnut table has a single drawer with simple brass drop pulls. The piece is supported on turned baluster legs and joined by a cross stretcher. The legs are typical William-and-Mary style. This piece would probably have belonged to a wealthy merchant. c.1700. H:68.5cm (27in); W:91cm (35¾in); D:53.5cm (21in). NOA



CENTRE TABLE

This small portable table is covered with gilt gesso incized with a low-relief design of C-scrolls and foliage. It has gently curved cabriole legs and pad feet. This table would have belonged to a very wealthy household. c.1720. H:78cm (30¾in); W:86.5cm (34in); D:55.5cm (22in). PAR



UPHOLSTERED SOFA

The two-seater sofa has a beech frame and walnut cabriole legs with shells carved on the knees. The upholstery has been replaced, but the sofa would originally have been covered with imported silk damask or needlework, which was used on the finest pieces. c.1720. W:141cm (55½in). L&T



CHEST OF DRAWERS

This George I-style oak chest of drawers has a moulded rectangular top above two short and two long drawers, and has double-beaded moulding on the carcass and petition rails. The ring handles are not original. The piece stands on stile feet. c.1700. H:85cm (33½in); W:94cm (37in); D:56cm (22in). DNS

the 1720s to 1740s (see p.96), and this influenced furniture design.

THE AGE OF WALNUT

Early Georgian furniture was usually made of walnut or decorated with a walnut veneer, although gilt gesso furniture was also popular. Marquetry was no longer fashionable, although inlaid cabinets were still imported from the Low Countries. Instead of relying on inlays for decoration,



JAPANNED SIDE CHAIR

The frame is decorated with japanning. The caned back and stretchers are typical of early 18th-century chairs, but the caning now flanks a vase-shaped splat and the stretchers are no longer turned. c.1725. H:113cm (44½in). PAR



WALNUT ARMCHAIR

This George I chair has a solid back splat and outspread arms terminating in scrolls. The cabriole legs are carved with shells and husks, and have trefoil feet. c.1725. H:101cm (39¾in); W:60cm (23¾in); D:60cm (23½in). PAR

English cabinet-makers emphasized the decorative features of the wood itself, such as the burrs and root timbers of walnut, which provided swirling patterns of timber.

Wooden furniture was decorated with single carved motifs, such as scallop shells, often on the knees of legs or in the centre of seat rails. By about 1710, corner blocks on the interior frames of chairs and tables meant that they no longer needed stretchers, so craftsmen could make cabriole legs more curved. Feet developed from the pad foot to the slightly scrolled foot, and subsequently to the claw-and-ball foot.

CHANGING TRENDS

Seats became more rounded, or “compass’d”, and broader, and backs became lower and spoon shaped, making chairs more comfortable. This chair may have been based on imported Chinese designs. Settees and sofas became more common. The settee was basically an armchair extended to seat two or more people, with a back in the same style as those used for single chairs. A sofa was a wide seat with an upholstered seat and back. Upholstery was still extremely expensive, and could only be afforded by the very wealthy. Little original upholstery survives from this period.

Walnut chests-on-chests became more architectural and decorative during the first quarter of the century. They often had pediments, fluted pilasters, and shaped bracket feet. Featherbanding was also popular.

The fashion for letter-writing made desks very popular and the *secrétaire* chest-on-chest was created in response. The top drawer of the lower section had a fall front that opened to reveal a writing surface, drawers, and numerous small pigeonholes.

The popularity of gambling created a demand for card tables, as well as for small tea tables and stands for holding refreshments during games.



Cast figures decorate the niches.

Two interior mirrored doors conceal more drawers.

Brass mounts depict bases or capitals of carved columns.

Architectural-style columns flank the central sections of the top and bottom.

The writing surface is covered with green leather.

The lower drawers are secured by an intricate locking system.

The inside door panels are decorated with veneer and inlaid brass surrounds.

ENGLISH *SECÉTAIRE* BOOKCASE

This flat-topped, fall-front, *secrétaire* bookcase is covered with walnut veneer. Various drawers and niches were designed to hold ledgers, stationary, and paperwork. c.1725. H:223cm (89¾in); W:110cm (44in). BAL

BRITAIN: PALLADIANISM

THE BRITISH PALLADIAN style is named after the Italian Renaissance architect, Andrea Palladio (1508–80), who published drawings of ancient Classical architecture. This style was popular in England from the 1720s to the 1740s, especially among educated, well-travelled aristocrats such as the Earl of Burlington, who built Chiswick House near London in 1725. Burlington's mansion is now regarded as the epitome of the Palladian style.

This was the golden era of the English country house, and many fine examples were built and furnished in the Palladian style, incorporating Classical motifs and rigid symmetry.

PALLADIO'S INFLUENCE

Palladio applied the mathematical precision of ancient structures to his work. His buildings, such as the Villa Rotunda near Venice (based upon the Pantheon in Rome), are geometrically balanced structures. In 1570, he published *I Quattro libri dell'architettura* (*The Four Books of Architecture*), which influenced architecture for centuries.

The architect Inigo Jones (1573–c.1652) studied Palladio's designs during a trip to Italy. On his return to England, he built the Banqueting House at Whitehall (1619–22) and the Queen's House in Greenwich (1635)

in the Palladian style. However, the influential architect, Christopher Wren, adopted the Baroque style, popular in Continental Europe, when he designed new buildings in the wake of the Great Fire of London, and it was not until the early 18th century that Palladianism was widely adopted in England.

ELEMENTS OF THE STYLE

Ancient Classical architecture was often at its best in large, public areas. The same is true of Palladian architecture, which was mostly designed for entrance halls and reception rooms. To fit such grand spaces, furniture had also to be grand. Large-scale architectural



Villa Almerico Capra, known as the Villa Rotonda, built 1566–70 by Palladio. This symmetrical building, with its central dome and Classical columns, was much admired by British architects.

Scrolled arms rest on supports decorated with acanthus leaves.



Carved scallop shell

Fielded panels provide architectural-style decoration.

The seat is made of solid mahogany.



MAHOGANY COMMODE

This commode is architecturally inspired: the pilasters on the sides and front are headed with lion's masks, with "bodies" of carved fish scales and acanthus. c.1730. H:81cm (32in); W:109cm (43in); D:51cm (20in). PAR

The cabriole legs terminate in pad feet.

The aprons are decorated with scallop-shell motifs.



GILTWOOD CONSOLE TABLE

The carved, gilded eagle and the heavy marble top are architecturally inspired. The table is attributed to William Kent, and is typical of his style. Early 18th century. H:89.5cm (39½in); W:78cm (31in); D:48cm (19in). PAR

The side aprons are decorated with the same carving as the front of the piece.

ENGLISH BENCH

This massive mahogany bench, attributed to the architect William Flitcroft, would have been made to enhance a grand hall. The rectangular-field back panels are derived from architectural motifs. The scallop shell above the centre panel

relates to the shaped aprons, also decorated with carved scallop shells, which were popular motifs of the time. This bench would have echoed the design and architectural details in the great hall for which it was commissioned. c.1730. H:108cm (43in); W:185cm (73in); D:59cm (23in). PAR



features, including pediments, pilasters, and fielded panels, were applied to side tables, seating furniture, and large overmantel frames. Acanthus leaves and Greek keys were popular decorative motifs.

Symmetry was crucial: many pieces were too heavy to be moved and were designed to fit in a particular place. Tables were often made in pairs with matching mirrors, which were designed to be positioned above them.

One of the paradoxes of this style is that although Palladian buildings were quite plain, many were furnished in the florid Rococo style, which appeared at the height of Palladianism.

WILLIAM KENT

The English landscape gardener and architect William Kent revived interest in Jones's and Palladio's work, promoting a severe architectural style based on ancient Classical tenets. At Holkham Hall in Norfolk, Kent was one of the first English architects to plan a complete interior and exterior design. Before the excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum from 1738, no-one had seen real ancient Roman or Greek furniture, so Kent designed furniture in his own version of an ancient style. His designs also reflected Italian Baroque taste, influenced by his studies in Italy.

Kent's furniture, or that attributed to him, tends to be large in scale, with decorative features inspired by ancient Classical designs. Kent is particularly associated with marble-topped side tables, supported on carved and gilt eagles. Vitruvian scroll decorations were also common in Kent's work.



SECRÉTAIRE CABINET

Made in mahogany, olive wood, and padouk, this bureau-bookcase is decorated with parcel (part) gilding. The pediment echoes the style of a Greek temple. *c.1745. H:191cm (85in); W:103cm (40½in); D:60cm (23½in). PAR*



CHAIR OF STATE

This chair was designed by Kent for the Prince of Wales' residence at Kew. It includes motifs from ancient Greece and Rome, such as the central mask. The pediment incorporates the Prince of Wales' emblem. *1733. H:142cm (56in). HL*

JOHN VARDY (1718–65)

THIS ARCHITECT AND FURNITURE DESIGNER HELPED TO POPULARIZE PALLADIAN TASTE DURING THE MID-CENTURY BUILDING BOOM.



Design for a bedroom mirror This combines the symmetry of the Palladian style with the lighter carving popular with Rococo designers.

John Vardy rose from a humble background to become one of the most important designers in Britain. Vardy's book *Some designs of Mr Inigo Jones and Mr William Kent, 1744*, was instrumental in popularizing the Palladian style. However, he was also a respected architect and designer in his own right.

One of Vardy's most famous projects was Spencer House in London, one of Britain's most important Palladian mansions. As well as designing the building, Vardy also created furniture for the house. These pieces were symmetrical, in the Palladian style, but also displayed more florid, Rococo traits. This combination of roles and styles was typical of the architect/designers who were influential in Britain at this time.



The guilloche moulding under the marble table top reflects Greek architectural motifs.

Pier table This gilt table has a marble top and serpentine legs carved with acanthus leaves. The sides are decorated with carved fish scales. *c.1745. H:39cm (15½in); W:136.5cm (53½in).*



MARBLE-TOPPED SIDE TABLE

Carved from pine and then gilded, this table would have been one of a pair, or perhaps four, matching tables. The marble top is supported by stylized mythological torsos, inspired by

ancient Greek statuary. Such figures were used as supports from the Renaissance to the Rococo period. The carved and gilt scallop shell, female mask, scrolls, and garlands are also Classical motifs. *c.1735. H:89cm (35in); W:143cm (56in); D:79.5cm (31in). PAR*

THOMAS CHIPPENDALE

THE NAME CHIPPENDALE HAS BECOME SYNONYMOUS WITH 18TH-CENTURY LONDON, AND WITH THE VERY BEST IN BRITISH FURNITURE DESIGN OF THE PERIOD.

THOMAS CHIPPENDALE IS arguably the most famous furniture designer of all time. The description “Chippendale” has become a generic term applied to furniture made in London between about 1750 and 1765, and has come to represent timeless design excellence. As well as his impact on English furniture, Chippendale was hugely influential around the world, especially in the American colonies, where his designs were widely copied. Chippendale is most famous today for his chairs. The typical Chippendale chair had a carved and pierced back splat, a serpentine top rail, carved knees, cabriole legs, and claw-and-ball feet. The elegance of Chippendale’s furniture challenged the French claim to be the greatest furniture designers of the age.

ST. MARTIN’S LANE

Thomas Chippendale was one of a number of brilliant craftsmen working in the vicinity of St. Martin’s Lane in London in the middle of the century. London was a vibrant capital for craftsmen, with a host of patrons, architects, and designers working together. Cabinet-makers copied each other’s wares, new craftsmen appeared on the scene, and new designs were published.

YELLOW DRAWING ROOM, HAREWOOD HOUSE

Two large mirrors designed by Chippendale, incorporating elaborate scrolls, fronds, and swags, dominate the drawing room of this imposing stately home in Yorkshire.

GEORGE III LIBRARY CHAIR

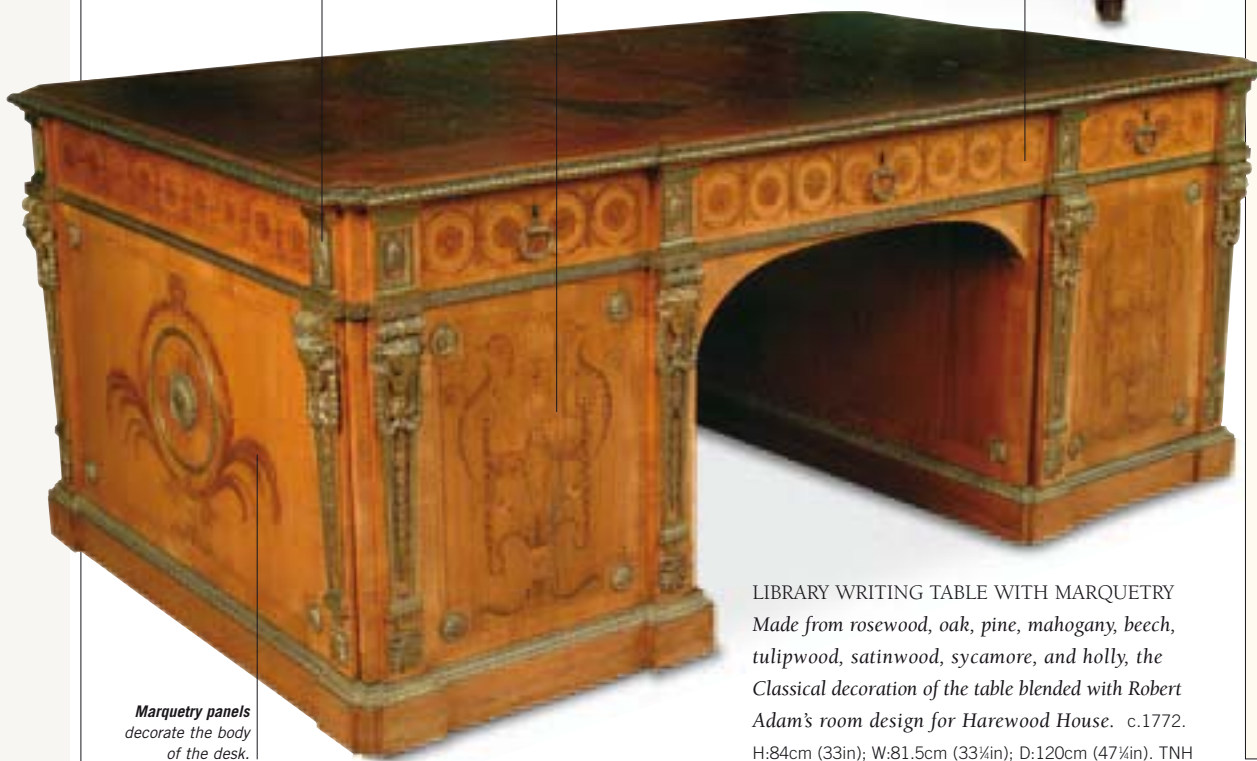
This is one of a pair, designed for a drawing room. The gros point and petit point needlework panels depict the gods Zeus and Neptune. c.1760. H:112cm (44½in); W:71cm (28in). PAR



Ormolu mounts decorate the edges of each panel.

Each pedestal contains a cupboard.

The frieze is decorated with rosette medallions.



Marquetry panels decorate the body of the desk.

LIBRARY WRITING TABLE WITH MARQUETRY
Made from rosewood, oak, pine, mahogany, beech, tulipwood, satinwood, sycamore, and holly, the Classical decoration of the table blended with Robert Adam’s room design for Harewood House. c.1772. H:84cm (33in); W:81.5cm (33¼in); D:120cm (47¼in). TNH

KEY DATES

- 1718** Thomas Chippendale born into a family of joiners and carpenters in Yorkshire, England.
- 1748** Chippendale married. He was well established in London as a cabinet-maker by this time.
- 1753** Chippendale and his financial partner, James Rannie, leased three buildings on St. Martin’s Lane in London. These buildings were occupied by Chippendale, and later his son, for 60 years.
- 1754** The first edition of *The Director* published. All furniture known to be the work of Chippendale was commissioned after this date.
- 1755** Fire at Chippendale’s warehouse, but within the year he was advertising his trade as both a cabinet-maker and draughtsman.
- 1766** Chippendale’s warehouse employed approximately 50 specialist craftsmen.
- 1769** Chippendale attempted, unsuccessfully, to import 60 unfinished chair frames from France.
- 1779** Thomas Chippendale died.

DESIGNS & STYLES

THE WORK OF CHIPPENDALE PROVIDES A SNAPSHOT OF THE FASHIONS OF THE TIME.

Chippendale's furniture ranged from pieces for the grandest reception rooms to domestic styles. For Harewood House in Yorkshire, he supplied a library table, an elm chopping block for the kitchen, and a deal table for the laundry. Harewood still contains one of the largest Chippendale collections in the world. Chippendale provided a complete interior decoration service, supplying (and often designing) curtains, chimneypieces, and wallpaper. He also made furniture specifically for particular architects, such as Robert Adam, to complement the style of each room.



This English armchair is similar to the "French Chair" design in *The Director* (above). The overall shape is Rococo, but the carved elements, such as the guilloche motif, are Classically inspired. PAR



THE MOST FAMOUS CABINET-MAKER

What sets Thomas Chippendale apart from other cabinet-makers of the time is that so many of his designs have survived. This is partly due to the enduring popularity of his style, but Chippendale's place in history is also thanks to the success of *The Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director* (often referred to simply as *The Director*). This book was intended to cultivate the patronage of the aristocracy, although the instructions were meant for cabinet-makers, who were invited to copy the designs. The engraver Matthias Darly was Chippendale's chief collaborator on the book.

By the time *The Director* was published, Chippendale was a master cabinet-maker. The increasing demands of running a successful business meant that Chippendale no longer actually made any of the furniture himself, but instead he directed and administered his London workshop of approximately 40 men. He also subcontracted work to the best suppliers for mounts and marquetry panels. *The Director* brought financial backing that allowed Chippendale to expand his business and become the leading furniture-maker of the day. His success also prompted fellow cabinet-makers to produce their own pattern books (see p.138).

EXOTIC INSPIRATION

Chinoiserie was very popular in the 1740s and Chippendale produced a large number of designs inspired by the motifs used on traditional Chinese pieces. As the liking for *Chinoiserie* developed, lacquer details were no longer sufficiently exotic on their own, so Chippendale designed furniture with pagoda surmounts, little bells, galleries of fretwork, and wood carved to represent interlaced bamboo. These were, of course, flights of fancy rather than representations of authentic Oriental furniture. One of the most famous commissions of "Chinese Chippendale" was a suite of green and white japanned furniture created for actor David Garrick's villa on the River Thames. Chippendale's pieces were designed for the villa's best dressing room and the Chinese bedroom.

GOTHIC ELEMENTS

The mid to late 18th century saw a revival in Gothic motifs and taste, inspired by the architecture and furniture of the Middle Ages, and Chippendale also published designs to satisfy this fashion revival. Gothic Chippendale furniture included decorative details such as pointed arches, finials, and panels with quatrefoil motifs.

SERPENTINE COMMODO

This piece has two oak-lined drawers and a mahogany-lined top drawer, with an olive, gilt-tooled, leather writing slide. Finely carved acanthus leaves, flanked by paterae and hung with bell flowers, overlay the moulded and shaped angles. c.1770.

H:85cm (33½in); W:135cm (53¼in); D:62cm (24¾in). PAR

BRITAIN: GEORGE II

GEORGE II'S REIGN (1727–60) signalled a period of peace and prosperity in Britain. Trading posts established by the East India Company in Calcutta and Madras were expanded, so by George II's death in 1760, England was confirmed as a commercial power.

THE AGE OF MAHOGANY

Imported from the British colonies in the West Indies and Honduras, mahogany became the favoured wood for fine cabinet-making in Britain by the early 1730s. In response to a blight on walnut trees, the French had stopped exporting walnut in 1730 and, besides, mahogany had many advantages. Cabinet-makers wanted to make the most of the wood's rich colour, which combined well with gold, silver, and bronze. The hardness of the wood also made it possible to create delicate pieces with pierced decoration and carving. This led to the creation of a British style based on mahogany, using less elaborate decoration than the French Rococo.

FASHIONABLE PURSUITS

Bureaux of all sorts were popular during this time, and chests of drawers and commodes "in the French taste" – with three drawers on feet – were made for fashionable patrons.

Tables ranged from grand, gilt pier tables with marble tops, used in formal reception rooms, to mahogany tilt-top tables with tripod bases and scalloped

edges, suitable for the fashionable pursuit of taking tea. Small portable tables were used in many rooms for a variety of purposes, ranging from playing cards to sewing or drawing.

Grand dining rooms were furnished with large sets of chairs, which often had carved and pierced back splats and upholstered slip seats fitted into a seat frame. These chairs had carved claw-and-ball feet, pad feet, or even, occasionally, scrolled feet.

ROCOCO INFLUENCE

Although the Rococo style was most influential in Continental Europe, British designers of the time were responsible for creating some of the movement's more extreme flights of fancy. The Rococo style affected the decoration of furniture as well as the shape. Large case pieces and beds were decorated with carved C-scrolls and foliage or other natural motifs, and some pieces had scrolled feet. The fashion for asymmetrical scrolls and curves was also evident on smaller furnishings, such as torchères, mirror frames, and tables.

The most famous English exponent of the Rococo style was Thomas Chippendale (see p.98), although it was just one of the design styles he embraced during his career.

Thomas Johnson, a respected English wood carver and furniture designer, published his engravings: *Designs for Picture Frames, Candelabra, Ceilings, &c* (1751), and *One Hundred and Fifty New Designs* (1761), for small tables and stands, wall sconces, clocks, frames, and other small decorative objects. His designs were wildly extravagant and epitomized the *genre pittoresque* decoration of Louis XV style (see p.78). He incorporated elements of the three most popular motifs of the time in his work: Chinese, Gothic, and Rococo. Johnson created elaborate pieces using *rocaille*, stalactites, foliage, birds, and other natural motifs. Some of the designs were so highly stylized that the wood was not strong enough to support the intricate carving.

Tripod table Made of mahogany, this tilt-top table would have been called a claw table in early inventories. The metal catch snaps into place when the top is lowered down onto the tripod base. c.1755. H:70cm (27.5in); D:68cm (26½in). PAR



GILTWOOD PIER TABLE

The frame of this marble-topped, giltwood pier table is exuberantly carved with Palladian motifs, including acanthus foliage and scrolls. The bearded mask in the centre is flanked by

eagle's heads, hung with a festoon of oak leaves and acorns, and has a pierced apron below. The cabriole legs are carved with putti, and terminate in scroll feet. The table is possibly by Matthias Lock. c.1740. H:115.5cm (45½in); W:128cm (50½in); D:68.5cm (27in). PAR

GILES GRENDEY (1693–1780)

THIS LONDON-BASED CABINET-MAKER RAN A THRIVING EXPORT BUSINESS OVER MANY YEARS FROM HIS WORKSHOP IN ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

Grendey's printed label noted that he 'Makes and Sells all Sorts of CABINET GOODS, Chairs, Tables, Glasses, etc.' His workshop, employing numerous craftsmen, supplied both high-quality goods and well-made but simple furniture for less wealthy clients, but he was most renowned for his export business, mostly to Spain. He famously supplied a suite of red japanned furniture to the Spanish Duke of Infantado, which comprised at least 77 pieces: the largest recorded suite of English furniture. A Grendey label causes great excitement among dealers and experts, but genuine Grendey pieces are extremely rare.



Side chair This beech chair, japanned in scarlet, is overlaid with gilt Chinoiserie. The chair combines earlier design elements – the solid splat and turned stretchers – with cabriole legs with claw-and-ball feet, pierced crest rail, and squared seat. c.1735. H:105.5cm (41½in). PAR



Armchair Made of mahogany, the shell motifs on the splat and the crest rail are carved rather than gilt. The carving shows the large-scale motifs sometimes used by Grendey. c.1740. H:101cm (39½in); W:63.5cm (25in). PAR



CHEST OF DRAWERS

This mahogany chest has a serpentine front with a similarly shaped top. Four graduated long drawers are flanked by chamfered corners carved with cartouches and pendant flowers,

and there is a slide-out writing surface. The handles are typical of the period, without backplates or elaborate escutcheons. The exquisite carving on the corners makes this a very fine, rare piece. *c.1755. H:86cm (34in); W:112cm (44in); D:68cm (26in). PAR*

ARMCHAIR

This style of mahogany armchair is usually described as a "Gainsborough", after the artist who often included the style in his paintings, and would have been made for a library or reception room. The seat and back have been re-upholstered in silk damask, similar to the original fabric, which would have matched that on the walls of the room. The cabriole legs are too heavy to be construed as Rococo. *c.1755. H:100cm (39in); W:77.5cm (30½in). PAR*



CARVED PINE CANDLESTAND

This stained pine and gilded candlestand is entwined with carved branches and dolphins and has iron candle branches. The naturalistic carving and scrolled base are typically Rococo. *c.1758. H:157cm (62in). TNH*

The fitted interior is very simple in style.

The writing surface retracts when not in use.

The simple ring brasses are reminiscent of the earlier William-and-Mary style.

The cabriole legs are decorated with carved leaves.

The shaped apron is decorated with brass.

The feet are scroll shaped.



WALNUT BUREAU-ON-STAND

This bureau-on-stand is unusual for English furniture. Made of walnut instead of the more typical mahogany, it sits on a carved, Rococo base terminating in scroll feet. *c.1735. H:96cm (37½in); W:74cm (29in). MAL*

AMERICA: QUEEN ANNE

QUEEN ANNE'S NAME is not only associated with British furniture, but also describes a style of furniture made in the American colonies, after her death, from about 1720 to 1750, depending upon the region.

By the early 18th century, British-trained cabinet-makers working in Boston were producing sophisticated furniture for the wealthy. Newspapers carried advertisements announcing the arrival of craftsmen conversant in the latest fashions. Furniture was also imported in great quantity, and included cane-backed chairs and lacquered trays, and mirrors from Britain, the Low Countries, and Spain.

INFLUENCE OF THE HOMELAND
Furniture made in the colonies did not imitate court styles, but was similar to furniture made for the middle classes in Britain and the Low Countries, because the settler communities consisted primarily of merchants, servants, and tradesmen, although some high-end pieces were produced.

By 1725, most furniture-makers were new second or third generation American, who interpreted traditional designs in new ways, but the influence of their homelands meant that designs varied between regions. These differences were also due to the woods available in the colonies.

THE CHOICE OF WOODS

During this time mahogany became more popular, although in the middle colonies walnut remained the wood of choice into the 1780s. Maple was often used in New England and furniture made in the mid 18th century often emphasized the curved grain of the wood. Cherry was popular in Connecticut, although other local woods were also used.

FURNITURE STYLES

Seating became more comfortable, but textiles remained prohibitively expensive, so upholstered furnishings were rare. Leather was often used to

upholster slip seats. Queen Anne chairs generally had balloon-shaped seats and solid, vase-shaped splats. The stiles were rounded and the crest rails were often decorated with carved shells. As the century progressed, turned legs with stretchers evolved into cabriole legs, but some makers favoured turned legs long after they had gone out of fashion.

Early chests of drawers tended to be veneered, but by the 1750s many were made of solid wood. Ball or bun feet favoured in the early 18th century were replaced by bracket, then claw-and-ball feet. On high chests of drawers, turned legs became cabriole



HIGH CHEST OF DRAWERS

This high chest, originating from Boston is veneered in both tiger maple and burr maple. The decorative pattern of the wood is enhanced by the use of crossbanding around each drawer

of the upper section, which gives the appearance of two drawers instead of one long drawer. The turned "cup-and-vase" legs are joined with flat, shaped stretchers, and are typical of the work of Boston cabinet-makers. *c.1715. KEN*



CHEST OF DRAWERS

This chest of drawers, made in Boston, is referred to as William and Mary, although it was made in the first quarter of the 18th century. Its burr walnut veneer imitates the oyster veneer pattern used on British examples. *1700–20. KEN*



FALL-FRONT BUREAU

This bureau from Boston is made of mahogany with pine secondary wood. The piece consists of various drawers behind a fall-front, and nine lower drawers with brass escutcheons. The piece sits on paw feet. *c.1750. H:112cm (44in); W:104cm (41in); D:53cm (21in). BDL*



MAPLE DINING TABLE

Made in the Boston area, this table is made of black-painted maple. It has a scrubbed, hinged oval top, with demi-lobe leaves. The apron has a single drawer for storage. The vase-and-reel

turned gatelegs terminate in claw-and-ball feet, and are joined by similarly turned stretchers. When not in use the leaves were closed and the table could be placed against the wall. *c.1715. H:73.5cm (29in); W:150cm (59in) open; D:122cm (48in). NA*

and cornice drawers disappeared. Bonnet-top pediments became more fashionable (although flat tops remained popular) and an extra drawer appeared in the upper section.

Dressing tables also served as writing tables in bedchambers. They were often made *en suite* with high chests and were one of the most expensive objects in a household. The tripod base snap table – so called because the metal catch under the top snapped into place – was made in all the

colonies. This had a round or square top and was easily moved for dining, cards, or writing. Turned-leg dining tables with folding side flaps, known as gateleg tables, were a staple item in most households. These tables remained popular until the 1750s and are often difficult to date.

As in Europe, tea tables were popular. The finest versions were made of mahogany and had elegant cabriole legs terminating in pad feet, and later, claw-and-ball feet.

REGIONAL VARIATIONS

While less wealthy areas favoured indigenous woods, New England and the southern colonies followed British fashions, and New York was influenced by the Low Countries. New York chair-makers preferred square claw-and-ball feet and rarely used medial stretchers. The high chest was unfashionable in

New York, where the wardrobe or chest-on-chest was preferred. Boston cabinet-makers used block-front façades on bureaux and chests of drawers. This distinctive feature may have originated from Indo-colonial furniture from Goa and Madeira, which would have been familiar to New England merchants.



MAPLE ARMCHAIR

This armchair, in the style of the School of John Gaines, was made in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The pierced scrolled crest with moulded shoulders and a vase-form splat are typical features of furniture made in this area. 1730–40. NA



SIDE CHAIR

This side chair was made in Philadelphia. It has a mixture of Queen Anne and Chippendale features. The back splat is solid, in the Queen Anne style, but its stiles and seat are shaped, and the chair has cabriole front legs, following the Chippendale style. FRE



The crest rail is elaborately carved and pierced.

The back splat is of a solid vase form.

The seat is made of rush.

The front stretcher is double baluster-turned.

QUEEN ANNE SIDE CHAIR

Thought to be designed by John Gaines, an important early cabinet-maker from Massachusetts, this maple chair's design is influenced by high-backed London chairs. It has a rush panel and seat, a new solid vase-shaped splat, turned stretchers, and "Spanish" feet. Early 18th century. NA



TRAY-TOP TEA TABLE

This tea table is made of mahogany. The moulded edge of the table top is designed to keep expensive implements used during tea drinking from falling on the floor. The piece has slender cabriole legs, terminating in pad feet. 1740–60. KEN



DRESSING TABLE

This dressing table comes from Salem. The case is decorated with walnut veneer and the piece has William-and-Mary style features in the form of turned legs and flat stretchers. 1710–30. H:76cm (30in); W:86cm (34in); D:56cm (22in). NA

AMERICAN CHIPPENDALE

The description “Chippendale”, when applied to American furniture, refers to stylistic features, rather than indicating that a piece was made by Chippendale. American Chippendale furniture was made from around 1745 to 1775, primarily in Philadelphia.

From the 1730s, Philadelphia welcomed immigrant craftsmen who brought with them new ideas and European fashions, which resulted in a more exuberant style than New England furniture. Some of the most

fashionable Philadelphian furniture was made by immigrants such as Scottish-born Thomas Affleck.

PREDOMINANT FASHIONS

Interior fashions popular in Europe, such as placing pairs of pier tables against the wall with mirrors positioned above them, were scaled down to suit smaller colonial homes.

Slab tables with marble tops were highly prized, using expensive materials and elaborate carving. In general less

expensive versions were made in New England and in the South, but the frames were not as finely carved and the legs were stocky. Dining tables, with or without drop leaves, were popular throughout the colonies. These were made in various woods including mahogany, walnut, and maple. In less grand houses tavern tables were common. These stood on cabriole legs and one or two pieces of wood were attached to the frame by wooden pegs: the top overhung the frame. Card and gaming tables were extremely popular. These also generally had cabriole legs, the knees carved with shells or

flowing foliage, and terminated in pad or claw-and-ball feet. Most had four legs with the rear two legs swinging outwards to support the top leaf, but five legs were favoured in New York.

By about 1745, side or dining chairs usually had pierced backs, rather than the solid splats common in Queen Anne furniture. Chippendale chairs generally had a squared seat with an upholstered slip seat that fitted into the frame. The most expensive versions were upholstered over the frame. Side chairs were often made in sets, sometimes with armchairs. Upholstered easy chairs offered greater comfort, but the expense of textiles



The top is made of imported marble, which is shaped to fit the frame.

A carved Chinoiserie figure sits within an asymmetrical cartouche.

The cabriole legs are elaborately carved with C-scrolls.

Intricate scroll feet support the piece.

PHILADELPHIA SLAB TABLE

This mahogany slab table was probably made by a foreign-born cabinet-maker. The backboard is made of yellow pine and the corner braces are of walnut. The elaborate decoration would have been designed to order for a wealthy client. c.1770. H:82cm (32½in); W:122.5cm (48¼in); D:59cm (23¼in).



CARD TABLE

This New England mahogany table has a central drawer to hold playing materials. When opened, square corners, hollowed out to hold a candlestick next to each player, are revealed. The piece rests on cabriole legs with carved knees and ball-and-claw feet. c.1760. W:82.5cm (32½in). NA



SLANT-FRONT DESK

This mahogany desk from the Boston area has 12 traditional, square, blocked drawers. However, it also has fashionable elements, such as the claw-and-ball feet and Chinese Chippendale brasses. The central shell motif is echoed in the carved pendant on the front rail. c.1770. W:102cm (40in). Pook



SLANT-FRONT DESK

This mahogany desk has brass handles at the sides for carrying. The wooden drawer pulls may be replacements. This classic desk shape was produced by the Newport cabinet-maker John Townsend. Its carved block and shell, used in the interior, is unique to furniture from Newport. 18th century. H:107cm (42in). NA



WING ARMCHAIR

This mahogany armchair was made in Massachusetts. It has a serpentine crest, canted back, shaped wings, and rolled arms, and is upholstered in velvet, although it would originally have been a woolen textile. The turned front stretcher is recessed, and the front legs terminate in claw-and-ball feet. c.1765. NA

meant that only the very wealthy could afford them. Wing armchairs protected the occupants from draughts.

OTHER FURNITURE

The chest of drawers and the high chest, often with a matching dressing table, remained popular. However, by the 1760s, these had been superseded by the clothes or linen press, a fashionable English form. Chests of drawers usually had four graduated drawers and stood on bracket or claw-and-ball feet, but the commode was rarely seen. New forms furnished fashionable abodes, including basin stands, candlestands and kettle stands.

DECORATIVE STYLES

Decoration tended to be similar to that used on European furniture, with carved shells, foliage, and trailing husks. However, colonial furniture tended to be less ornate. Gilt furniture was not found in the colonies, with the exception of mirrors, although gilt highlights were sometimes applied to interior carving, finials, and claw-and-ball feet. Painted furniture was popular outside the port towns and reflected the styles of the craftsmen's home countries. The Pennsylvania German community produced highly decorative, painted furniture, particularly dowry chests.

Woods, carving techniques, and the style of furniture all help to identify where a piece was made. In Newport, Rhode Island, the Goddard-Townsend school of cabinet-makers produced shell-carved, blocked bureaux and secretary bookcases that are immediately identifiable. Newport cabinet-makers also favoured claw-and-ball feet hollowed out under the claw tenons. New York cabinet-makers carved squared, claw-and-ball feet with deeper webbing over the ball.

WOODS

Mahogany was favoured by urban cabinet-makers, although maple and cherry were popular in New England. Walnut, from Pennsylvania and Virginia, was still used after the introduction of mahogany. Secondary woods tended to be indigenous: white pine, birch, tulipwood, cedar, yellow pine, and sycamore. Wood was plentiful in the colonies, so veneers were not common. Solid woods were also less susceptible to changes in climate.



PHILADELPHIA CANDLESTAND

This mahogany candlestand has a tilt-top, birdcage mechanism. The turned support extends to a compressed ball and a tripartite, cabriole base, terminating in slipper feet. *Early 18th century. H:51.5cm (20¼in). FRE*



PHILADELPHIA LOWBOY

This carved mahogany lowboy has inset fluted quarter columns on the case. Shell, vine, and foliate carving decorates the centre drawer, apron, and cabriole legs. *1796. H:77.5cm (31in); W:90cm (36in); D:53.75cm (21½in). NA*



SIDE CHAIR

This walnut chair is similar to the Queen Anne style. The solid vase splat and trifid feet are typical of Philadelphia Queen Anne chairs. The projecting ears, cabriole legs, and squared seat reflect the Chippendale style. *c.1745. NA*



SIDE CHAIR

This mahogany chair, attributed to Thomas Affleck, has a carved crest rail, fluted stiles and knees, and a pierced splat. The front legs have scrolls under the seat and terminate in claw-and-ball feet. *c.1765. H:94cm (37in). BDL*



PHILADELPHIA HIGH CHEST

This mahogany high chest is clearly derived from the Chippendale pattern books, although the date of the piece is towards the end of the period. The gilt-brass escutcheons and the quality of the carving indicate the Chippendale

influence. The pediment follows the design of a desk and bookcase illustrated in Chippendale's *Director*, while the carving on the central lower drawer is taken from a chimneypiece tablet design by Thomas Johnson. *1762–75. H:233cm (91¾in); W:113.5cm (45½in); D:62.5cm (25in).*

AMERICA: SOUTHERN STATES

THE SOUTHERN STATES of Maryland, North and South Carolina, and Virginia were British colonies along the eastern seaboard of America, whose societies were centred on large plantations.

The largest southern city in the early 18th century was Charles Town (known as Charleston) in South Carolina, a port where rich merchants aspired to recreate British fashions. The wealthy plantation owners traded with their compatriots in Britain and employed native craftsmen to build their houses in the latest style. Imported furniture, pattern books, and immigrants all introduced new styles of furniture to the area.

NEW FORMS

As in New England, types of furniture developed in pace with changes in housing and with the growth of the middle class. In larger houses, rooms were now designated for specific purposes, such as parlours for dining, libraries, steward's rooms, and bedrooms.

The clothes press, which usually had drawers at the bottom, was related to the European armoire and was common, while the high chest of drawers – so popular in the north – was rarely seen in the southern states.

Tables ranged from round and square tilt-top tables, breakfast tables, and

card tables, to dining tables and sideboard or slab tables. The sideboard table usually had a marble top making it suitable for use in the dining room. If made with a wooden top, it also had a cover to protect it from wet objects. These tables were based on British furniture and were copied from imports or drawings.

Dressing tables, which were also used for writing or reading, were closely related to British examples and rarely had the same arrangement of drawers as those originating from New England. The southern versions either had one long drawer at the top of the table, or two square drawers

flanking a central long drawer. The legs tended to have pad, rather than claw-and-ball, feet.

Chairs varied from simple side chairs with turned stretchers and backs, and rush seats, to sumptuous wing armchairs with claw-and-ball feet. Corner chairs, known as smoking chairs, were made for gentlemen in Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina. These had curved backs, which were sometimes upholstered in leather.

The Chippendale-style chair was made by both rural and urban



MAHOGANY LINEN PRESS

This linen press was made in Eastern Virginia. The upper case fits into the moulded top of the lower case. It has stop-fluted corner columns, a dentil cove cornice, and ogee bracket feet. The two doors, when open, reveal a yellow pine fitted interior with a number of pigeonholes. *c.1760. H:184cm (72½in); W:93cm (36½in); D:53.5cm (21in).*

TEA TABLES

THE FASHION FOR TAKING TEA CREATED A MARKET FOR LOCALLY MADE TEA TABLES.

By the early 18th century, wealthy Americans had taken up tea drinking, and as a result southern cabinet-makers made tea tables using predominantly European methods.

Square tables often had rectangular tops with slightly bevelled edges, as well as straight, turned legs ending in "button" feet, and rails with curved lower edges.

The middle classes picked up on the trend for taking tea and by 1750 rural southern cabinet-makers and craftsmen were making tea tables in vernacular styles from black walnut, cherry, and maple. The craftsmen reinterpreted the designs favoured by the rich to suit local tastes and their own abilities. Styles tended to be a combination of William and Mary and Queen Anne.

By 1760, round tea tables had become popular. These typically had baluster and column shafts sitting on tripod bases. Slipper feet were designed with a pronounced ridge on the top edge and a large pad underneath. The table top usually sat on a shaped, solid block rather than on a birdcage device popular on earlier tables.



Mahogany tray-top tea table This table has a shaped bulging skirt and cabriole legs, which have acanthus-carved knees and end in claw-and-ball feet. *1740–60.*



WALNUT ARMCHAIR

This Maryland chair is inspired by Chippendale, or similar pattern books. It has a serpentine crest with scrolled ears, a pierced back splat, carved shell details, and cabriole legs. *1755–70. H:105.5cm (41½in); W:81cm (32in). SP*



SLAB OR SIDEBOARD TABLE

This Virginian dining table has a marble top and unusual legs with bifurcated knees. The ball-and-claw feet are all forward-facing and have pronounced webbing. *1745–60. H:65cm (25½in); W:69cm (27in); D:47cm (18½in).*

craftsmen. The detail of the pierced splats varied, but all the chairs had a squared seat and shaped back legs. The seat was usually narrower than on British examples.

LOCAL MATERIALS

Historically, southern furniture has often been confused with furniture from Britain or New England. Examining the types of wood that have been used is generally the best way to determine the origin of a piece. In most cases, it is the secondary

woods, not visible to the eye, that help identify the region of origin. Secondary woods used in the southern states included tulipwood – particularly for drawer linings in both mahogany and walnut furniture – gumwood, yellow pine, and bald cypress, which is resistant to decay and so particularly suited to the south's hot and humid climate. Primary woods, the wood on show, included mahogany, which was imported and used in Charles Town in the 1730s, and walnut, which other southern towns preferred.



SIDE CHAIR

This is one of a pair of chairs made of walnut and yellow pine. The crest rail has a shell motif centred above a carved splat. The front cabriole legs terminate in trifid feet. *Mid 18th century. H:100cm (40in); W:50cm (20in).*



OVAL-TOP DINING TABLE

This Virginian table, based on a British design, has drop leaves, so could be moved easily and stored against the wall. The shape of the legs and use of yellow pine indicate its southern origin. *1690–1740. H:81cm (32in); W:122cm (48in).*

SECRÉTAIRE BOOKCASE

This mahogany secretary bookcase is believed to be the earliest known piece of American furniture with this pattern of Chinoiserie Gothic mullions. This piece is similar in construction to four other case pieces made in Charleston. The carved rosettes on the pediment are typical of the Charleston style. *c.1760. H:244cm (97½in); W:109cm (43½in); D:60.5cm (24¼in).*

The mullion pattern is a Chinese railing design interpreted in a Gothic pattern.

The prospect door is flanked by carved document drawers.

The fall front is supported on lopers that pull out of the case when needed.

Simple brass bale handles are attached to the drawer fronts.

Shaped bracket feet support the case.



NEW FORMS

DURING THE 18TH CENTURY, the desire for a more relaxed and informal life became increasingly important amongst the wealthy and leisured classes, creating a demand for new types of furniture.

The growing popularity of writing and playing games, in particular, influenced furniture design, and many new kinds of writing table and desk were created. These were usually intended for bedrooms, rather than being placed in a reception room. In addition to writing tables specifically intended for correspondence, writing surfaces were skilfully incorporated into other small tables, including dressing tables.

Games tables evolved in response to the popularity of board and card games, and the most elaborate versions incorporated different surfaces for playing a variety of games. The 18th-century fascination for novelty furniture with secret devices led to the creation of ordinary-looking tables that opened to reveal hidden writing or games surfaces.



Green baize-lined surface for playing cards.

The inner surface is inlaid with a board for backgammon and other games.

The shaped cabriole legs terminate in pad feet.

GEORGE II GAMES TABLE

Made of mahogany, this table has four legs, one of which swings back to provide support for the leaves. Inside the triple-hinged top is a baize-lined card-playing surface with squared recesses on the corners to hold candlesticks, and an inlaid surface for playing backgammon and other games. *c.1740. H:85cm (34in). NA 4*

Kettle stands and tea tables were designed to accommodate the new fashion for drinking tea and coffee. Like other small occasional tables, these were light and easy to move, so that they could be placed against the walls of a room when not in use, as convention demanded.

Comfort became much more of a priority during the 18th century, particularly in light of the greater interest in conversation and informal social gatherings. Powerful women, such as Louis XV's mistress, Madame de Pompadour, were influential patrons and held salons, where guests met to discuss literature, science, and the arts. New types of chairs, sofas, and settees were shaped with gently curved backs, and had padded and upholstered seats, backs, and arms, to make them more comfortable, despite the high cost of textiles. Design books featuring these new forms of furniture often contained special sections indicating how people should use them and giving the proper dimensions.

KETTLE STAND

This English mahogany kettle stand has a solid gallery to stop the kettle from sliding off, and a column on top of a tripod base. The column is fluted and spirally turned, and the feet terminate in claw-and-ball feet. Some elaborate stands have silver salvers made to fit the shape of the top on which the kettle and spirit burner stood, although these have often been lost over time. *c.1750. H:61cm (24in); Diam:29cm (11½in). L&T 6*



ENCOIGNURE "À FLEURS"

This Louis XV corner cupboard is decorated with rosewood inlays of flowers and foliage. It has a quarter-circle marble top above a two-door case, a shaped apron, and short cabriole legs. Bronze mounts and sabots provide additional decoration. *c.1750. H:93cm (37½in); W:76cm (30½in); D:53cm (21¼in). GK 4*



BUREAU DRESSING TABLE

This rare piece has one long drawer above three short drawers at each side. There is a cupboard and a small drawer in the recess. The desk is richly japanned with gold Chinoiserie on a green background, and has brass mounts and bracket feet. *c.1720. H:83cm (33¼in); W:78cm (31¼in); D:48cm (19¼in). MAL*



ENGLISH WRITING TABLE

Made of mahogany, this writing table has tall cabriole legs rather than the short legs found on a bureau dressing table. The top of the desk has a leather-covered writing surface. Two of the front legs swing out to support the frieze drawer, to reveal slides and compartments. c.1745. HL 7



FRENCH LADY'S WRITING BUREAU

This small Louis XV *secrétaire* is veneered in kingwood and satinwood parquetry and has five drawers and cabriole legs. The restrained use of ornamental ormolu mounts marks this out as a mid-century, rather than an early-century piece. c.1750. H:96cm (38½in); W:101cm (40¼in); D:52cm (20¾in). GK 5



FRENCH LADY'S WRITING BUREAU

Known as a *secrétaire en pente* (*secrétaire* with a slope), this bureau is decorated with black lacquer. The decoration is quite sparse, which is typical of the Japanese style. This piece is stamped with the initials of the acclaimed *ébéniste*, Jean-Pierre Latz. c.1750. H:98cm (39¼in). GK 9



CHINESE GAMES TABLE

This rare Padouk table from Canton has a square top made in two pieces, which are hinged so that they open out. Support for the extended top is supplied by lopers concealed in the apron.

The interior contains several games surfaces, including one for backgammon. The cabriole legs have carved knees and terminate in claw-and-ball feet. The piece would have been made for export. c.1775. H:82cm (32¼in); W:139cm (55½in) (open); D:70cm (28in). MJM



GEORGE II DRAWING TABLE

When closed, this mahogany table looks like an ordinary card table. However, the double fold-over top opens to reveal a surface for cards as well as a drawing or writing slope with two

drawers below and a tray for writing utensils. The piece has square, chamfered legs, which were introduced around this time. Unlike writing desks or card tables, architect's tables have a covered writing surface that can be adjusted. c.1760. H:90.5cm (36¼in). L&T 4



ENGLISH SETTEE

The back-splat design for this mahogany settee is based on two chair backs. The seat is upholstered in a flamestitch pattern. This medieval design was a favoured textile of the period, and was used for curtains and bedhangings. The piece terminates in cabriole legs and claw-and-ball feet. c.1755. NOA



FRENCH CANAPÉ

This Louis XIV tapestry-covered walnut canapé is part of a suite. The original Beauvais tapestry is worked in vivid colours depicting bold flowers, foliage, birds, and squirrels. The piece has eight cabriole legs that are carved at the knees with shells and foliage. c.1715. H:112cm (44in); W:173cm (68in); D:91.5cm (36in). PAR



PAINTED ITALIAN SETTEE

This small, upholstered settee is based on the design for a French chair, but the Italian maker has added floral carving at the top of the legs and in the centre of the chair rail. It is slightly bulkier than a French settee and the leg curve is more exuberant. c.1760. H:88cm (35¼in); W:130cm (51in). NAG 4

COMMODOES

THE COMMODOE BECAME popular in France around 1700 and the shape is now synonymous with the 18th century. Initially the width was always greater than the height, sometimes exaggeratedly so, and the commode was a curved, *bombé* shape, often with slightly splayed legs.

Fashionable commodes had marble tops to match the marble of chimneypieces. They were often surmounted by a pier glass and either faced the chimneypiece or stood between the windows in reception rooms. As other countries created their own versions, commodes became more varied in form and decoration, and

were used in different rooms. Louis XV commodes usually have three large drawers, but the upper drawer is sometimes divided into two half drawers. The drawer divisions were often disguised in French furniture. Louis XV commode cases were generally made of oak or walnut and veneered, and ormolu mounts were used to protect the veneers.

Louis XVI commodes were less curved and had shorter legs shaped like spinning tops (*toupées*). They were made of walnut and had veneers in exotic woods such as tulipwood, violet, or satinwood, enhanced with ebony and mahogany parquetry.



ITALIAN COMMODOE

This Milanese commode is decorated with ivory marquetrie set into olivewood and crossbanded veneers. The drawer divider, moulding, frame, and legs are stained to resemble ebony. The marquetrie top depicts mythological goddesses. *c.1760. H:102cm (40 $\frac{1}{2}$ in). LT 6*



AMERICAN COMMODOE

This marble-topped commode is made of mahogany, white pine, and chestnut, with brass drawer pulls and escutcheons. The commode is extremely rare in colonial furniture. *c.1760. H:88.3cm (34 $\frac{3}{4}$ in); W:93.3cm (36 $\frac{3}{4}$ in); D:54.6cm (21 $\frac{1}{2}$ in).*

The top is made of marble.

The locks are decorated with gilt bronze.



Intricate veneers create elaborate parquetry.

Fine marquetrie shows a bird-and-flower pattern.

The curved shape echoes Louis XV style.

PARISIAN COMMODOE

The two-drawer shape was standard in Louis XV design. The front of the piece is decorated with illusionist marquetrie depicting a bouquet of flowers with birds, and the sides are covered with veneer made into a geometric pattern, known as parquetry. The front is made *sans*

traverses, meaning that the divide between the drawers is subtle, creating a unified pattern, although the drawers have dropped over time. The legs and body are curved, but less so than in many Louis XV pieces. Like much Louis XV furniture, ormolu mounts protect the feet and veneer. *c.1760. H:85cm (34in); W:128cm (51 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); D:60cm (24in). GK 7*

The gilt bronze mounts are both for protection and decoration.



SWEDISH COMMODOE

This three-drawer commode by C.G. Wilkom has the short legs of Louis XVI commodes but not the fashionable *toupée* feet. The exaggerated curve at the top of the case is unusual. *c.1776. H:79cm (31 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); W:80.5cm (32 $\frac{1}{4}$ in); D:46cm (45in). BK 5*



CURVED SWEDISH COMMODOE

Although it is inspired by the French commode, the drawer divisions of this Swedish piece are emphasized by the banded inlay framing the drawers, and the placing of the escutcheons and handles. *c.1750. H:83cm (33 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); W:103cm (41 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); D:48.5cm (19 $\frac{1}{2}$ in). BK 5*



PROVINCIAL FRENCH COMMODOE

Cabinet-makers from the provinces imitated Parisian fashions, but often used cheaper materials. This commode from Bordeaux, made in walnut rather than veneered with precious woods, has subtle incised frames around the handles and escutcheons. The panelled sides and feet form an S-shaped curve. *c.1760. W:124.5cm (49½in). SL 3*



GERMAN COMMODOE

This French-style commode, made by the German cabinet-maker Matthäus Funk, accentuates the divisions between the two drawers more dramatically than most French pieces, using gilding to emphasize the bottom of each drawer. The mounts and the grain of the walnut provide decoration. *c.1760. H:104cm (41½in); W:61cm (24½in); D:84cm (18in). GK 7*



PROVINCIAL DRESDEN COMMODOE

This oak commode is an early Saxon example. It has a serpentine front and carved bottom, typical of the commode form. The escutcheons are very simple in design, and the commode has simple French bracket feet, rather than the cabriole legs found on more elaborate examples. *c.1750. H:87cm (34½in); W:125cm (50in); D:66cm (26½in). BMN 3*



PAINTED ITALIAN COMMODOE

This two-drawer commode is decorated with paintings of aristocrats in an idealized landscape, similar to the Rococo paintings of Watteau (see p.78). Stylized leaf patterns adorn the skirt, sides, and legs. The shape of the legs resembles the curved cabriole style of Louis XV, but is less pronounced. *c.1765. H:90cm (36in); W:116cm (46½in); D:64cm (25½in). GK 6*



ENGLISH CHIPPENDALE-STYLE COMMODOE

This mahogany *bombé* commode has three oak-lined drawers. The chased gilt brass Rococo swing handles and escutcheons are not original. The piece has a Rococo carved frieze and foliage carving on the front moulded serpentine corners. The front legs are decorated with leaf sprays emanating from cartouche carved feet. *Mid 18th century. H:97cm (38in). WW 7*



GERMAN COMMODOE

This fine serpentine *bombé* walnut and fruitwood commode is decorated with exquisite marquetry and parquetry. The locks, drawer pulls, and feet are decorated with gilt bronze mounts. This piece may have been made by the famous Spindler brothers, court *ebénistes* to Frederick the Great. *c.1765. H:89cm (35½in); W:160cm (64in); D:63cm (25½in). NAG*



FRENCH COMMODOE

This walnut commode has a serpentine front and a shaped apron. As is typical of French commodes, the top is made of marble. The three drawers have decorative brass pulls and keyholes. The piece terminates in cabriole legs and rests on scroll feet. *Mid 18th century. H:91cm (36½in); W:121cm (48½in); D:60cm (24in). PIL 4*



PROVINCIAL GERMAN COMMODOE

This serpentine commode is veneered in walnut with banding around the drawers and veneer flitches of different colours. The escutcheons are Rococo in style with asymmetrical pierced attachments. Like most provincial commodes, it does not have a marble top, but is veneered. The legs are slightly cabriole in shape. *c.1750. W:127cm (50½in). BMN 5*



TURKISH CHEST OF DRAWERS

This chest of drawers is influenced by different sources. It incorporates the serpentine shape of the commode as well as the massive shape and drawer configuration of library table designs published in 18th-century pattern books. Columns and elaborate carving add to the decorative features. *c.1750. H:47cm (18½in); W:92cm (36½in); D:46cm (18½in). 5*

HIGHBOYS

HIGHBOYS AND LOWBOYS first occurred in England, but by 1730 highboys were almost exclusive to colonial America. Both pieces were intended for use in the bedroom, and were often made to be used together.

A lowboy, known in Britain as a dressing table, had drawers below a fixed top, and long legs to allow easy access to the drawers, and to enable someone to sit comfortably at it.

Lowboy drawers did not have locks, which indicates that items stored in them were not as valuable as those stored in the upper part of a highboy, which did lock. A mirror would often be hung above, or placed on top of a lowboy.

Known as tallboys in England, highboys consisted of chests placed on top of lowboys. These imposing pieces were highly prized in America as symbols of wealth, and remain an important part of American cultural heritage. Each region had its own style, influenced by local materials and the cultural origin of the makers.

Flat-topped highboys were used to display ornaments, and cabinet-makers also made high chests with shelves on top which stepped inwards to display ceramics and other treasures. Towards the mid-century, shaped tops became fashionable, and the finest pieces had carved pediments and finials.



This pediment shape is known as a "bonnet top".

The urn-shaped finials display a Classical influence.

The central motif is a carved shell, which is repeated on the lowboy.

The brass escutcheons are etched.

Lowboy drawers do not have locks.

Cabriole legs support the piece.

The carved shell echoes the motif at the top of the piece.



The japanned motifs are repeated from the highboy.

The turned pendants are carved and gilt, matching those on the highboy.



ENGLISH HIGHBOY

This provincial George I highboy is made of oak and ash. The upper section has a flat cornice above two short drawers and three long drawers. The lower section has an arrangement of five drawers. It has fashionable cabriole legs but also has the "bat-shaped" brass escutcheons and handles popular at the beginning of the century. c.1720. MAL



MASSACHUSETTS HIGHBOY

Made on the north shore of Massachusetts in native figured maple, this highboy is similar to English pieces of the period. Its flat projecting cornice may have been used to display prized pieces of ceramics or glass. The cabriole legs and Queen-Anne-style brass escutcheons indicate that this piece was made mid-century. c.1750. H:185 cm (72 1/4 in). NA 4

BOSTON HIGHBOY AND LOWBOY

The japanned case of this Boston highboy is made of maple, while white pine is used for the interior supports. Its brass escutcheons are Queen Anne style in shape but with earlier style engraving. Highboys like this were made in Boston as late as 1747, and this highboy's cabriole legs help to date it as a later example. Made with a matching lowboy, this highboy is one of only eight known japanned Boston highboys, with cabriole legs. 1747. H:178.5cm (70 1/4 in); W:100.5cm (39 1/4 in); D:53cm (20 3/4 in).



CONNECTICUT HIGHBOY

This highboy is made of cherry wood, a material favoured by Connecticut cabinet-makers. The tapering scroll feet are a variation of a type known as Spanish feet, which were popular on American furniture. Connecticut pieces often incorporated features such as double Spanish feet and triple, moulded cornices. c.1730. H:193cm (76 in). NAO

THE POUFREUSE AND COIFFEUSE

THE HIGHBOY AND LOWBOY DREW INSPIRATION FROM FEMINE FRENCH FURNITURE DEVELOPED FOR POWDERING HAIR AND APPLYING MAKE-UP.

The French word *poudreuse* means “powder” or “dust”. When applied to furniture it refers to a table originally used as a place to powder hair. These

fashionable French pieces evolved into dressing tables, lowboys, and ultimately highboys. A *poudreuse* usually had a marble top, which opened to reveal a mirror that could be raised on a rack. Beneath the mirror were compartments for powder and wigs.

As the fashion for face make-up grew, the *poudreuse* evolved into a larger piece, called the *coiffeuse*. Ladies’ *coiffeuses* were often decorated with floral marquetry.

By the late 18th century, a *coiffeuse* with a writing surface and inkwell had been developed for use by gentlemen.



PENNSYLVANIA HIGHBOY

This highboy is decorated with reeded quarter columns on the sides of the upper and lower case, and carved shells in the centre of its cabriole legs. Trifid feet (which have three toe-shaped sections) were generally used only in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. *c.1730. H:190.5cm (75in); W:107cm (42in); D:58.5cm (23in). NAO*



Paris Coiffeuse concealed compartments and a leather writing slide. This piece was intended for use in a lady’s dressing room. *c.1760. H:86cm (33½in); W:47cm (18½in); D:74cm (29in). GK*

French Coiffeuse with three false upper drawers and a mirror which is revealed when the central portion of the top is lifted. *c.1750. H:70cm (27½in); W:82cm (32½in); D:50cm (20in). NAG*



ENGLISH DRESSING TABLE

This mahogany dressing table has four drawers that pull out. Unlike French examples, these drawers are not divided into compartments. *c.1750. H:71cm (28in); W:76cm (29in); D:47cm (18½in). POOK 5*



WALNUT LOWBOY

This Delaware Valley piece has four equal sized drawers positioned in pairs – a configuration favoured by the middle American colonies. Its cabriole legs terminate in Spanish feet, a common characteristic of furniture from this area and New Jersey. *c.1760. H:79cm (31in). POOK 6*



NEW YORK HIGHBOY

This highboy is made of walnut, a wood used and favoured by New York cabinet-makers in the 1720s and 1730s. Its proportions are particular to the New York region: it has a smaller upper section with four long drawers (the single top drawer appears to be split), and a lower case with three drawers. *c.1730. H:104cm (41in). NA 3*



CONNECTICUT HIGHBOY

This Chippendale-style tall chest is made of cherry. The upper section has a curved pediment flanked by terminals and has six drawers. The lower part is made up of one long drawer and short drawers on either side of a central fan-carved drawer. The piece has turned pendants and cabriole legs. *c.1750. H:180cm (72in). POOK 6*



PHILADELPHIA HIGHBOY

Highboys from Philadelphia were often highly carved and elaborately decorated. The upper section of this mahogany piece has a swan-neck pediment with floral terminals, which were popular in Britain. The urn and flame finials, and the acanthus carved on the cabriole legs, are typical Neoclassical motifs. *c.1760. H:206cm (81½in). S&K 3*



NEW ENGLAND LOWBOY

The case and top of this piece are veneered in figured walnut. The single long drawer – in this example fitted with compartments – over three short drawers is an arrangement typical of the New England style. The highly arched skirt is decorated with pendant finials, and the piece rests on cabriole legs. *c.1735. W:82.5cm (32½in). FRE 5*

TABLES

CHANGING SOCIAL CUSTOMS at the beginning of the 18th century created a need for many new types of table. The fashion for entertaining small groups of people led to a demand for light, portable tables that could be arranged wherever required. Specific tables were made for playing cards, taking tea, and writing letters.

The card table was primarily a British innovation. In the early part of the 18th century, the card table was basically a square table with a hinged top that folded back. The rear leg swung back to support the open top. As card tables were stored against the wall, only the front skirt and legs were carved. The top often had hollowed-out corners for holding cards, chips, or candlesticks.

Writing tables were often fitted with a velvet or leather writing surface. Lady's writing tables were small, with a sloping top and a drawer for storing writing materials. These tables could also be used for embroidery or needlepoint. Men's writing tables, which were known in France as *bureaux plats*, were larger and had flat tops and a storage drawer.

FRENCH RÉGENCE BUREAU PLAT

This bureau is made of ebony with brass inlays. It has a serpentine bronze-framed top above three drawers at the front and blind drawers at the back. The piece is decorated with ormolu and sabot mounts, and has cabriole legs. *c.1720. H:74cm (29in); W:150cm (59in). GK 3*

The top is covered with inset gold leather.

The corners and sides are decorated with ormolu masks.

The legs are cabriole shaped.

Ormolu mounts in the shape of animal hooves protect the feet.

Both console tables and pier tables were created as part of the design for an integrated interior. A console table usually had supports at the front only, because the back was attached to a wall. Pier tables were also designed to be positioned against the wall, but these were usually smaller, and had four legs. Traditionally, they stood between two windows or doors, and often had matching mirrors, known as pier glasses, above them. Both types of table were often elaborately decorated with carving and gilt, and had decorative marble tops, but the designs were generally lighter than the Baroque style favoured in the 17th century, and they incorporated the asymmetric, natural motifs of the Rococo style.

Pedestal tables were columnar and had three splayed legs. The style of the tabletops varied. These tables were often used in dining rooms as tea tables for holding china and crockery.

Tripod candlestands generally had small, rounded tops. Larger tripod tables were often called tea tables, and the finest examples had scalloped tops with moulded edges, and elaborately carved columns and feet.



SWISS CONSOLE TABLE

This gilt table, probably made in Bern, has a marble top above a carved, pierced frame with Rococo scrolls, foliage, and asymmetrical shells. The apron and stretcher are both carved with an asymmetrical cartouche. *c.1765. H:83cm (32½in); W:36cm (14½in). GK 4*



GERMAN PIER TABLE

This small pier table displays both Rococo and Neoclassical elements. The top is made of marble and sits above a frieze, decorated with a stylized Greek key motif. It is supported by four carved, scrolled legs. *c.1760. H:89cm (35in); W:46cm (18in); D:81cm (32in). GK 5*



GERMAN OAK TABLE

This imposing oak table is made in the Franconian Baroque style. It is veneered in walnut and the shaped top is inlaid with damson, cherrywood, and maple wood in a geometric marquetry pattern within a crossbanded surround. A shallow frieze,

which is also crossbanded, leads into carved cabriole legs with scroll feet. The legs are joined by flat, shaped stretchers. The piece terminates in ball feet. *18th century. W:138cm (55½in). BMN 6*



ENGLISH SIDE TABLE

This small, vernacular side table is made of oak and fruitwood. It has one narrow frieze drawer above an undulating, shaped apron. The table stands on turned, slightly tapering legs, and terminates in pad feet. *c.1750. H:69.5cm; (27½in). DN 1*



SICILIAN SIDE TABLE

This table is made of gilded pine with a marble top. The frieze is faced with glass panels painted on the underside to simulate blue-grey onyx. Neoclassical symbols, such as egg and dart, bay leaf mouldings, and lion's masks, provide decoration. The tapered legs have acanthus plumes and are faced with glass panels. 18th century. H:96cm (38½in) W:126cm (50½in). TNH



GILTWOOD SIDE TABLE

This French Régence side table is heavily carved and covered with gilt. The top is made of *rosso antico* marble. The frieze and cabriole legs are elaborately decorated with carvings of pierced foliage surmounted by nymphs' heads. The table was bought by an English gentleman for his country house. c.1725. H:84cm (33in); W:110cm (43in); D:72cm (28in). MAL



GILTWOOD SIDE TABLE

This marble-topped giltwood table, which may be of German origin, has an ornately carved frieze and apron, which are enlivened with Rococo flames and swags of flowers on each side. The cabriole legs have carved knees decorated with large, bearded masks. 18th century. H:80cm (32in); W:124.5cm (50in); D:70cm (28in). HL 7



ENGLISH TEA TABLE

This George II tea table has a mechanical concertina action, which means that when the two-part hinged tabletop is open, it reveals compartments for holding games. The piece stands on cabriole legs and terminates in claw-and-ball feet. c.1750. W:96cm (38in). DN 3



GERMAN TABLE

This simple table, which has one small drawer underneath an inlaid floral marquetry top, is decorated with more marquetry over the shaped frieze and cabriole legs. It is small enough to move easily, and would have fulfilled many uses. c.1760. H:95cm (38in). BMN 3



LOUIS XV WRITING TABLE

This small French writing table has a raised, pierced brass edge around the top. The sides and feet are decorated with ormolu mounts. The escutcheons are asymmetrical in typical Rococo style. c.1750. H:72cm (29in); W:60cm (24in); D:41cm (16½in). BK 4



AMERICAN TEA TABLE

This vernacular table is made of painted maple. The rectangular top has a moulded edge projecting over a shaped skirt with a drawer. The corners of the frieze continue into sharp edges down the cabriole legs, which lead into pad feet. c.1740. H:70cm (27½in). NA 5

TILT-TOP TABLES

THESE VERSATILE TABLES WERE IDEAL FOR THE NEWLY FASHIONABLE PASTIME OF DRINKING TEA.

Tilt-top tables had three parts: the top, a "birdcage" mechanism that enabled the top to tilt and revolve, and a columnar support with a tripod base. The top folded flat, so that the table could be stored against a wall.

The top had a lip around the edge, to protect items on the table, such as valuable porcelain cups. The birdcage, named after its appearance, was used in England but was more popular in America. An iron catch was fitted to the underside of the top and birdcage, to lock the top in place. The column was anchored to the birdcage with a removable wedge. The various parts of the table were purchased from different craftsmen, then assembled by a cabinet-maker.

Tilt-top tables from Philadelphia are considered the best examples of colonial cabinet-making. The finest ones are made of solid mahogany, which makes it difficult to distinguish them from English examples.



Detail of mechanism



Birdcage



Philadelphia tilt-top tea table This fine table has a birdcage support, a scalloped edge, a tripod base, and claw-and-ball feet. The top is made from a single piece of figured mahogany. c.1765. H:122cm (48in); W:89cm (35in). SP



CHAIRS

EARLY IN THE CENTURY, Queen Anne-style chairs had a solid, narrow splat, usually of a vase or baluster shape, which fitted into the centre of the back rail. The frame tended to be straight and narrow, with rounded shoulders, and the seat was rounded or balloon-shaped with an upholstered seat.

Queen Anne chairs were usually made of walnut, although vernacular versions were made of elm or oak. They had slightly cabriole legs and pad feet. The earliest versions had flat or turned stretchers.

During the second quarter of the 18th century, squared seats became more common. The seat rails were shallower and often shaped, and sometimes had carved or applied shells in the centre. Chair backs had serpentine crest rails terminating in scrolls or volutes and the back splat was wider. The upper section of the back splat sometimes had scrolled ears close to the intersection with the top rail. On very fine examples, splats were sometimes carved at the edges.

The knees of cabriole legs were now more pronounced and frequently carved with shells or husks, or had carved volutes attached below them. Most chairs still had pad feet, but claw-and-ball feet first appeared in about 1725 in Britain and around 1740 in the American colonies.

Chinese furniture makers produced chairs that were similar in style for the lucrative European market.



The back splat is solid and an inverted baluster shape.

Carved roundels echo the decoration on the crest rail.

Shell motifs are often found on cabriole legs of the period.

ENGLISH SIDE CHAIR

This is the ultimate example of a George I side chair. The solid, inverted baluster-shaped back splat slips into a shaped shoe. Rounded shoulders form a continuous S-shape to the stiles, which terminate in volutes. Carved shells adorn the centre of the crest rail and appear on the shaped knees. The balloon-shaped seat is

upholstered in needlepoint. The front of the seat rail has a cartouche in the centre. The cabriole front legs have claw-and-ball feet while the back legs have block feet. This type of chair was copied all over Britain, Europe, and the colonies, with chair-makers drawing on various elements depending on their clientele. *c.1720. H:105.5cm (41½in); W:57cm (22½in); D:61cm (24in). PAR*



ENGLISH SIDE CHAIR

This is an early example of a Queen Anne side chair. The back splat is solid, the shoulders and stiles are slightly curved, and the slip seat is balloon-shaped. The chair is attributed to John Yorke on the basis of the design and construction. *c.1710. H:114cm (45in); W:53.5cm (21in); D:58.5cm (23in). PAR*



CHINESE ARMCHAIR

This open-style armchair, made of solid padouk, incorporates a variety of different elements. The solid splat is shaped but the stiles below the shoulders remain straight. The splayed cabriole legs are shorter than those seen on European examples. *c.1740. H:109cm (43in). B&I 5*



AMERICAN SIDE CHAIR

This walnut chair from Massachusetts displays a mixture of styles. It has the slim back splat and turned stretchers popular at the beginning of the century, while the square slip seat and curved legs are more typical of the mid century. It represents a transition between Queen Anne and Chippendale styles. *c.1745. NA 4*



PERUVIAN ARMCHAIR

This mahogany chair reflects the Rococo style. The crest rail has asymmetrical central carving. The sinuous moulding continues from the crest rail down the stiles and onto the arms. The legs are cabriole-shaped with C-scrolls on the knees. The pierced splat may be a later replacement. *c.1750. H:122cm (48in); W:59cm (23¼in). TNH*

INTERPRETING THE FRENCH STYLE

A MOVE AWAY FROM THE FORMALITY OF THE BAROQUE INTERIOR LED TO A DEMAND FOR MORE COMFORTABLE FURNITURE, AND THE FRENCH LED THE WAY WITH THE *FAUTEUIL* ONE OF THE MOST ICONIC PIECES OF THE 18TH CENTURY.

During the 18th century, the European nobility and the increasingly influential middle classes sought more elegant surroundings and rooms in which to entertain and converse, and with this came more comfortable furniture, which invited visitors to linger.

This desire for a more sociable environment led to the development of new chair styles. French craftsmen created the *fauteuil*, an upholstered armchair with open sides. This feminine-looking piece influenced the development of chairs around the world, and allowed the occupant to entertain in comfort.

Compared to the heavy-looking, high-backed chairs of the 17th century, these armchairs were lighter and more refined in shape, reflecting the fashion for feminine furnishings. They were often decorated in the same style as the room's other furnishings, using similar colour and fabrics.

The seat and back of the *fauteuil* were upholstered to make the chair more comfortable. The armrests were also padded and covered

in the same fabric. The arms were set further back around a quarter of the length of the side-rail in order to accommodate the large, hooped skirts that were fashionable with aristocratic ladies from around 1720.

Decoration was often asymmetrical in the Rococo style, incorporating shells and rocaille. Raised on cabriole legs, the entire frame of the chair was a mass of graceful curves.

Usually painted in pale blues, greens and yellows to match the colour scheme of the interior, the exposed framework might also have gilt decoration to emphasize both shape and carved detail.

Cabinet-makers all over Europe strove to emulate and surpass the talents of their French counterparts in meeting the demands of their wealthy clients, many of whom were hungry for furniture in the French taste. Interpretations of the *fauteuil* were plentiful throughout the continent, and the *fauteuil* became the seating style of choice for the most fashionable European homes in the early 18th century.



CANTONESE SIDE CHAIR

The wide, undulating shoulders of this chair and the unusually wide splat indicate that the chair is of non-European origin. The crest rail and back stiles are made from one piece of wood, which is typical of Chinese furniture. c.1730. H:106cm (41¾in); W:53cm (20½in); D:53cm (20¾in). MJM



SWEDISH ARMCHAIR

The back splat of this mahogany chair is unusual in that it terminates into a back stretcher rather than into the seat of the chair. A stylized carved shell decorates the crest rail and serpentine apron. This chair also has turned stretchers, even though they were no longer fashionable at this time. c.1755. BK 4



Italian Armchair Inspired by the *fauteuil*, this Italian example has a higher, more oval back with intricate gilt carving. The pastel paint reflects the French fashion for more subtle surroundings. c.1750. H:94cm (37in); W:61cm (24in). PAR



German chair This chair emulates those of contemporary French cabinet-makers, whose influence can be seen in the ornate, rocaille carving and the pale colours of the floral-embroidered silk upholstery. NAG



English armchair Essentially French in style, the later date of this armchair by Ince and Mayhew is evident from the square, tapering legs and Neoclassical decoration, which were fashionable from the 1760s. c.1770. H:98cm (38½in). PAR



French Fauteuil The elegance of the gentle curves is emphasized by the gilt decoration. The shell motifs on the crest rail and the knees are typical of the period. c.1750. H:96.5cm (38in); W:70cm (27½in); D:61cm (24in). PAR

EVOLUTION OF MIRRORS

FOR MANY YEARS THE MIRROR WAS A RARE AND VASTLY EXPENSIVE ITEM, AND TODAY IT IS DIFFICULT TO APPRECIATE JUST HOW PRIZED AND IMPORTANT MIRROR GLASS ONCE WAS.

AT THE END of the 17th century, a mirror about 1m x 90cm (40in x 36in) would have cost the equivalent of £20,000 in today's currency. The earliest mirrors were handheld, but by the 18th century, the mirror had become an essential part of the fashionable home.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Mirrors have been used for thousands of years. They were believed to foretell the future and to bring bad luck, especially when broken. Many people thought that to see your reflection was to see your soul, and for years the Church was against the use of mirrors.

The earliest known mirror was made of bronze, and ancient civilizations also used silver, gold, tin, steel, obsidian (volcanic glass), and rock crystal. Curved glass mirrors, made by cutting a sphere in two, were produced during the Middle Ages, but it was not until the 15th century that it was possible to create flat, colourless glass, known as "crystallo". This technique created relatively small pieces of glass.

VENETIAN GLASSMAKERS

Crystallo, or crystalline glass, and blown glass were developed in Venice. The Venetian workshops were the only places producing glass mirrors before the mid 17th century. The commercial importance of this discovery prompted the Venetian authorities to forbid glassmakers to move from their headquarters on the island of Murano on pain of death.

DEVELOPMENTS IN EUROPE

Although some Venetian glassmakers were seduced into setting up workshops, principally in Germany and the Low Countries, it was not until around 1663 that Murano's supremacy was challenged. Louis XIV of France established a glassworks at Tournai, while in England, a glassworks was set up at Vauxhall to produce mirrors for the court of Charles II.

At the end of the 17th century, Bernard Perrot, working at Tournai, developed the casting method, which made it possible to create larger sheets of glass. The glass was translucent but not transparent, as minerals in the sand affected the result. Artisans cut, ground, engraved, polished, and silvered the glass, using mercury to produce a reflective surface. In 1835, real silver was used for the first time, relieving the makers of the hazards of mercury poisoning.

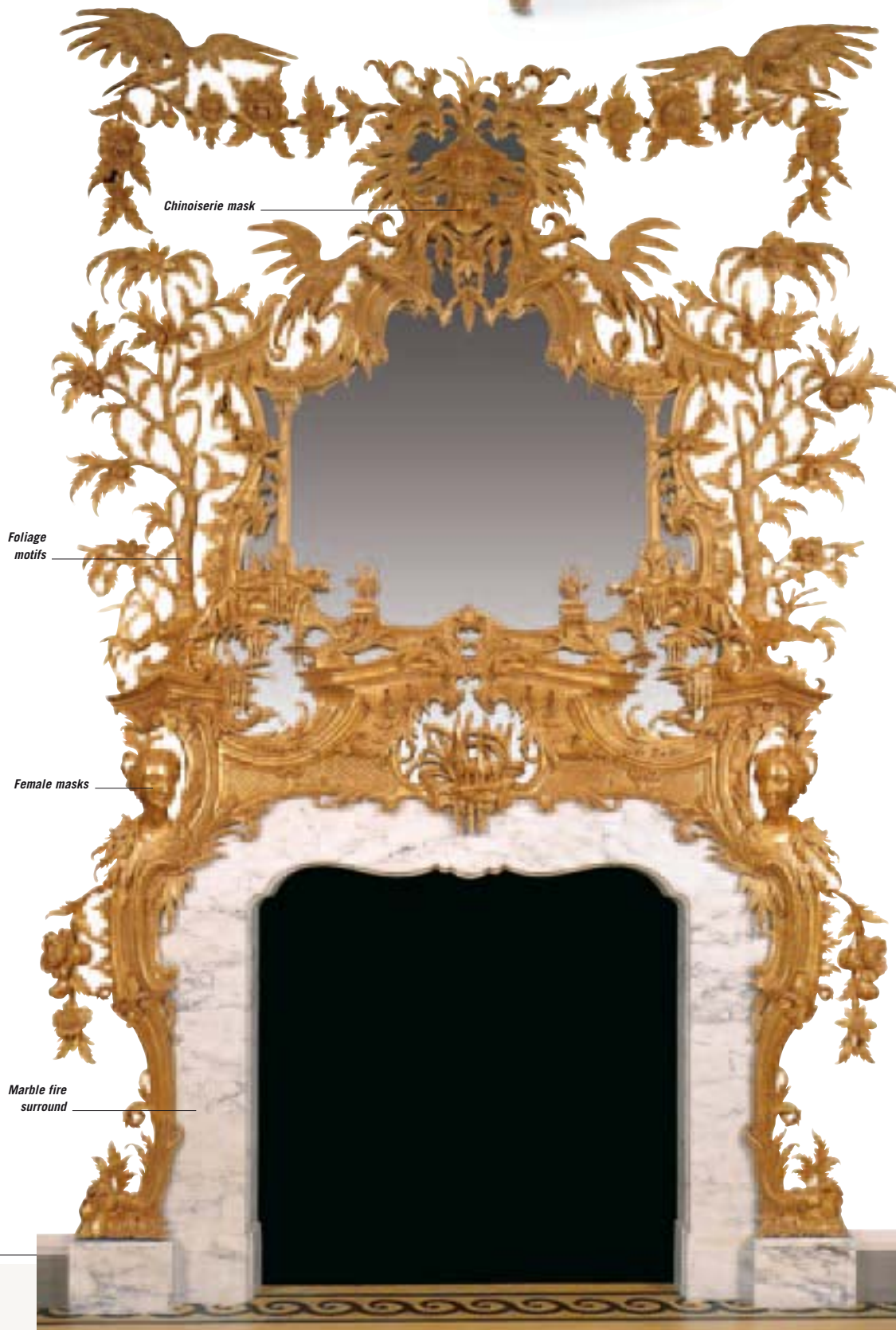
GEORGE II CHIMNEYPIECE

This giltwood mirror, attributed to Matthias Lock, has an elaborately carved frame with Rococo details of fruit, leaves, birds, scrolls, and Chinoiserie elements. c.1755.

H:590cm (236in); W:215cm (86in).

ENGLISH GILDED EASEL MIRROR

This mirror was designed to be placed on a table. Mirror backs were often covered with softwood, to protect the glass and metal from being oxidized by the light. c.1725. H:78cm (31¼in). NOA



Chinoiserie mask

Foliage motifs

Female masks

Marble fire surround

MIRROR BOX

This stunning box mirror has a number of architectural elements, including the broken pediment and the two marble columns flanking the mirror plate. The piece is inlaid with precious stones. This mirror was once owned by Marie de Medici.



CARVED, GILDED GIRANDOLE

This is one of a pair of fine giltwood girandoles after a design by Thomas Johnson, published in 1758. The gilding and candles helped to reflect more light around a room.

c.1760. H:120cm (48in); W:53cm (21¼in). NOA



VENETIAN OVAL MIRROR

This oval-shaped glass is typical of Italian design and uses etched and applied glass to frame the central oval mirror. Its Venetian origin would have made it highly covetable. Whole teams of artisans were needed to create mirrors like this.

1800-15. H:100cm (39in). DC



CHANGING FASHIONS

The production of larger sheets of glass enabled mirrors to become the focal point of the room, and to reflect light around what were previously very dark homes. The *Salle des Glaces* at the Palace of Versailles (see p.34) must have made a powerful impact on those who had never seen anything other than a small hand mirror.

In England, 1700-40 marked a golden age of mirror production while the 20 per cent tax on mirrors was temporarily abolished. Large mirrors were designed to be placed over the mantelpiece, and long pier glasses were made, often in pairs, to fit between windows in grand houses. Fashionable country homes were furnished with fine mirrors. In 1703, John Gumley produced 3m-high (10ft) mirrors decorated with blue glass for Chatsworth.

From about 1725, English design was inspired by Palladian architecture (see p.96), often mirroring architectural details of the house in the frame. Oval mirrors were also very popular.

FRAME DESIGN

Due to their size and the versatility of frame carving, mirrors were among the first household objects to reflect fashion. At the turn of the 18th century, lacquer panels or japanning were sought after. Later, fashion favoured elaborately carved Rococo frames, including asymmetrical mirrors with Chinoiserie, C-scrolls, and foliage.

KEY DATES

20th century bc: Hand-held polished bronze mirror.

6th century: Etruscan hand mirror.

1291: Venetian Republic requires glassworkers to move to the island of Murano.

1448: Term "crystalline glass" appears in the inventory of René d'Anjou.

1571-92: Venetian craftsman, Jacopo Verzelini, sets up glassworks in the City of London.

1612: *L'Arte Vetraria*, by Antonio Neri, about the processes of glassmaking, published in Florence.

1618: Sir Robert Mansell obtains patent to set up a London glasshouse employing Venetian glassmakers.

1665: Nicholas du Noyer sets up a glass house employing 200 workers in Paris.

c.1670: Bernard Perrot invents casting technique, making it possible to create larger sheets of glass.

1676: George Ravenscroft invents lead crystal glass by adding lead oxide to glass.

1678: Patent granted to John Roberts' "invention of grinding, polishing and diamonding glass plates for looking glasses...by the motion of water and wheels."

1719: *Real Fábrica de Coína*, probably Portugal's first mirror factory, established by John Beare.

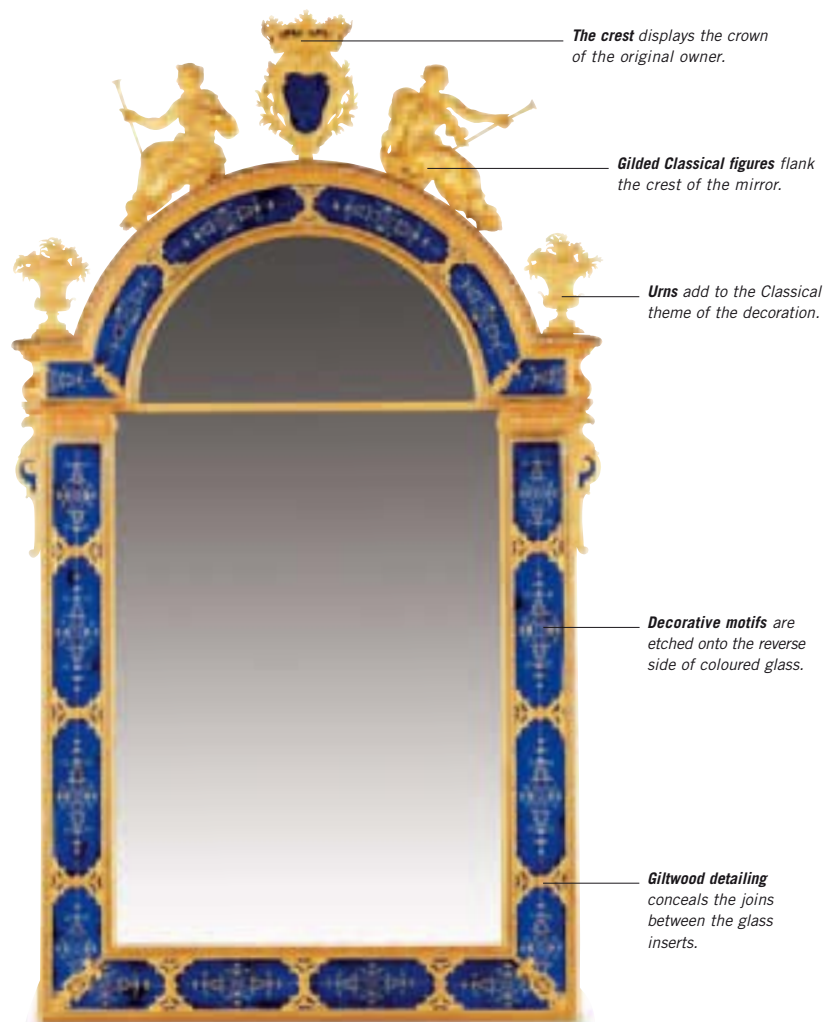
MIRRORS

NOWHERE WAS THE influence of Rococo style stronger than in mirror design. It was difficult to produce big sheets of glass, so large mirrors were often made of several pieces of glass. 18th-century glass tends to be thin with shallow bevels. Many pattern books were published at the time, and as a result many pieces show influences from other countries.

In the early part of the century, mirror frames were usually made of carved gilt or silvered gesso on a wooden base, and then walnut was used with giltwood until the start of the Rococo period, when carved giltwood and mahogany took over. Costly materials such as coloured and etched glass, were sometimes included. Candelabra were often attached to the

base of frames (known as *girandoles*) to reflect light into dark rooms and cast dancing shadows on the walls.

Frames were made from softwoods such as pine and fruitwoods, making it possible to carve curves, scalloped shells, and ornate cartouches with relative ease. The joints were gessoed and painted with gold or silver leaf. Popular motifs included shells, acanthus leaves, egg-and-dart moulding, and cresting, often depicting birds with outstretched wings. Bird motifs were popular in America. It is difficult to distinguish American mirrors from the English ones that were imported in large quantities, partly because the American and European species of spruce, which were often used in the frames, are very similar.



The crest displays the crown of the original owner.

Gilded Classical figures flank the crest of the mirror.

Urns add to the Classical theme of the decoration.

Decorative motifs are etched onto the reverse side of coloured glass.

Giltwood detailing conceals the joins between the glass inserts.

PIER MIRROR

This elegant mirror would have been placed above a pier table and was probably one of a pair. Pier mirrors were designed to hang between the windows in a drawing room. As it was difficult to manufacture large mirrors, two plates of glass are joined by a gilt wooden frame. The cobalt-blue etched glass inserts

were designed to glow in candlelight, and were created by *églomisé*, where the design is etched on the back of the glass. Classical forms were fashionable, as seen by the trumpet-bearing maidens on the top of the mirror. Frames were more influenced by fashion than larger items of furniture, so they are good indicators of contemporary styles. *c.1735. H:197cm (78¼in); W:117cm (46¼in). MAL*



ENGLISH PIER GLASS

This mirror is a fine example of the Palladian style, with a central mask set into the crest. Decorated with carved and gilded gesso, this pier glass is a rare find because it still retains the original candle arms, which are often missing from pieces of this period. *c.1720. H:119cm (47½in); W:66cm (26¼in). NOA*



MIRROR WITH PAINTED FRAME

This highly coloured Venetian mirror frame is reminiscent of Italian painted furniture of the time, but it also has elements of Louis XV style in the scrolled feet and curvaceous frame. The frame is painted and has highlights picked out in gilt. *c.1760. H:73cm (29¼in); W:44cm (17¼in). GK 2*



GERMAN MIRROR

This south German wall mirror frame is made of carved and gilded wood. The foliate carving winds around the frame to make a curvaceous rectangular shape. The crown and pendant are typical of the asymmetrical Rococo style. *Mid 18th century. H:133cm (53¼in); W:63cm (24¼in). BMN 3*



ENGLISH MIRROR

One of a pair, this walnut mirror features a gilt carved phoenix flanked by a broken pediment terminating in carved and gilt foliage. The birds on the crests of the two mirrors face in different directions, indicating that the mirrors were originally placed next to each other. *c.1740. H:104cm (41¼in); W:54.5cm (21¼in). NA 6*

**GERMAN MIRROR**

In the early 18th century, Germans continued to favour designs that were no longer fashionable in France or England. The pelmet in the cresting and the heavy design features are similar to late 17th-century styles, but the scrolling foliage decoration is typical of the Rococo style. *c.1760. H:70cm (28in). GK 2*

**ENGLISH CARTOUCHE MIRROR**

This cartouche-shaped mirror is a good example of the English interpretation of Rococo. C-scrolls and curved foliage were very popular motifs in all Rococo pieces, but the carving of this mirror frame is less ornate than that on French pieces of the period. *c.1760. H:89cm (35½in); W:(max) 47cm (18¾in). NOA*

**ITALIAN GIRANDOLE MIRROR**

This Italian late Rococo mirror is strikingly similar to English and French designs of the time. It is made of carved and gilded soft wood. A candle holder is positioned at the base of the glass. Mirrors incorporating candle holders, *girandoles*, were popular in the Rococo period. *c.1770. H:86.5cm (34¼in). DL 3*

**ENGLISH GEORGE II MIRROR**

This bevelled mirror frame is made of carved giltwood and red lacquer. The pierced giltwood frame is carved at the top with scrolling foliate cresting, flanked by two bird's heads. The frame is decorated with birds, flowers, acanthus leaves, strapwork; and a cartouche at the base. *c.1735. H:101.5cm (40in); W:66cm (26in). PAR*

**ITALIAN OVERMANTEL MIRROR**

This large mirror uses many different sizes of plate in the frame. The joints are disguised by carved, gilt fillets across the larger pane of glass and scroll elements along the sides. Many smaller pieces of glass alongside the main mirror reflect additional light. *c.1750. H:191cm (76½in). DN 5*

**AMERICAN CHIPPENDALE MIRROR**

This mirror is a fine example of Chippendale style. Made of highly polished mahogany, it lacks the gilt decoration of many pieces of the period. The interior of the frame surrounding the glass is double moulded and both the crest and base are serpentine shaped with delicate ears. *Mid 18th century. FRE 2*

**AMERICAN CHIPPENDALE MIRROR**

This mirror frame in the Chippendale style is made of walnut with parcel gilding. The crest is decorated with a foliate design. It is attributed to John Elliott of Philadelphia, who both made and imported mirror frames. Many British Chippendale-style frames were exported to the colonies at this time. *NA 3*

**ENGLISH CHIPPENDALE MIRROR**

Mirrors of this design, often without a gilt bevel surrounding the plate, were exported in large numbers from England, spreading the Chippendale style. This frame is made of pine veneered in walnut and parcel gilt. The candle holders are decorated with leaf motifs. *c.1750. H:114cm (45½in); W:61cm (24½in). NOA*



LATE 18TH CENTURY

1760-1800

A NEW CLASSICISM

THE SECOND HALF OF THE 18TH CENTURY WAS A PERIOD OF IMMENSE REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE AND A RENEWED INTEREST IN CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN.

DURING THE EARLY YEARS of the 18th century, an agricultural revolution slowly spread across Britain, Europe, and the Americas. Farmers enclosed the old open, mixed fields of crops and pasture, and used new and intensive methods of farming as well as experimenting with new breeds of livestock. These changes increased food production, thus pushing down prices, but also drove farmworkers off the land into the rapidly expanding towns.

In 1760, a second revolution got under way in Britain as inventors and engineers developed new machinery powered by coal and water. The

steam engine and pump, mechanical spinning machine, blast furnace, and other inventions revolutionized the manufacture of textiles and eventually led to the mass production of furniture and other household goods. Methods of working changed, too, as people who had previously worked at home in rural cottage industries now lived together in towns and cities and worked long hours in vast factories.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Alongside and informing both these revolutions was the cultural revolution known as the Enlightenment, a philosophical attempt to rationalize the replacement of customs, traditions, and religion with reason and natural law. Philosophers, scientists, astronomers, explorers, and surveyors questioned the boundaries of their world and pursued new ways of thought that influenced two of the most important political revolutions in history: the American Revolution of 1776 against British colonial rule that led to the independence of the United States of America; and the French Revolution of 1789 that overthrew the monarchy and introduced new ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity.

NEOCLASSICISM

Just as the Enlightenment philosophers looked back to the ordered Classical world for inspiration – to understand how humankind fitted into a universe of laws and reason – so,



Transitional *fauteuil à la reine* This giltwood armchair is carved with berried laurel leaves and rosettes. c.1775. H:103cm (40½in). PAR

too, did designers, giving birth to the movement we now call Neoclassicism. The term itself did not appear in print until 1861 in a review of a painting, but it is generally used to refer to the style of art, architecture, and design that was concerned with the ideals of the Classical world and which flourished in the late 18th century.

The intellectuals and travellers of the period revered the Classical world of the ancient Greeks and Romans. With the discovery of ancient Roman villas and their furnishings in Pompeii and Herculaneum after 1738, the craze for the Classical world was unleashed. It began with the application of decorative Classical motifs and the principal of symmetry to architecture. Various artists and architects published great tomes illustrating the ancient world, thus creating a demand for a more accurate Classicism rather than just a reworking of Italian Renaissance and Baroque architecture. It then spread to interior design, notably furniture, as well as to painting, pottery, glass, and tapestry, totally transforming the environment and style of the period.



Somerset House, London This is a fine example of a symmetrical Neoclassical building. It was designed by Sir William Chambers between 1766 and 1786.

TIMELINE 1760–1800

c.1760 The Age of Enlightenment, embodied in works by Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, and Hume.

1760 George III crowned King of Britain.

1762 James Stuart and Nicholas Revett publish *Antiques of Athens*, raising public interest in Classical antiquities, and influencing design styles.



George III

1762 Accession of Catherine the Great to the Russian throne, extending European influence in Russia.

1762 English government declares war on Spain over colonies in Europe; Spain declares war on Portugal.

1763 Treaty of Paris ends Seven Years' War between France and England.



The American eagle

1767 Jesuits expelled from Spain and all Spanish colonies by Charles III.

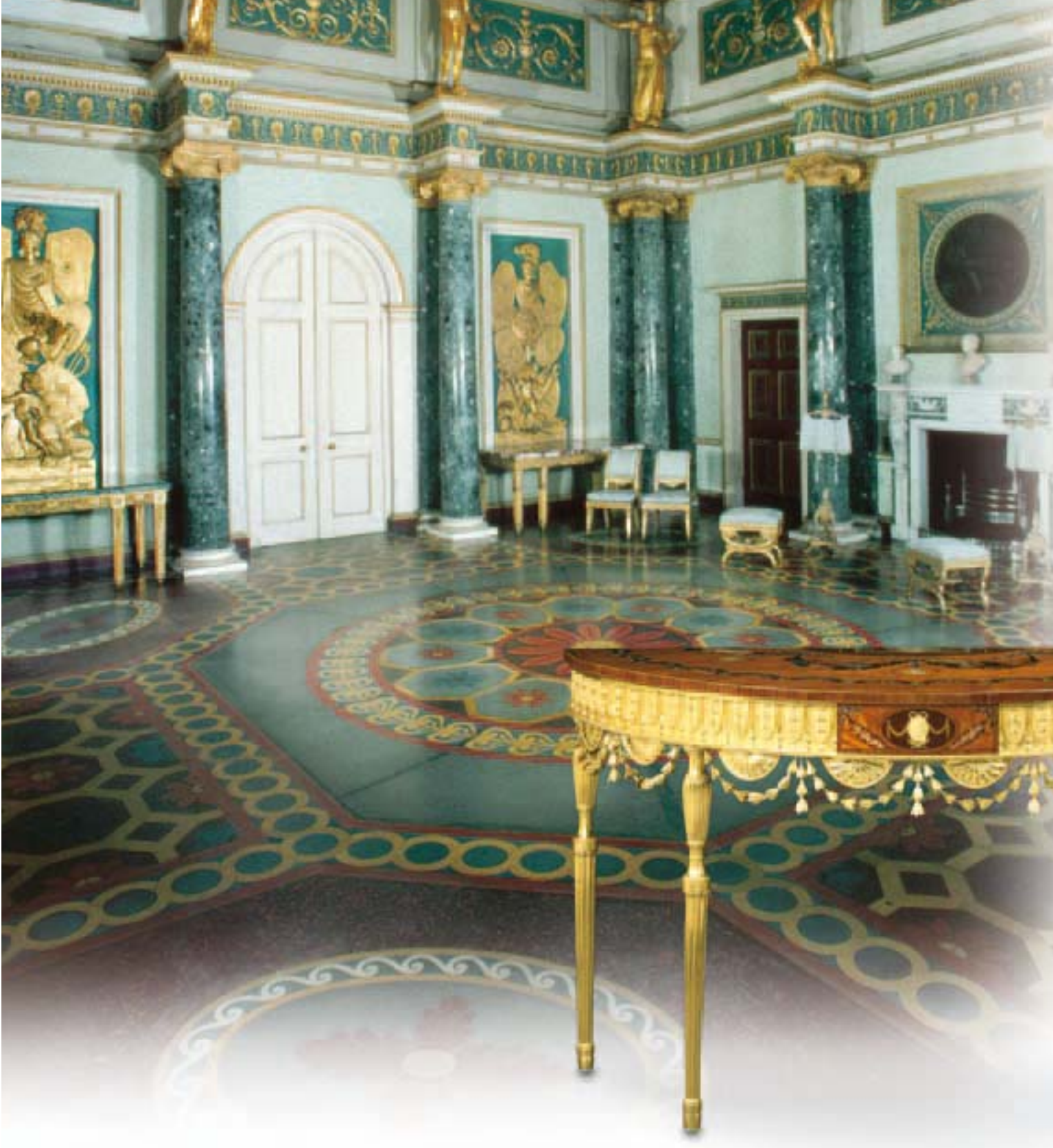
1769 Josiah Wedgwood relocates his pottery to Etruria in Staffordshire.

1773 Robert and James Adam, Scottish architects, publish *Works in Architecture*, instigating a major Classical revival in architecture and the decorative arts.

1776 The American Declaration of Independence. The eagle is adopted as an American emblem on furniture.



The world's first iron bridge This bridge was erected over the River Severn at Coalbrookdale in Shropshire, England in 1779.



Room in Syon House, London
 Syon house was remodelled by the British architect Robert Adam in around 1765. This room is richly decorated and exhibits the Neoclassical influence with the golden statues supported on marble columns that circle the room.

Giltwood console table One of a pair, this table has a painted satinwood top and a painted tablet in satinwood at the centre of the carved and gilt frieze, which has gilt swags below. The table is supported on turned and fluted, tapering legs. c.1770. W:98cm (38½in). PAR

1779 First iron bridge is erected at Coalbrookdale in Shropshire.

1780 David Roentgen becomes a member of the Paris Guild of *Ébénistes*.

1783 End of American Revolutionary War. The Treaty of Paris recognizes the new United States, and Britain accepts American independence.



The Argand lamp allowed more oxygen to the flame and so increased brilliance.

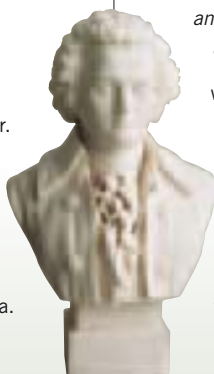
1783 Louis XVI orders a suite of furniture for Marie Antoinette costing 25,356 livres.

1784 End of the Anglo-Dutch war.

1784 Invention of the Argand lamp revolutionizes lighting and interiors.

1788 First British settlement founded at Botany Bay in Australia.

1788 George Hepplewhite publishes the *Cabinet-Maker*



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

and *Upholsterer's Guide*.

1789 The French Revolution begins with the storming of the Bastille.

1789 George Washington becomes the first President of the United States.

c.1790 High point of European orchestral music with compositions from Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven.

1792 Trial of Louis XVI; French Republic proclaimed.

1793 Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette executed; Roman Catholicism banned in France; Reign of Terror begins; Holy Roman Empire declares war on France.

1796 James Wyatt begins building Fonthill Abbey in Wiltshire, England for the writer William Beckford.

1799 Napoleon Bonaparte becomes Consul.



Napoleon Bonaparte

NEOCLASSICAL FURNITURE

THE HEART OF NEOCLASSICAL DESIGN lies in ancient Greece and Rome. It was initially inspired by architecture, as there were no examples of ancient furniture until after the excavation of Pompeii and Herculaneum in the mid 18th century. Thus, early Neoclassical furniture tends to use architectural motifs adhered to in standard furniture forms, such as acanthus leaves, swags and foliage, guilloche bands, and scrolls. The use of these motifs was not new, as they were employed as ornament in both the Renaissance and Baroque periods. What was new was how the motifs were adapted, added to, and incorporated within the decorative schemes encountered through travel on the Grand Tour (see p.132) and the discoveries made in ancient sites.

INTRODUCING THE STYLE

France was the first country to embrace Neoclassical design, although it was not until the 1770s that the final vestiges of Rococo were erased from



English lady's writing desk The satinwood and yew tambour shutter opens to reveal a fitted desk interior. Beneath this is a long drawer with a frieze. The scrolling foliage pattern, brass ring pulls, and etched wyverns are all typical Neoclassical motifs. The desk has square, inlaid, tapering legs and brass feet on casters. c.1775. H:94cm (37in); W:82.5cm (32½in). PAR

the decorative library. The French barometer of taste, the Comte de Caylus (1692–1765), was instrumental in introducing Classicism, including Classical furniture, to France, publishing in 1752 the first of seven volumes of *Recueil d'antiquités égyptiennes, étrusques, grecques et romaines*, in which he discussed and illustrated the tastes and styles of the ancient world.

Neoclassical furniture tends to be rectangular and lacks curves. This did not happen at once, as larger pieces often remained in stock after fashions had changed and cabinet-makers adapted the Rococo forms by applying Neoclassical decoration. In this French transitional style, serpentine shapes were gradually straightened and cabriole legs evolved into turned or tapered legs. Chair backs were rectangular or oval with turned legs, often fluted in reference to Classical architectural columns.

DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS

Throughout the Neoclassical period, building booms influenced the production of furnishings. More palaces were built in Russia in the second half of the 18th century than in any other European country. These new buildings, and refurbished older buildings, required new furniture, as most of the existing pieces lacked sufficient pomp and majesty for Catherine the Great's court. Most Russian furniture was imported from Paris, as Russian taste tended to emulate French style. The German *ébéniste*, David Roentgen (see pp.142–43), made furniture specifically for his Russian clientele that was far more flamboyant than French court furniture.

ADAM STYLE

The Neoclassical style in England – home to the innovative architecture of Robert Adam – adapted some French forms such as the commode and the “French chair”. Adam's furniture complemented the light colours used in his interiors and textiles, and painted decoration featured more than

Parisian guéridon Made of rosewood, kingwood, and sycamore, this table is inlaid with musical instruments and has a brass gallery. c.1775. H:74cm (29in); W:49cm (19½in); D:38cm (15in). GK



in its French counterparts. Greek vase paintings greatly influenced Adam, and he often used painted panels in his work; these might be the central panel of a *demi-lune* or rectangular commode, or a centred roundel at the top of a pier glass flanked by carved maidens and urns.

Thomas Chippendale also worked in the Neoclassical style, producing a pair of rectangular pedestals with urns, a sideboard table, and wine cooler for the dining room at Harewood House (see p.98). For this commission he used circular inlaid medallions on the pedestals with carved swags and rams' heads above, to match the other pieces.

TRANSMITTING THE STYLE

The pattern books published by George Hepplewhite and Thomas Sheraton simplified Adam's designs for the mass market. Their designs were hugely influential, particularly in America. Furniture in this style is termed Federal after the new US government and often features the official symbol of the American eagle.

Swedish furniture from this time is referred to as Gustavian after King Gustav III who admired the work of the French cabinet-makers so much that he invited them to work in Sweden. When he could not afford to pay them, they returned home, but left their furniture style as a lasting legacy. Danish furniture was simpler and often made from darker woods. Decoration was limited to dentil moulding, the Greek key motif, and rosettes.

European furniture fashion tended to follow French or English taste: in Spain, the north was inspired by English styles, while in the south, French styles were dominant.

SIGNATURE STAMPS

Parisian guild restrictions drawn up by the French *Parlement* in 1751 stipulated that cabinet-makers and chair-makers had to mark their work. Each master had his own stamp and an impression of this *estampille* in lead was kept by the guild. From 1743, many artisans had, in fact, already been stamping their pieces, with an iron stamp in the form of their name. Some, like the chair-maker Georges Jacob and his sons, merely used their surname. Others used their initials, like the cabinet-maker Robert Vandercruse La-Croix, with his stamp R.V.L.C.



Georges Jacob's stamp Stamped on the underside of the back rail of the *bergère* shown is JACOB, the *estampille* for the chair-maker Georges Jacob (1739–1814). He received his mastership in 1765.

Giltwood *bergère* The rectangular back of this chair is carved with guilloche. The arms are supported by sphinxes and the chair has tapering front legs. c.1785. H:96cm (37½in); W:51cm (20in); D:66cm (26in). PAR



A NEOCLASSICAL COMMODE

This hawood and marquetry commode represents the zenith of 18th-century cabinet-making. It has been attributed to various London furniture workshops, including those of John Cobb and William Vile, and William Ince and John Mayhew, both workshops competing with Chippendale. The marquetry is of the finest quality and may have been supplied by a specialist maker. The top panel is more freely designed

than the door panels, indicating that they might have been made by two different makers.

This piece is more decorative than functional and would have been used in the drawing room, a French practice introduced by the French cabinet-maker Pierre Langlois and quickly taken up by Robert Adam. Up until about 1760, commodes had only been deemed fit for use in the bedroom.

Hawood and marquetry commode The serpentine-shaped top of this commode is inset with a circular panel, inlaid with a marquetry design. The serpentine front is fitted with doors, behind which are shelves. The commode is supported on splayed bracket feet with cloven-hoof ormolu mounts. Both the top and sides are decorated with ormolu fluted and beaded banding. c.1760. H:91.5cm (36in); W:117cm (46in); D:56cm (22in). PAR

The serpentine top and sides are trimmed with ormolu fluted and beaded banding.

This circular panel is inlaid with a marquetry design of flowers and gardening tools.

This diaper pattern repeats the marquetry pattern on the sides of the commode.



The splayed bracket feet have ormolu mounts in the shape of animal hooves.

Rococo influences can still be seen in the curvaceous shape of the commode.

The oval door panels are inlaid with a striking design of flaming urns with rams' masks on tripod stands.

Oval panels on the sides of the commode feature intricate geometric marquetry.

ELEMENTS OF STYLE

The decorative details of Neoclassical furniture were inspired by ancient Greece and Rome, and there was a marked move away from the asymmetrical exuberance of the Rococo period towards a more restrained, symmetrical, and linear style. Architectural details, such as friezes and swags, were used to decorate chair rails and tables and the shapes of legs were influenced by Greek columns. Many Classical motifs had symbolic meanings. Grecian urns were particularly popular, although designers chose to ignore their symbolic funerary use and concentrate on the pleasing symmetry of their shape.

French-style armchair

Oval chair backs

Oval and shield-shaped chair backs became increasingly popular from the 1760s onwards, especially in France. The frames of these sumptuous chairs were usually gilded and carved with Classical motifs, including acanthus. The finest armchairs were upholstered with costly silks and damasks.



Swag of laurel leaves

Swags

The swag is a decorative motif inspired by hanging garlands of laurel leaves, ribbons, or bud-like motifs known as husks. They were based on Classical Roman stone examples, which were themselves copies of the garlands that decorated altars and temples.



Greek urn on a mahogany cabinet

Greek urns

Urn were carved, incorporated in marquetry patterns, or applied as sculptural relief to furniture. They were based on the shape of ancient Greek vases, which were often used to hold human ashes. The motif was popular on Louis XVI and Adam-style pieces. Often the urns incorporated Classical mask heads and swags.



Gilded mask motif on a frieze

Friezes

A frieze is a horizontal band used to decorate case furniture, chairs, or tables. Architectural details taken from friezes at the tops of Classical columns were often copied. These included Vitruvian scrolls, Greek key motifs, egg-and-dart moulding (which symbolized life and death), and lines of small beads, known as beading.



Intarsia panel on a German cabinet

Intarsia

Cabinet-makers working in the Neoclassical style took advantage of the flat surfaces on rectilinear furniture to create elaborate three-dimensional intarsia inlays. Designs ranged from complex architectural scenes, which were particularly popular on Italian and German pieces, to simple ribbon-tied bouquets.

Anthemion frieze on a *demi-lune commode*

Anthemion

The stylized floral motif of the anthemion is based on the ancient Greek representation of the honeysuckle flower and leaves. It was mainly used horizontally as a repeated motif, often alternating with carved acanthus, palmettes (palm leaves), or lotus leaves, to form a frieze. Single motifs were sometimes also used on vertical panels.



Detail of a gilt table leg with husk carving

Columnar legs

In a move away from the curved cabriole leg, based on an animal's leg, which dominated furniture design earlier in the 18th century, the legs of tables and chairs frequently looked like miniature Greek and Roman columns. Often tapering and fluted, they sometimes had additional decoration, such as the carving above.



Oval inlaid shell motif

Decorative inlays

Delicate inlaid designs were particularly popular as decorative veneers on tables and case furniture. Many motifs, such as shells and flowers, were inspired by nature, but fans and vases were also popular. The maker required a great deal of skill to create the intricate inlays used on the finest examples of Neoclassical furniture.



Oval brass handles with solid backplates

Brass handles

Supplied by specialist craftsmen, brass handles were made in many shapes during the second half of the 18th century, but unlike Rococo pieces they tended to be symmetrical in shape, usually oval or circular. Handles and escutcheons were often embellished with Classical decoration, such as wreaths of laurel leaves.



A carved ram's head

Ram's head

The motif of a ram's or goat's head was used in antiquity to decorate altars, probably as a sacrificial representation. Robert Adam first used them on English furniture. Carved ram's heads were a popular decoration on tripod table knees, and as objects from which to hang swags.



Inlaid satinwood table top

Satinwood

The period from 1765 to 1800 is sometimes referred to as the Age of Satinwood. This light yellow wood from the West Indies had a silky sheen and satin-like markings, hence its name. As it was expensive, it was mostly used as a veneer. Many satinwood pieces of furniture were created from designs by Robert Adam.



Parquetry detail on a cabinet

Parquetry

Cabinet-makers took advantage of the increased availability of exotic woods with a strong grain, such as kingwood, tulipwood, and satinwood, to create striking veneers. Parquetry, which used geometric patterns made up of cubes, lozenges, trellis, or trellis patterns with dots in the centre, was particularly popular and reflected the interest in symmetrical, rectilinear designs.



Cameo of a Roman emperor

Classical figures

Classical imagery of all types was widespread in the second half of the 18th century. The motifs often appeared on friezes or in the centre of doors or panels. Cameos, in which figures were shown in profile, were particularly popular. The medallion above is typical of the type of decoration used by the Adam brothers.

ITALY

THE ITALIAN STATES retained their separate identities during the late 18th century. These rival regions assimilated the Neoclassical style at different times: Rome, Naples, Turin, and Genoa gradually moved towards Classical forms, while Venice was much slower and only embraced Neoclassical designs towards the end of the 18th century.

INFLUENCES

France, and to a lesser extent Britain, provided the main sources of Neoclassical design. However, the Neoclassical style was also directly influenced by Italy's ancient sites and contemporary archeological discoveries.

In 1757, the first volume of eight, *Le antichità di Ercolano esposte*, was published in Naples, describing the discoveries at Herculaneum. The illustrations of ancient motifs and decorations such as palmettes, beading, ribbons, cameos, lion's heads, pelts, and feet subsequently appeared in painted decoration and furniture. The colours seen at Herculaneum – red, green, blue, and white – also became very popular in painted furniture.

Giovanni Battista Piranesi's *Diverse Maniere d'Adornare i Cammini* illustrated a more sumptuous version of Neoclassicism. His designs were not only influential in Rome, where they

were refined and used by the architects furnishing several rooms at the Vatican, but also throughout the rest of Europe.

FURNITURE TYPES AND MATERIALS

Commodes had rectangular cases, inspired by Louis XVI shapes, but their legs were distinctly Italian, with their sharply tapered shape in an exaggerated triangle, and recessed necks.

Vernacular wardrobes or *armadios* were made in plain walnut, but more decorative versions were painted and gilded, or inlaid with intarsia marquetry in rare woods including rosewood. The French *encoignure* or three-cornered cabinet also appeared

in Italian furniture for the first time.

Desks were heavily influenced by French design and writing tables were the most popular form. The *secrétaire à abattant* was often inlaid with Classical scenes or panels and the slant-top secretary, although similar to English models, was also decorated with inlay or figured veneers.

Table tops were specimen marble, *pietra dura*, or scagliola in Neoclassical designs. Sometimes they were made from Roman marble or material painted to resemble marble. The legs and aprons of pier and console tables were carved in low relief and usually painted and gilded. Late 18th-century



VENETIAN GIRANDOLE

This carved and gilded girandole has a rectangular form with pierced cresting centred by a C-scroll cartouche engraved with a flower and leaves. The plate is engraved with an image from the Zodiac and the frame is carved and gilded with flowers and leaves in a symmetrical design. c.1750.



GILTWOOD SIDE TABLE

This Louis XVI-style gilt side table from Turin has a semicircular marble top above a frieze carved and gilded with an interlaced guilloche and quatrefoil decoration. It has stocky, tapering legs encircled with carved swags and small ball feet. Attributed to Guiseppe Maria Bonzanigo. c.1780. D:110cm (43½in). GK



VENETIAN SALON TABLE

In the style of Louis XV, this salon table has a marble top, with colouring that matches the light-green and gilt decoration of the frame. The serpentine frieze is carved in panels with foliage and scrollwork. The frame is supported on four sinuous cabriole legs. c.1760. W:98cm (38½in). GK



GENOESE COMMODE

With a design derived from the French commode, this painted and gilded example is one of a pair designed for the Palazzo Saluzzo. The shaped top sits on a case with two drawers, *sans transverse*. The four cabriole legs are also painted and gilded. c.1760. H:89cm (35in); W:123cm (48½in); D:57cm (22½in). BL



WRITING TABLE

This provincial writing table may have been made in the Duchy of Parma. The rectangular top is inlaid with burr wood. The shaped base is fitted with four drawers, one on each side. The tapering, slightly cabriole legs are a continuation of the frame. c.1790. H:77.5cm (30½in); W:108cm (42½in); D:74cm (29in). BRU

console tables generally had four legs and were round, rectangular, or *demi-lune* in shape and no longer had serpentine fronts.

Many Italian chairs were based upon French and English designs, such as the open-splat back chair and the *fauteuil*. However, sculptural, throne-like chairs were still made. The main features that distinguished Italian chairs from other European chairs were their painted decoration, the contours of the chair back, which usually had a pronounced outward curve, the flaring arms, and the overall proportions, which were generally more exaggerated. The interlacing circular splat, a

sunburst rosette decoration, was another Italian feature. Sofas had either all-over upholstery, open backs with an upholstered seat, or were caned.

Native woods such as walnut, olive, and pine were used for furniture, but the scarcity of good-quality timber meant that much Italian furniture was painted and had decoration inspired by Neoclassical designs.

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

In Turin, furniture for the royal palaces was made by Giuseppe Maria Bonzanigo, who was inspired by the French forms of the 1770s. Bonzanigo's work is said to represent the best Italian

Neoclassical furniture ever made, and he is celebrated for the quality of his wood carving, particularly of light wood and ivory, which is known as microsculpture.

In Rome, bold, highly sculptured furniture was produced. The Roman Neoclassical architect and craftsman Giuseppe Valadier restored many of the city's ancient monuments as well as making furniture, including tables with thick marble tops, veneers, and gilded edges.

Lombardy was renowned for cabinet-making. One of the regions most talented *ebenista* was Giuseppe Maggiolini (see p.205) who decorated

items with marquetry, parquetry, carved medallions and flower-heads, and inlays.

Venice still produced the largest, most lavish, and expensive mirrors. While the frames became rectilinear, the scrollwork remained Rococo. Here, bulbous forms remained popular, but painted pieces incorporating Neoclassical motifs, show the gradual acceptance of the style.



ROLL-TOP BUREAU

This transitional roll-top bureau is made of indigenous walnut and fruit woods. The lower section is rectangular in shape and has one central drawer flanked on either side by three shorter drawers. The desk is supported on short, tapering legs. Similar to French examples, it was probably made in Piedmont or Lombardy. c.1780. W:145cm (58in). GK



NORTH ITALIAN COMMODE

This early fruitwood and ebonized commode has a divided and hinged top and a false top drawer, with a fitted and veneered interior. The drawers have elaborately carved handles and escutcheons, and bone and ivory stringing; parquetry panelling decorates the top, sides, and front. The bracket feet have leaf cast mounts. 1700–50. W:160cm (63in). L&T

VENETIAN ARMCHAIR

This armchair is reminiscent of the Baroque tradition of sculptural carving. The frame has a carved central cartouche containing a coat-of-arms and is flanked by boldly carved sides above down-scurled arms. The moulded seat frame has a central pierced apron. The baluster legs are joined by a flat cross-stretcher on ball feet. c.1795. H:140cm (56in). GK

The central cartouche contains a coat-of-arms.

Bold scrolls make up the arms and terminals.

Stylized acanthus leaves are carved on the arm support.

A pierced apron decorates the chair frame.

A flat cross-stretcher connects the legs.



THE GRAND TOUR

TRAVEL ACROSS EUROPE TOOK IN THE ART AND CULTURE OF THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD AND HELPED TO DEVELOP THE NEOCLASSICAL IDEAL.

EUROPEAN TRAVEL AIMED at furthering the Classical education of young aristocrats and gentry first became popular in the late 16th century. Such a journey came to be referred to as the Grand Tour after 1670, when the term was first used in the French translation of Richard Lassels' *Voyage or Compleat Journey through Italy*.

DESTINATIONS OF THE GRAND TOUR

"All our religion, all our arts, almost all that sets us above savages, has come from the Shores of the Mediterranean." So wrote Dr. Samuel Johnson, author of the first English dictionary, explaining why learned men should visit Italy.

Travellers arrived in Italy via the seaports of Genoa, Livorno, or Civitavecchia, or, carried in a chair, crossed the Alps to Turin. Depending on the season, they visited Florence, Rome, Naples, and Venice. Florence offered the opportunity to see the Medici collection of antiquities while Venice beckoned travellers with its festivals. However, as the study of Classical antiquity was the purpose of most Grand Tours, Rome was the focal point, as it contained the largest number of ancient sites. From Rome, travellers went south to Naples to visit the ancient sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum and walk up Mount Vesuvius, as well as inspect the remains of the various Greek colonies in the region.

Such journeys were expensive and often arduous, but they gave the privileged tourist an opportunity to see at first hand the monuments of Greco-Roman antiquity, the Italian Renaissance, and the Classical Baroque. Paintings and sculptures were also studied, mainly in private collections, as public museums were rare at this time.

THE PARTICIPANTS

Grand Tour travellers tended to be young aristocrats with a knowledge of Greek and Latin literature, accompanied by a teacher or guardian, although art students also visited the sites. The numerous and wealthy upper classes of Britain were pioneers in travel for pleasure and enlightenment, but travellers also came from Denmark, the German states, Poland, Russia, Sweden, and America. Tours by royalty were documented in the Italian press, particularly the Roman *Diari Ordinario*.

Tourists were often helped by the numerous influential foreigners who had settled in Florence, Rome, and Venice. They acted as agents for the travellers, directing them to the sites and aiding them in the acquisition of souvenirs, for which they often received payment.



MAP OF THE GRAND TOUR

This hand-coloured lithograph of a map is taken from *The Travellers, or A Tour Through Europe* by W. Clerk, published in London in 1842.



CLASSICAL SOUVENIR

This model of ruins from the forum in Rome is made from Siena marble. Copies of ruins were popular souvenirs and continued to be so well into the 19th century.



PAIR OF FRENCH TABOURET STOOLS
Knowledge of Classical design gained on the Grand Tour can be seen in the Greek keys decorating the fluted legs of this pair of French tabouret stools. H:43cm (17in); D:66cm (26in); W:48cm (19in).



PARISIAN SECRÉTAIRE À ABATTANT

This secrétaire has marquetry panels depicting Classical ruins with figures highlighted in inlaid ivory. c.1775. H:140cm (55½in); W:91.5cm (36in). PAR

THE RUINS OF HERCULANEUM

THE EXCAVATION OF THE RUINS FOUND AT THE FORMER ROMAN TOWN OF HERCULANEUM IN THE MID-18TH CENTURY SUBSEQUENTLY HAD A HUGE IMPACT ON EUROPEAN FURNITURE DESIGN.

Herculaneum is an ancient town at the foot of Mount Vesuvius in the Bay of Naples. In Roman times, Herculaneum and its neighbour Pompeii were fashionable places with fine villas. However, the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79CE buried both towns completely in volcanic ash, preserving the residents and their homes as they were, complete with architecture and furnishings. Herculaneum was rediscovered in 1709, but major excavation of the site did not begin until 1738, under the patronage of the King of the Two Sicilies.

The rediscovery of Herculaneum had a great effect on European design and created a heightened awareness of Classical antiquities. While ancient furniture was unearthed – such as a tripod table with animal feet – it was the discovery of wall paintings depicting Roman furnishings that had a greater impact and resulted in many imitative designs. The colours used at Herculaneum and Pompeii, such as rich reds, also inspired interior designers.



Roman fresco from Herculaneum Several items of furniture are depicted, including a three-legged table with animal legs, and chairs on which the couple recline. 50–79ce.



Classical-style side table This English table is made in the Classical style. An Italian trellised, specimen-marble top sits above carved swags, foliage, and a medallion of a Roman Emperor. The tapering legs have carved palmettes in laurel wreaths. c.1760. W:169cm (66½in). DN

THE ALLURE

The Grand Tour also offered the opportunity to acquire antiquities. Excavations of “new” ruins received funding from non-Italians, particularly the British, often in an attempt to discover pieces that could be taken home. Italy’s pleasant climate and low cost of living were also appealing – especially as tours sometimes took as long as eight years.

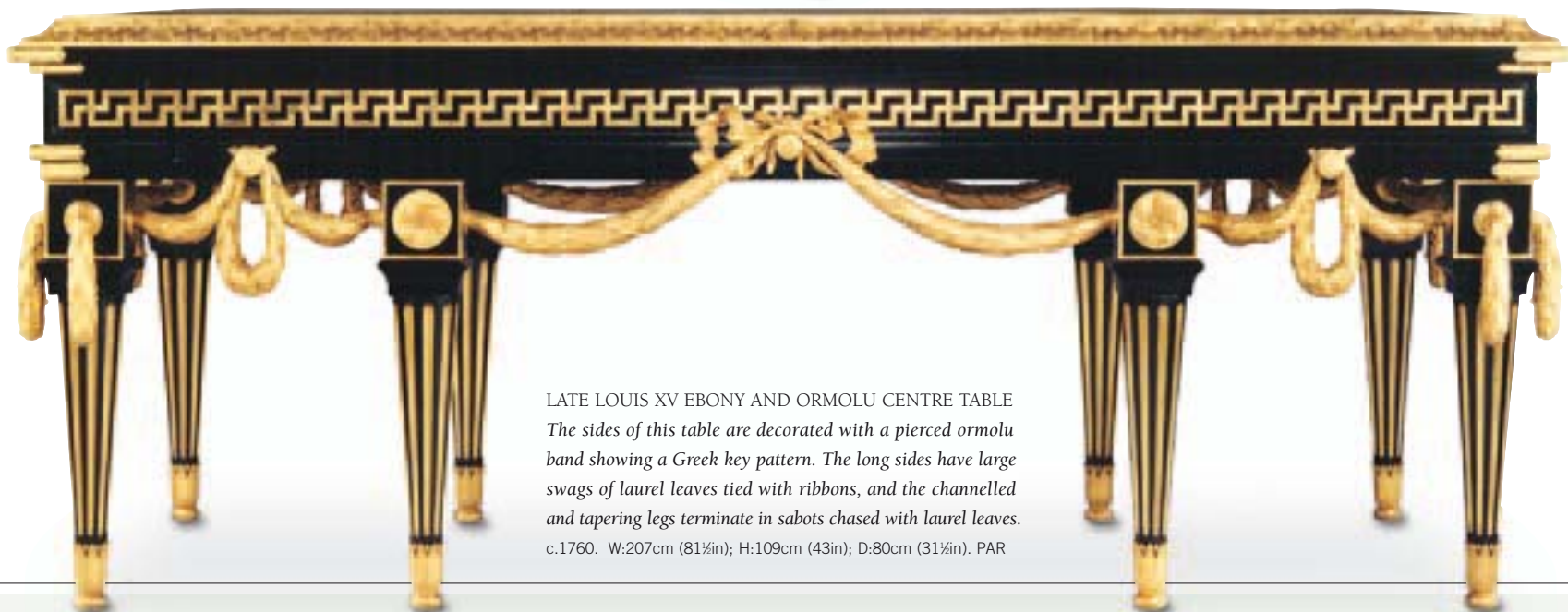
Participants travelled through Europe – although not to Greece, which was largely inaccessible to foreigners – examining, measuring, and drawing Classical architecture. Many royals and aristocrats employed artists to document their visit. Others sponsored visits for professional men, like the architect Robert Adam, who published engravings of his observations. The Society of Dilettanti, established in London in 1743, funded expeditions that resulted in accurate drawings, and such prints fuelled interest in ancient objects, while for those who could not afford such a trip, the publications brought Classical images into their homes.

SPREADING THE NEOCLASSICAL IDEAL

The Pope and other Italian rulers presented their royal tourists with gifts, while other tourists were keen to purchase mass-produced souvenirs such as tapestries, small mosaics, and prints of Giovanni Battista Piranesi’s paintings of Roman views.

Some of the souvenirs were on such a scale that they required Italian artisans to install them at the traveller’s residence. Englishman Sir Francis Dashwood attempted to create an entire Roman villa, complete with mosaic floors. Travellers returned with pieces of buildings or statuary, which designers, including Robert Adam, made use of.

These souvenirs helped to spread the Neoclassical ideal. However, it was probably Piranesi’s romantic paintings of antiquity – representing the theatricality of ancient ruins rather than their reality – which had the greatest impact on Neoclassical design.



LATE LOUIS XV EBONY AND ORMOLU CENTRE TABLE
The sides of this table are decorated with a pierced ormolu band showing a Greek key pattern. The long sides have large swags of laurel leaves tied with ribbons, and the channelled and tapering legs terminate in sabots chased with laurel leaves. c.1760. W:207cm (81½in); H:109cm (43in); D:80cm (31½in). PAR

TRANSITIONAL FURNITURE

FRENCH FURNITURE MADE BETWEEN ABOUT 1760 AND 1775 IS KNOWN AS “TRANSITIONAL”, AND DISPLAYS CHARACTERISTICS OF BOTH THE ROCOCO AND NEOCLASSICAL STYLES.

FRENCH TRANSITIONAL FURNITURE reflects the transition from Rococo to the Neoclassical style. The reaction against Rococo started in about 1750 in France. The curator of the King's drawings, Nicolas Cochin, who had spent two years in Italy, was put in charge of the redecoration of the royal chateaux and was highly critical of the Rococo style. In 1768, Jean-François de Neufforge published a book about architecture that was also clearly against Rococo, and in the same year Jean-Charles Delafosse, a designer and architect, published a book containing designs for furniture and ornaments in the Transitional style.

A HYBRID STYLE

Transitional pieces usually incorporate features of both Louis XV and Louis XVI furniture. The sinuous Louis XV style gradually gave way to the rectilinear shapes, tapering lines, and restrained decoration of the Neoclassical style. Transitional commodes were rectangular in shape, rather than curved, but they still had short, cabriole legs, like Louis XV commodes. The most characteristic example of the Transitional style was the breakfront commode. This retained the swelling, serpentine shape of earlier forms, but the central front façade protruded. Chairs no longer had curved, but oval backs and cabriole legs were replaced by straight, fluted legs.

The decoration of Transitional furniture also combined elements of both the Rococo and Neoclassical styles. Some motifs harked back to the Louis XIV style, and featured acanthus leaves, gadroons, palmettes, lion masks, and trophies. Floral designs proliferated under Louis XV and were still used on Transitional pieces. As the influence of Neoclassicism grew, Greek key motifs, interlaced scrolls, and parquetry became more common.

EMINENT CABINET-MAKERS

The cabinet-maker Louis Joseph Le Lorain furnished the Paris town house of Lalive de Jully, who was highly influential at the French Court, with furniture inspired by the Greek style. Under the influence of Madame de Pompadour, the King's personal office was decorated completely in the Transitional style, with furniture made by Jean-François Oeben in 1760 and Jean-Henri Riesener in 1769.

LOUIS XV SECRÉTAIRE À ABATTANT
This gilt-bronze mounted tulipwood, kingwood, amaranth, and parquetry desk has a curved fall front, which opens to reveal an interior fitted with an arrangement of compartments and drawers. c.1765.

PARQUETRY AND ORMOLU COMMODE
This rectangular tulipwood and lemonwood commode, stamped M. Carlin (maître, 1766), has a marble top with a moulded edge and canted corners. The single frieze drawer is overlaid with a band of ormolu guilloché. Below are two drawers decorated sans traverse with parquetry. The apron has a pierced ormolu cartouche and the cabriole legs end in leaf and claw sabots. c.1770. H:62cm (24½in); W:100cm (39½in); D:54cm (21½in). PAR



COMPARE AND CONTRAST

It is helpful to compare Louis XV and Louis XVI pieces of furniture, to understand the transition from the first style to the second. Louis XV is the epitome of Rococo and is characterized by the use of swirling scrolls, shell and flower motifs, rocaille, and asymmetry. Louis XVI, on the other hand, is Neoclassical in style and features shapes and motifs inspired by Greek and Roman architecture, laurel leaves, swags, and rosettes.

Louis XV furniture is characterized by serpentine shapes, curves, and cabriole legs, whereas Louis XVI pieces have straight lines, geometric shapes, and turned, tapering legs.

Light colours highlighted with gilding were typical of Louis XV furniture, as were veneers of colourful, exotic woods, such as kingwood. Lacquer, including imitation japanning, was also popular, as were ormolu mounts. Louis XVI

furniture, on the other hand, relied on the grain of woods such as mahogany for decorative effects, and carved details replaced ormolu mounts as decorative features.

Styles of furniture changed slowly, as it took cabinet-makers a while to adopt the latest fashions and they frequently had to adapt existing stock in order to sell it.

LOUIS XV



LOUIS XV COMMODE This kingwood, tulipwood, and parquetry commode is of bombé form and has a serpentine-fronted marble top above two short and two long drawers inlaid with strapwork cartouches and set

with foliate and C-scrrolled escutcheons. The drawer handles are cast with scrolling foliage. The sides of the case are inlaid with cube parquetry and the front has a shaped apron. The commode stands on splayed bracket feet. FRE



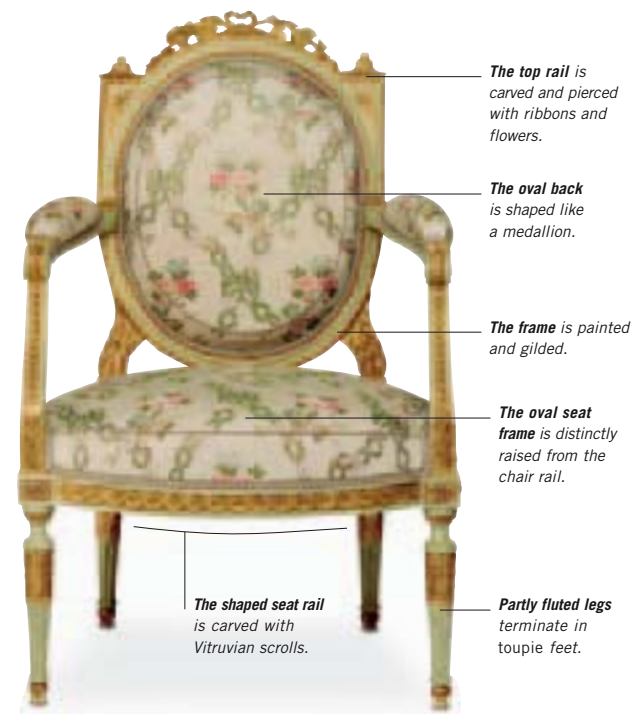
LOUIS XV FAUTEUIL This armchair has a cartouche-shaped back, padded arms, and serpentine-fronted seat. The channelled and C-scroll carved frame is decorated with flower-heads and scrolling foliage. The chair has cabriole legs terminating in scroll feet. PAR

LOUIS XVI



LOUIS XVI PROVINCIAL COMMODE This rectangular wooden commode has a moulded top and straight sides. Its four long drawers are decorated with Neoclassical carved swags of drapery and ribbon bows,

and paterae at the outer edges. The short legs are square and tapering, in contrast to the splayed legs of the piece above, and do not have ormolu mounts, because it is a provincial piece. c.1780. W:137.5cm (55in). FRE



LOUIS XVI FAUTEUIL This painted armchair has a medallion-shaped back with a carved top rail. The seat rail is decorated with Vitruvian scrolls and it has partly fluted legs with toupie feet. c.1785. H:94cm (37in); W:62cm (24½in). PAR

FRANCE: LOUIS XVI

WHEN LOUIS XVI and his Austrian wife Marie Antoinette came to the French throne in 1774, many German craftsmen, including prominent cabinet-makers such as Adam Weisweiler and Jean-Henri Riesener, moved to France in the hope of royal commissions. Their hopes were fulfilled, and in the years before the Revolution they supplied the royal household with sumptuous furniture that was both Rococo and Neoclassical in style.

Commissions also came from wealthy French households – who demanded fashion and luxury – and European monarchs who held French design and quality in high regard.

DEVELOPING STYLE

Furniture styles evolved gradually at this time. Pieces from the early years are often referred to as “Transitional” because they contain elements of both Rococo design and the Neoclassical style (see pp.134–35). As time went on, however, the Neoclassical elements became more pronounced.

In the 20 years or so before the French Revolution in 1789, English taste began to influence the French, and this trend can be seen in furniture designs. Mahogany was now used frequently, particularly when trade with America increased at the end of the Revolutionary War, and the wood could be easily imported from the West Indies.

DECORATION

Different styles of marquetry developed as a method of decoration. Pictorial designs became more prominent than the loosely arranged floral decorations of previous eras. Landscapes and architectural compositions were very popular, as were vases or baskets of flowers. Parquetry, a geometric form of marquetry, was another common decorative feature.

Later in Louis XVI's reign, Riesener became one of the most important cabinet-makers. Around 1780, he abandoned marquetry and started to produce much plainer furniture that relied on well-figured veneers for its decorative effect. One truly French aspect of furniture design of this period was the use of delicately detailed porcelain plaques from the Sèvres factory, which were set into

pieces of furniture as a decorative feature. Mounts were often elaborate and of fine quality, particularly those made by foundries such as Gouthière and Thomire.

Boullework was still favoured, as was furniture that incorporated pieces of painted and foiled glass known as *verre églomisé*, or Chinese or Japanese lacquer panels, often reused from late 17th- or early 18th-century pieces. Painted furniture was also popular.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Chairs, which had previously been fairly rounded in shape, became more rectilinear and had tapering legs. As rooms were now smaller than they had been, furniture was made on a correspondingly smaller scale. Women were now more influential in society than they had been before and so light, elegant pieces, such as *bonheurs-du-jour* and delicate worktables, were designed specifically for female clients.

In the late 18th century, banks and security were not what they are today, so elaborate desks with secret compartments and hidden drawers were popular with the wealthy. These had intricate locks to enhance security.

EFFECTS OF THE REVOLUTION

After the French Revolution, the furniture-makers' guilds were disbanded and the quality of French furniture began to decline as a result. The market for high-quality pieces dwindled as the nobility fell victim to the guillotine and the country became impoverished by war. Furniture became simpler in design and was decorated with plain veneers, rather than marquetry. The war made it harder to import exotic woods, so furniture-makers often used local fruitwoods instead.

The Neoclassical style found favour with the new government of France and continued to develop during both the *Directoire* and *Consulate* periods that followed (1795–1804). It was only when Napoleon came to power in 1804 that fine-quality, highly decorated pieces of furniture became fashionable once again.



LOUIS XVI COMMODE À VANTAUX

This is one of a pair of rectangular commodes surmounted by a grey and white marble top. The case is veneered in flame mahogany, and the frieze contains one long drawer, which is panelled with ormolu to look like three smaller

drawers. The lower section has two drawers, designed to look like three, which open to reveal three long drawers with ring handles. The legs terminate in ormolu *toupie* feet. The piece is attributed to the Paris-based maker, Godefroy Dester. c.1785. H:93cm (36¾in); W:133.5cm (52½in); D:56.5cm (22¼in). PAR



BUREAU À CYLINDRE

This fine *bureau à cylindre* (roll-top desk) is made of mahogany veneer on oak and soft wood. The top of the piece is made of grey and white marble and sits above three narrow drawers. The curved upper section slides back

to reveal a fitted interior consisting of shelves and drawers, and gives access to the leather-covered writing surface, which can be extended. Beneath this are two pairs of side drawers, and one longer drawer above the kneehole. The piece stands on four fluted legs. c.1789. H:121cm (48½in). LPZ



PARISIAN SUITE

These seats have rectangular backs with arched top rails and cut-out corners, decorated with guilloche patterns. The arms consist of reeded columns headed by paterae and finials, and are

overlaid with carved acanthus leaves leading to padded armrests. The front and sides are similarly carved. The frames are supported on tapering, spiral-fluted legs. *c.1780. Canapé: H:96.5cm (38½in); W:195.5cm (78¼in). Fauteuils: H:96.5cm (38½in); W:65cm (26in). PAR*



RECTANGULAR MIRROR

This mirror has a carved and pierced giltwood frame. The crest is decorated with two birds in leaf garlands and the base has a beaded frieze. *H:115cm (45¼in). BEA*



BRONZE GUÉRIDON

Inspired by Roman paintings, this table is made of gilded bronze with a marble top mounted in brass. A stretcher joins three claw feet on casters. *c.1785. H:81cm (32½in). GK*



PARISIAN GUÉRIDON

This table is inlaid with satinwood and sycamore, and decorated with ormolu. The piece stands on cabriole legs. *c.1770. H:79cm (31¼in); D:44cm (17¼in). PAR*



PARISIAN SEMAINIER

This style of chest is named after the French word for week, *semaine*. The chest was designed to store a week's supply of clothes. This elegant piece is veneered in tulipwood and purple

wood inlaid in a geometric chevron pattern. The drawers are decorated with ormolu beaded borders and ribbon and foliage escutcheons, with an ormolu back plate and laurel ring pulls. *c.1780. H:160cm (64in); W:81cm (32½in). PAR*



BERGÈRE

This fruitwood chair has a simple waxed frame. The crest and seat rail are carved with foliage. Turned and fluted tapering legs support the frame. *c.1780. GK*



PARISIAN ENCOIGNURES

This pair of corner cupboards has grey marble triangular tops set upon similarly shaped cases. Elegantly veneered door fronts that open to opposite sides are inlaid with flowers

in swagged, Classically shaped vases. Stylized ormolu columns sit above the inlaid canted corners, which terminate in slightly flared feet. The shaped bases are decorated with a single ormolu mount. *c.1790. H:88cm (35¼in). GK*

ENGLISH PATTERN BOOKS

FURNITURE PATTERN BOOKS HELPED TO BRING THE VERY BEST OF LONDON DESIGN TO AN AUDIENCE OF TRADESMEN AND EAGER CLIENTS.

PATTERN BOOKS REVOLUTIONIZED the way furniture fashions were disseminated. Much of the modern understanding of Georgian furniture originates from the designs illustrated in pattern books, and the golden trio of British design; Thomas Chippendale, Thomas Sheraton, and George Hepplewhite, owe the longevity of their reputations more to their published works than to the furniture itself. Pattern books were published for many reasons: to introduce new fashions; to assist in the pricing of work; to impress wealthy patrons; and, ultimately, to acquire new clients. The London cabinet-makers, William Ince and John Mayhew, publishers of *The Universal System of Household Furniture* (1759–62) even translated their volumes into French in order to target the lucrative market across the Channel.

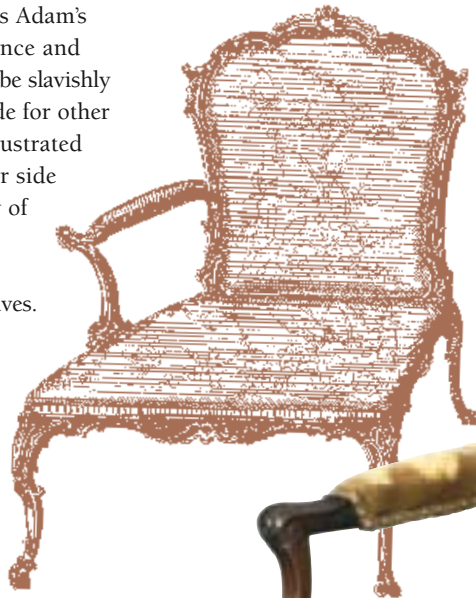
Some of the pieces illustrated in pattern books already existed, such as Robert and James Adam's pieces, and work by Chippendale, and Ince and Mayhew. Many designs were not meant to be slavishly copied, but rather were intended as a guide for other makers. In the "French Chairs" plate, illustrated right, the chair could be either an arm or side chair and Chippendale designed a variety of choices for leg designs.

Other cabinet-makers were actively encouraged to recreate the designs themselves. Some publications included dimensional drawings and most included heights of the furniture and instructions for when these should be altered – a change that was dependent upon the room for which a piece of furniture was intended.

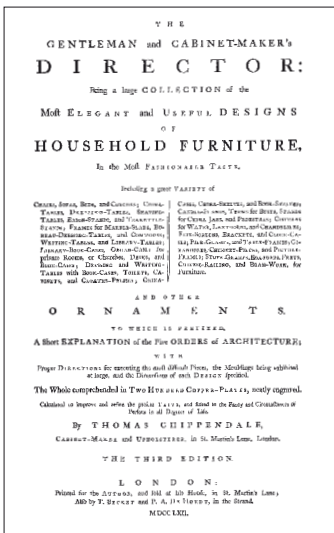
Thomas Sheraton's two volume *The Cabinet Dictionary* (1803) ensured that nothing was left to chance in the implementation of his instructions. The book included perspective drawings, measurements, the type of wood or paint to be used, a description of types of furniture, and even instructions on where the furniture should be placed.

It is a curious fact that despite his immense fame, no actual pieces of furniture can be attributed to George Hepplewhite. His notoriety is entirely due to his published works, and he only became famous after his death, on the publication of *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide* in 1788. This book was intended to be of use to both craftsmen and clients. Hepplewhite was a great advocate of the Adam style, and it is thanks in no small part to Hepplewhite's publication that Adams' work continues to be so well known today.

MAHOGANY BUREAU-CABINET
Desks and bookcases were made in two parts: the upper section with either doors or glazed panels behind which were shelves to contain books; and a lower section below the sloping writing front that contained drawers or clothes-press shelves. They were originally intended to be used in bedchambers, but during the course of the 18th century were used in other parts of the house. In the American colonies, such an expensive piece of furniture would have been displayed in the grandest room. NA



FRENCH CHAIRS, PLATE XX,
THE GENTLEMAN &
CABINET-MAKER'S DIRECTOR
Chippendale drew the
upholstered chair to display
multiple interpretations. It
could be an arm or side chair.
The feet could be scroll or
trifid in shape and the carving
could be adapted depending on
the skill of the chair-maker or
the tastes of the patron. PAR



CHIPPENDALE'S *THE GENTLEMAN & CABINET-MAKER'S DIRECTOR*
This was not the first pattern book to be published but it was unique in that it was the first-ever publication to concentrate solely on furniture. Moreover, it was singularly comprehensive – illustrating all contemporary forms, along with examples of Gothic, Chinese, French, and Rococo variations. The Chippendale chair is probably the most emulated of all Chippendale's designs, where the same basic form was interpreted in a number of different ways.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF DESIGN BOOKS
Few English furniture designs were printed before 1715. Daniel Marot's publications, which first appeared in 1702 (see p.45), were widely used in England and contained ideas for all branches of the decorative arts including interior design and furniture arrangements. English furniture designs also first appeared in architectural publications and designs for chimney-pieces, pier tables, and mirror frames within an architectural framework were common. In 1735, the Engravers' Copyright Act protected designers from being copied by their competitors – although plagiarism continued.

From 1740, two or three furniture pattern books appeared each year, right up until the end of the century. Thomas Chippendale's *The Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director* of 1754 was the first pattern book to focus solely on furniture, and set the standard for the subsequent range of pattern books that were published from the 1760s. The book also helped to establish Chippendale's name and his distinctive style of furniture for posterity, a power that Sheraton's later publication also possessed.

CHIPPENDALE CARVED CHERRYWOOD SIDE CHAIR
This chair from Philadelphia has a serpentine crest rail with a central carved ornament above a carved and pierced splat and fluted uprights. The square, tapering, drop-in seat has a seat rail with a centred shell ornament. The carved cabriole legs have claw-and-ball feet. The chair takes its basic form from the illustration from the design book (see left), in this instance in a typically Rococo interpretation. c.1770. H:100cm (39½in).

THOMAS SHEARER'S LONDON BOOK OF PRICES

THIS INFLUENTIAL DESIGN BOOK, PUBLISHED BY LONDON CABINET-MAKER THOMAS SHEARER IN 1788, FEATURED DESIGNS BY BOTH SHEARER HIMSELF AND BY GEORGE HEPPLEWHITE.

The Cabinet-Maker's London Book of Prices was a practical trade manual and contained tables of prices to assist in calculating the cost of labour. It was compiled for the London Society of Cabinet-Makers by journeymen working in London and Westminster and was originally produced not as a pattern book, but as a guide to prices.

The first edition contained only 20 plates but had extensive text and an index to types of furniture. Seating furniture, mirrors, and upholstered beds were excluded, as they were made by specialist craftsmen rather than cabinet-makers. It was not until the 1793 edition, greatly enlarged, that a complete set of rules for calculating costs for all furniture was published. This had over 250 pages and addressed pricing in more detail. Approximately 1,000 copies were printed, most of which were used in workshops. *The London Book of Prices* remained a standard work well into the early 19th century.

Calculating the cost of an item, particularly from a journeyman's point of view, was not easy. Journeymen were paid either a daily wage or "by the piece". The cost of timber and materials was usually borne by the master, but the journeymen had to cost all the extras. They

submitted their calculations to the master and this book was intended to eliminate grievances between the two. *The London Book of Prices* gives us a snapshot of Georgian furniture designs. It shows which styles of furniture were complicated to make, and which less so.



Chest of drawers by Thomas Shearer, *The Cabinet-Maker's London Book of Prices*, Plate 17
The design for this serpentine-fronted chest of drawers has been used to create the piece shown left. It has a moulded edge over four long graduated drawers flanked by three short graduated drawers on fluted bracket feet.



English chest of drawers This chest of drawers is inspired by a design from Shearer's book (above). The parquetry top would have added significantly to the price of the piece. c.1790. H:91.5cm (36½in); W:117.5cm (47in); D:61cm.

GERMANY

NEOCLASSICAL STYLES came later to the German states than other European countries. This was partly the result of German guild restrictions, which primarily sought to protect those craftsmen who were not privileged enough to work in a Court workshop. By restricting the numbers of workshops in a city in order to guarantee work for all the masters, the guilds made it extremely difficult for foreign craftsmen to settle, so their influence was, at times, found to be lacking. Also, the conservatism of the middle classes meant that new fashions were less readily accepted.

The Spindler brothers were leading cabinet-makers who made furniture for Frederick II. They were famous for their use of floral marquetry, and continued to make Rococo-style commodes up until the late 1760s. At the height of their career, the two-drawer serpentine commode on long legs was popular, a shape that had already become passé in France. Commodes made for use outside court circles were less formal and resembled a chest of drawers with three or four drawers. However, despite this simplicity, these commodes still favoured Rococo styling with curvilinear fronts and veneers in walnut, rather than mahogany.

Abraham Roentgen and his son, David, were the most famous German cabinet-makers to embrace the Neoclassical style. However, the furniture Abraham Roentgen initially produced was strongly influenced by the English Queen Anne and Low Countries designs. Much of the Roentgens' early furniture was made in walnut, as mahogany became fashionable in German cabinetwork much later than in Britain and France. Both enjoyed a tremendous following at all the German Courts of their time.

NEOCLASSICAL FURNITURE

It was not until the 1770s that the early Neoclassical style, or *Zopfstil*, became accepted. As in France, where enthusiasm following the excavations of Pompeii and Herculaneum had led to the emergence of the *goût grec* style, German designers began to seek inspiration in the ancient Greco-Roman world. The term *Zopfstil* itself derives from Classical braided friezes

(*der Zopf* translates as “braid”) and hanging swags.

The *Zopfstil* continued to apply many of the decorative features seen in the marquetry of the late Rococo style: acanthus-shaped mounts, bay leaves, swags, medallions, triglyphs, and lion's and ram's heads. Initially, furniture was similar to that of the Louis XVI style, albeit with more exaggerated proportions. From the middle of the 1780s, however, furniture forms became lighter, more refined, and had very little decoration.

This shift was partly due to the increasing influence of the middle and merchant classes in matters of design. Although the Neoclassical style was popularized by Abraham and David Roentgen, their patrons remained exclusively at Court, while the Baroque and Rococo styles continued to have a greater influence on cabinet-makers in the provinces.

As elsewhere in Europe, the use of Neoclassical design was initially restricted to the application of decorative elements to traditional forms. Marquetry had never fallen from favour in the German states and it was still used in the latter half of the 18th century. However, designs became more geometric and, rather than completely covering a case, often focused on the centre of a piece.

POPULAR FORMS

The cylinder bureau, which was devised by Francois Oeben at the courts of Louis XV and Louis XVI, the flat desk with a functional top with drawers or doors, and the commode were popular pieces. Legs were mostly fluted columns or conical squares. Commodes tended to have two or three drawers and square, tapered legs. The china cabinet remained popular, but, again influenced by French fashion, became rectangular, with restrained ornament. Seating furniture also followed French examples with oval or square backs, painted or gilt seat frames, and tapered legs.

Towards the end of the century, imported mahogany became the most favoured wood. Brass-mounted furniture with well-figured mahogany veneers became popular, although regional woods such as walnut or cherry wood were also used.

ROLL-TOP *SECÉTAIRE*

This pine *secrétaire* from Munich has a geometric veneer in walnut, fruitwood, and maple. The carved gallery has a central medallion of an emperor surrounded by laurel leaves. The upper section has architectural marquetry

across two large doors, with drawers and pigeonholes inside. The roll-top desk front has marquetry flowers and musical instruments in a geometric border. The lower drawers have similar marquetry. The desk stands on short, fluted, tapering legs. c.1775. H:233cm (91½in); W:116cm (45¾in); D:65cm (25½in). BAM



SET OF SIX AUSTRIAN CHAIRS

The beech frames of these Neoclassical chairs are painted green and white. The rigid, square backs are channelled and have a rectangular tablet in the centre of the top rail. The seats are also square with stiff upholstery, raised and

squared at the edges. Each chair rail mimics the chair back, with a central tablet. The frames are supported on fluted, tapered legs, also painted green and white. The gilding and paint would have reflected the overall design of the room for which the chairs were made. *c.1780. H:92.5cm (37in). LPZ*



SOUTHERN GERMAN COMMODE

This Louis XVI-style commode has a rectangular and architectural pine case with a veneer in walnut, plum, maple, and oak. The central medallion-and-garland motif is thought to have been influenced by the work of David Roentgen.

The handles on the two drawers, constructed *sans traverse*, are in the form of four different bronze portraits on a silver ground. The case is set on four squared, tapering legs. Attributed to Cornelius Pentz. *c.1785. H:85cm (33½in); W:124cm (48¾in); D:63cm (24¾in). SBA*



Carved dolphin detail

WALNUT SALON TABLE

This round tilt-top table *aux dauphins* (with dolphins) rests on a hexagonal column surrounded by three carved dolphins that are painted green and partly gilded. The table is supported on a tripod base that has casters. *H:82cm (32¼in); W:100cm (39in). GK*



SWISS CABINETS

This pair of rectangular-shaped cabinets is designed in the style of Louis XVI. They are made of walnut and veneered with cherry and local fruitwood. The tops slightly overhang the bases and the friezes are decorated with

Neoclassical-style ormolu mounts. Each cabinet is glazed on three sides – opening to the front with a single-lock escutcheon – and is fitted with three shelves. The cases are supported on short, tapered legs, which terminate in metal casters. *c.1800. H:154cm (60¾in). GK*

PIER COMMODE

This pine, squared commode is veneered with cherry, plum, and maple woods in a geometric pattern. Below the rectangular top is a frieze containing a drawer, and two further drawers, flanked by inlaid flat columns. Slightly flared feet support the case. *c.1795. H:119.5cm (47¾in). SLK*



DAVID ROENTGEN

THE FINEST, MOST INNOVATIVE AND COMMERCIALY DRIVEN CABINET-MAKER OF THE 18TH CENTURY CREATED FURNITURE THAT REMAINS UNPARALLELED IN QUALITY.

It is unlikely that David Roentgen would have achieved his level of fame without the influence of his father, Abraham, who produced furniture combining superb craftsmanship with technical complexity. David began as Abraham's apprentice, and took over his Neuwied workshop, near Koblenz in Germany, in 1768.

Increasingly influenced by French design, David travelled to Paris in 1774 to present a desk to Queen Marie-Antoinette. Realizing that his work was old-fashioned, he began to study the latest Neoclassical styles he saw in the city. By the late 1770s, his furniture showed the results of this study in its more austere shapes, the decoration

SECRÉTAIRE EN COMMODE BY ABRAHAM ROENTGEN
The oak and maple body of this piece is surmounted by an adjustable top. The top drawer contains a leather-covered, sliding writing surface and nine small drawers. 1755-60.
H:87cm (34¼in); W:136.5cm (54¼in); D:66.5cm (26¼in).



KEY DATES



David Roentgen

- 1743** David Roentgen born at Herrnhag.
- 1757** Works in his father Abraham's workshop in Neuwied.
- 1768** Takes over father's workshop.
- 1770** Roentgen delivers a table to Frederick the Great of Prussia.

1774 Presents a desk to Queen Marie-Antoinette in Paris, where he also acquires engravings of the latest fashions.

1779 Sets up a depot in Paris.

1780 Joins Paris Guild of *Ébénistes*.

1783 Visits Russia to sell a *secrétaire* to Catherine the Great, later making four subsequent trips to St. Petersburg.

1785 Receives title of *Ébéniste-mécanicien du Roi et de la Reine* from Louis XVI of France.

1789 Outbreak of French Revolution threatens his business.

1791 Appointed Court Furnisher to Frederick William II of Prussia.

1793 Abraham Roentgen dies.

1795 Paris stock is liquidated by France's revolutionary government and much of the furniture provided to the court and aristocracy is sold at official auctions.

1807 David Roentgen dies in Wiesbaden.



Moulded ormolu edge

Satinwood stringing

Book rest

Sliding writing surface

Patena

Interior drawers

Ormolu-ribbed panels

PARISIAN ARCHITECT'S TABLE
When closed, this piece appears to be a typical writing table with a single drawer. But when the mahogany top is lifted up on a double-ratchet mechanism, a book-rest springs forward. c.1785.
H:80cm (31in); W:109.5cm (43in). PAR

CONSTRUCTING AN OCCASIONAL TABLE

DAVID ROENTGEN PERFECTED A STANDARDIZATION OF PARTS IN HIS ELEGANT FURNITURE THAT ALLOWED IT TO BE TAKEN APART, SHIPPED SAFELY TO CLIENTS, AND THEN EASILY REASSEMBLED.

Although Roentgen's primary workshop was in Neuwied, he also had warehouses in three major European cities. He therefore developed a process of disassembly that allowed him to ship furniture safely and efficiently.

The table below illustrates this feature. It breaks down into eight separate components: the top and its frame, the drawer and shelf, and the four legs. Once taken apart, the pieces were put into a special packing case, which helped to protect the veneer.

Taking the table apart also saved space and made the piece easier to handle during shipment, while standardization of the process saved valuable time during manufacture.

As Roentgen was often away soliciting orders for months at a time, he relied on his foreman to load wagon trains, find coachmen, sort out horses, and documents, and ensure that orders were completed. This could be complicated: a single shipment to Russia often contained more than 50 pieces of furniture.

reduced to veneering in plain timbers, usually mahogany, with gilt-bronze or brass mountings. Such was his success in Paris that he joined the Guild of *Ébénistes*. His stamp was D.ROENTGEN, although most of his pieces were unstamped.

Roentgen set up depots for his furniture in Paris, Berlin, and Vienna, enabling him to promote his designs, gain commissions, and supply furniture more quickly without losing control of his Neuwied workshop. This innovative thinking and commercial acumen also allowed him to keep up with the latest fashions, through pattern books and prints.

ROENTGEN'S FURNITURE

Initially, Roentgen worked in wood, which he engraved, but by the late 1760s he was using stained and tinted woods. After 1770, delicate pictorial marquetry became a speciality of his workshop, the designs for which were often taken from paintings by Januarius Zick. This resulted in extraordinarily realistic renditions of floral sprays, arrangements of garden utensils, musical instruments, and, after his first trip to Paris, pastoral idylls and architectural scenes.

Towards the end of the 1770s, Roentgen was producing a range of furniture in the Louis XVI style. He was also noted for his writing desks, produced in the later years of the Neuwied workshop, which featured ingenious mechanical devices that were operated by moving a section of the piece (see pp.174–75).

In 1783, Roentgen visited Russia with his first consignment of furniture, which included dressing tables, chests of drawers, a revolving armchair, and desks at which one could write seated or standing. Following this visit, he received several commissions from Catherine the Great. Roentgen's main customers were the French king and court. Louis XVI had purchased a writing table in 1779 and subsequently appointed David *Ébéniste-mécanicien du Roi et de la Reine*; he was already cabinet-maker to Queen Marie-Antoinette.

Over the next ten years he supplied the French court with furniture that was noted both for its intricate marquetry and its ingenious mechanical construction.

In 1791, Roentgen was appointed Court Furnisher to Frederick William II of Prussia and by this time he was recognized as the most celebrated cabinet-maker in Europe. However, the French Revolution seriously weakened his business and he never regained his former status. David Roentgen died in Wiesbaden while on his travels in 1807.

GERMAN LADY'S *SECRÉTAIRE*

Rectangular in shape, the front flap opens to form a writing surface. The geometrical nature of the case is emphasized by ormolu bands that highlight the rectangular central panel. The square, tapering legs are inlaid with ormolu-ribbed panels. c.1790.



German occasional table This table, one of a pair, was specifically constructed to be taken apart easily. The legs unscrew and the ormolu galleries on both the top and around the undertier can be removed. 1780–90. H:74cm (29¼in); W:57cm (22½in); D:38cm (15in).

SYCAMORE AND MARQUETRY TABLE À ÉCRIRE

This ormolu-mounted writing table has a spring-loaded frieze drawer enclosing a leather-lined slide and four small drawers. Two additional spring-loaded drawers each contain an inkwell and two drawers. The square, tapering legs end in spade feet and casters. 1775–80. H:78cm (30in); W:75cm (29½in); D:51cm (21in).



RUSSIA

CATHERINE THE GREAT became Empress of Russia in 1762 and ruled until 1796. Her reign marked a golden age of Russian culture, during which St. Petersburg, built in the first half of the 18th century, became a prominent European capital. Catherine's predecessor, Empress Elizabeth I, had commissioned architects to build magnificent Rococo palaces and pavilions, but Catherine promoted the Neoclassical style, both in architecture and furnishings. During her reign she commissioned the building of the two Hermitages next to the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. Both were built in the austere Neoclassical style, with

colonnaded façades, the first as a pavilion where Catherine could relax and the second to house the Empress's library and growing art collection. Following Catherine's example, the aristocracy built imposing new mansions in St. Petersburg and grand homes on large country estates.

NEOCLASSICAL STYLE

Furniture styles became more severe, but lighter. Russian Neoclassical furniture is rectilinear and decorated primarily with symmetrical motifs and geometric patterns, but it is larger in scale and often more brightly decorated than similar styles elsewhere in Europe.

Commodes, tables, and chairs were influenced by French examples and were often made of mahogany with gilt, bronze, or brass mounts. Elaborate tables were designed to be placed in the centre of a room, rather than against a wall, and were therefore decorated on all sides. Elegant brass-enriched dining chairs were fashionable in the 1790s and could be found in most of the palaces and in the

collections of the Russian elite. Some had trellis-pattern backs with mounts attached to the joins of the pattern, and legs inlaid with reeded brass.

INNOVATIVE DESIGNS

Mechanical furniture was popular in Russia. The inventive German cabinet-maker, David Roentgen, visited St. Petersburg five times between 1783 and 1789, and



Brass acorn finials adorn the pierced gallery.

Neoclassical bronze heads conceal pen and ink drawers.

The columns are decorated with brass.

The grain of the flame mahogany is used for subtle decoration.

FALL-FRONT WRITING CABINET

Made of flame mahogany and inlaid with brass, this writing cabinet has a flat top and a pierced gallery with finials. Below is a frieze with a central drawer, flanked by panels inlaid with arrowheads. The fall front opens to reveal a

fitted interior and is flanked by Neoclassical bronze heads. The lower section of the piece has two doors with brass surrounds, flanked by panels inlaid with an arrowhead. The plinth base has tapering, block feet. Attributed to Heinrich Gams. *c.*1790. *H:*161cm (63½in); *W:*97cm (38¼in); *D:*45cm (17¼in). BLA



PARCEL-GILT ARMCHAIR

This mahogany, maple wood, and parcel-gilt armchair has scrolled finials and swan-shaped supports under its scrolled arms. The padded back and seat are covered in silk. *c.*1800. *H:*111cm (43¾in); *W:*80cm (31½in).



DINING CHAIR

One of a set, this mahogany side chair has a five-piece vertical splat above an upholstered seat. The frame is supported on square, tapering legs joined by a stretcher. The frame is embellished with brass mounts. *c.*1800.



SECRÉTAIRE-CABINET

The upper section of this ormolu-mounted and brass-inlaid mahogany *secrétaire*-cabinet has a frieze of scrolling foliage and satyrs. Below this are two doors enclosing an interior fitted with three shelves. The doors on either side are

decorated with circular medallions and enclose more shelves and three secret drawers. A *secrétaire* drawer encloses a writing surface, four small drawers, and a central shelf, above two small drawers. The tapering legs terminate in sabots. *Late 18th century.* *H:*170.5cm (67in); *W:*148.5cm (58½in); *D:*79.5cm (31¼in).

supplied many intriguing pieces of furniture to Catherine the Great, including desks at which she could write either standing up or sitting down, cabinets in which she could display her medals and gems, and a revolving armchair. The pieces that Roentgen produced for his Russian clients were more elaborate and ostentatious than those that he produced for his French and German patrons, and were made from woods that resembled the native Russian Karelian birch.

DECORATIVE FEATURES
Private factories and estate workshops were set up in St. Petersburg and around Russia, to create furnishings for the new palaces and mansions. Russian craftsmen became highly skilled and created fine pieces of furniture decorated with marquetry and gilding, influenced by both French and German designs. The Classical motifs of sphinxes, griffins, dolphins, lions' heads, acanthus, rosettes, and swags were common, and fine brass inlays were used to

imitate Classical columns. Table cabinets were decorated with exotic inlays of ivory and bone, and porcelain plaques from the Wedgwood factory in England were set into furniture panels.

TRADITIONAL STYLES
Vernacular furniture remained traditional and was usually made of oak. Armchairs based on monastic furniture, benches, and tables, sometimes with extending leaves, were simple and differed little from the pieces in peasant homes.



Brass-inlaid mahogany mirror The mirror frame has a Greek-key brass inlay and gilt mounts on the corners. c.1790. H:110.5cm (43½in); W:60.5cm (23¾in). EVE



MAHOGANY CENTRE TABLE

This table from the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg has a raised surface in the centre. Embellished with brass inlay, the apron has a Wedgwood panel depicting Hercules and Deianeira. With ormolu mounts, the table is supported on tapering, square-section legs. 1790-1800. W:149cm (59½in). GK

TULA FURNITURE

MADE OF SPARKLING CUT-STEEL, THE FURNITURE PRODUCED BY TULA'S IMPERIAL ARMOURY EPITOMIZES 18TH-CENTURY RUSSIAN DECORATIVE ARTS.

Founded in 1712, the Imperial Armoury at Tula came to the fore under Catherine the Great, supplying not only weaponry but an eclectic range of cut-steel objects. Tula furniture represents the very best of Russian decorative arts in the 18th century. Tula's armourers used an

extraordinary diversity of metal-working techniques. They cut steel into diamond facets that sparkled like jewels, coloured and chased the surface, and used non-ferrous metal inlays. The table pictured below is regarded as the finest example of Tula furniture.



Tula centre table This intricate parade table, created for display, is made of birch adorned with steel, silver, and gilt copper. The rectangular top is supported on a column terminating in four cabriole legs with fish-shaped mounts. 1780-85. H:70cm (27½in); W:56cm (22in); D:38cm (15in).

Neoclassical detail can be seen in the frieze.

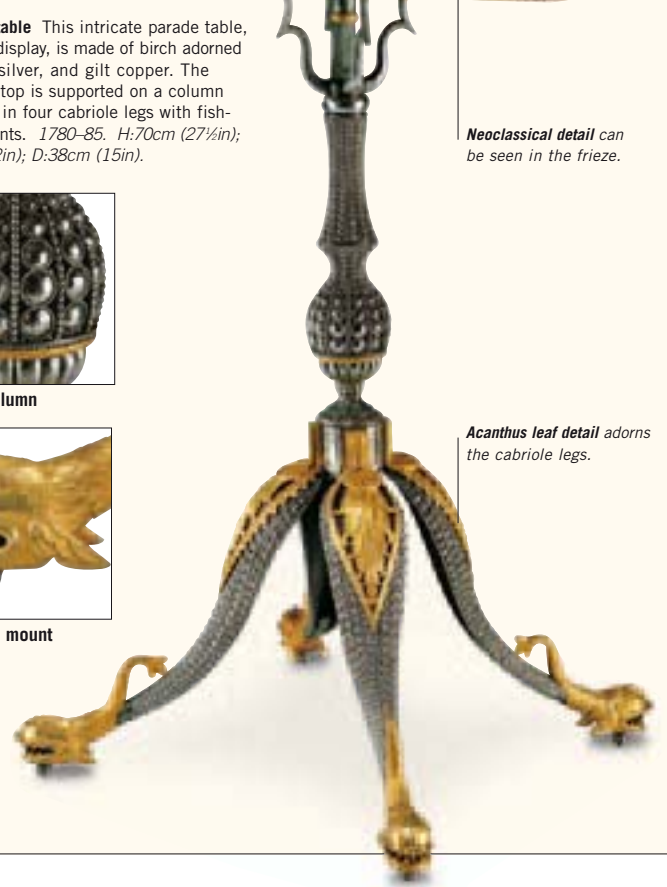


Detail of column



Fish-shaped mount

Acanthus leaf detail adorns the cabriole legs.



MAHOGANY BUREAU

The upper section of this mahogany bureau has a hinged top with a red gilded leather writing surface above two drawers. The lower case has an additional, sliding, green-felt writing surface above four drawers. The interior is fitted with

five large shelves. The bureau has gilt-bronze mounts, with swags over the keyholes and simple circular pulls on the drawers. It is supported on bracket feet. The desk was intended for an architect or similar, and enables the user to stand while working. c.1800. W:116cm (46½in). GK

LOW COUNTRIES

THE NETHERLANDS underwent a variety of political changes in the late 18th century as Spanish and Austrian rule was ceded to revolutionary France in 1795, and the Netherlands was renamed the Batavian Republic. Despite these changes, several areas of commerce continued successfully: agriculture, the money markets of Amsterdam, and trade with the East Indies all prospered and provided income for furniture and building.

The established trade links also facilitated the import of exotic woods such as mahogany and American satinwood.

IMPORTED FURNITURE BAN

While wood continued to be imported, the import of finished furniture was banned in 1771, largely due to the excessive popularity of French and British furniture. This ban meant that Dutch cabinet-makers lacked

competition and an environment in which new ideas were readily generated. This led to the provincial nature of much late 18th-century furniture and – to satisfy demand – the imitation of French Louis XVI pieces. Andries Borgen was known for this type of work.

APPLYING THE NEW STYLE

The rectilinear styling of Louis XVI furniture was applied to Low Countries case furniture. Cabinets were also inspired by British designs, as pediments became less heavy, and later examples incorporated a stylized swan's neck or a broken pediment.

Canted corners were common and, while cases swelled out at the base, they were not as broad as previous examples. Feet became square and sharply tapered. Glazed panels, rather than solid wooden doors, were used on cabinets designed to display collections of ceramics. Smaller case pieces such as the commode kept their signature shape but had a lighter, more geometric feel.

In the last quarter of the 18th century, a new type of case furniture, the low buffet or sideboard cabinet, was introduced. This piece was similar to a commode, but had a hinged top that opened to reveal an enclosed cistern



BONHEUR-DU-JOUR

The rectilinear case of this *bonheur-du-jour* has an upper section with three cupboards above a writing surface and five drawers. It is decorated throughout with Neoclassical motifs and the square, tapering, gilded legs have *toupie* feet.



Detail of handle pull

MARQUETRY COMMODE

This mahogany commode has a shaped top over a case with four drawers, flanked by canted corners that curve outwards towards the base. The commode is profusely inlaid with satinwood, fruitwood, and walnut marquetry. It is supported on bracket feet. *c.1790. H:81.5cm (32in). FRE*



DEMI-LUNE CARD TABLE

The top of this table is inlaid with butterflies, flowers, and cornucopia. When opened, floral marquetry is revealed. It has two pivoting drawers in the frieze, and inlaid tapered legs. *c.1785. H:89cm (35cm); W:44cm (17¼in); D:76cm (30in).*



SIDE CHAIR

One of a set of eight, this Dutch mahogany chair has an oval padded back and seat upholstered in striped grey velvet. The top rail has a stylized urn motif. The chair stands on turned, tapering, fluted legs. *1775–1800.*



CENTRE TABLE

The top of this mahogany oval table is echoed by its inlaid, oval shell *patera*. Square, tapered legs support the case and terminate in brass casters. *c.1800. H:75cm (29½in); W:37.5cm (14½in). RGA*



GATELEG TABLE

This mahogany, oval, drop-leaf table has one drawer in the frieze. It stands on tapering legs terminating in pad feet. *Second half of the 18th century. H:74cm (29in); W:126cm (49½in); D:91.5cm (36in).*

for washing glasses. On some examples, a number of shelves were attached to the lid, which fell open on lifting the lid. On other models, additional flaps were fitted under the lid and could be opened to provide more surface space.

The innovative buffet was just one example of metamorphic furniture that had a dual use and could be transformed when elements such as space-saving cupboards, and fold-over tops were opened up – particularly

suitable for small Dutch townhouses. Chairs had either an oval or a rectangular back, as in France. However, mahogany was preferred for the frame, while the carved decoration and set of the arms was characteristic of the Netherlands.

Despite these details, even in the Neoclassical period, Dutch furniture remained largely unchanged from the previous 50 years, although a more refined sense of proportion is evident.

DECORATIVE FEATURES

Local cabinet-makers continued to excel in the art of marquetry, using exotic woods such as rosewood, satinwood, or ebony. During the second half of the century, marquetry designs began to incorporate Classical motifs such as the stylized fan, urn, and trophies.

Despite the Dutch appreciation of French style, the angular, contrasting geometric shapes of the marquetry and

the minimal use of ormolu mounts – except in keyhole escutcheons and handles – gave their furniture a distinctive Dutch character.

Decorative inlays remained popular, and as furniture became more rectilinear in the 1780s, lacquer was again used for decoration on cupboard doors, table tops, and cabinet fall-fronts. These lacquer panels were often combined with light woods to provide a strong colour contrast.



Chequered inlay is a typical Dutch feature.

The centrepiece is a reused Chinese lacquer panel.

Ribbons and tassels are popular motifs of the period.

The fall front folds down to provide a writing slide.

MARQUETRY SÉCRETAIRE À ABATTANT

Made of satinwood, walnut, sycamore, and fruitwood, and decorated with parcel-gilt black lacquer and marquetry, this desk has a fall front enclosing a fitted interior with three pigeon holes, a central door, and four drawers. The mounts on the frieze door are inset with porcelain plaques. 1780. H:141cm (55½in); W:86.5cm (34in); D:42cm (16½in).

The supports are square and tapering.



FLORAL MARQUETRY DISPLAY CABINET

This solid oak piece with maple marquetry is made in two parts. The upper section has a central carved-and-scroll swan's-neck pediment, and glazed doors. The lower section has drawers. It has carved feet to the front. Essentially Baroque in style, the single concession to Neoclassicism is the carving on the apron. c.1795. H:241cm (94¾in). BMN



OAK CHEST

This rectangular chest has a hinged top with a moulded edge. It has ebonized detailing, and the two panels at the front are inlaid in fruitwood with stylized fans and a central urn. Two drawers are set below the panels. The case is supported on tapering, channelled feet. c.1790. W:148cm (58¼in). DN

BRITAIN: EARLY GEORGE III

George III came to the throne in 1760 and British furniture-making reached its zenith during his 51 year reign. British design was highly influential, owing to the publications of key designers whose names have become synonymous with Georgian furniture.

The key style of this period was Neoclassical, which was largely introduced to Britain by James Stuart and Robert Adam in the 1760s (see pp.152–53). Thomas Chippendale also played a role in the development of the movement, and worked alongside Robert Adam on a number of occasions. However, the designers George Hepplewhite, who published

his *Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide* in 1788 and Thomas Sheraton, whose *Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Drawing Book* came out between 1791 and 1794, are also strongly associated with the style and helped to spread the Neoclassical ideal. Important furniture-makers included Gillows of Lancaster, Ince and Mayhew, George Seddon, and John Linnell.

ADOPTING A NEW STYLE

By about 1765, the Rococo style was waning, and its typical decorative details, such as carved foliage and C-scrolls, had become passé. The main change ushered in by the Neoclassical

movement was the introduction of symmetrical designs. New decorations made use of Classical ornaments such as urns, rosettes, swags of husks, and bellflowers. Other popular motifs included vases, Greek keys, laurel wreaths, palmettes, sphinxes, anthemion, and guilloche.

At first, Neoclassical decoration was applied to existing Rococo furniture shapes. However, these soon began to show the influence of Neoclassicism, and became more refined and rectilinear in shape, with symmetrical lines and fewer curves.

DECORATIVE FEATURES

The way in which furniture was decorated also changed. Carved decoration was pronounced at first, but as the century progressed it became shallower, and was finally replaced by inlaid woods in imitation of earlier carved decoration. These inlays were made from a greater



The grain of the mahogany top is contrasted with lighter sycamore banding and boxwood stringing.

The urn design is frequently seen on Neoclassical furniture.

Carved, entwined bands of husks run down the legs.

Roundels decorate each side of the spade-shaped feet.



Carved rosette

CARVED SIDE TABLE

The rectangular top of this mahogany side table is inlaid with stained sycamore banding and boxwood stringing. The table has a shaped apron frieze, which is decorated with a large carved central urn flanked by paterae, a pair of smaller vases, and a swag of husks. The two foliate side handles are integral

to the design. The four square-section, tapering legs are headed by paterae and carved with entwined bands of husks, which are frequently used Neoclassical motifs. The carving runs down the length of the legs to spade-shaped block feet, which are decorated with carved roundels. This piece is one of a pair. c.1775. H:86.5cm (34in); W:112cm (44½in); D:60cm (23½in). PAR



GILTWOOD ORNAMENTAL MIRROR

The upper part of this gilt frame contains an oil painting of a pastoral scene. The sides are carved with rushes bound with ribbons and palm brackets. The cresting is centred by a trophy of Cupid's bow, tied with ribbons and palm branches. c.1775. H:223cm (90in); W:175cm (69in). PAR



CONCERTINA-ACTION CARD TABLE

The hinged, crossbanded, serpentine, mahogany table top has a carved border of flowers and leaves. It opens to reveal a baize playing surface. It has reeded, cabriole legs with bead-and-reel carving, foliate brackets, and scrolled toes on square, block feet. c.1760. H:72.5cm (28½in); W:90cm (35½in); D:44cm (17¼in). PAR

variety of woods than previously, including satinwood, tulipwood, and rosewood. By 1780, carving on case furniture or tables was reduced to a minimum. The grain of the timber or inlay became more important.

Painting was also a popular decorative technique, and was another way in which Neoclassical designs and motifs could be incorporated into pieces of furniture.



CHIPPENDALE SIDE CHAIR

This mahogany side chair has a shell-carved crest with foliate scrolled ears above a pierced and carved back splat. The trapezoidal slip seat is raised on cabriole legs with shell-carved knees and claw-and-ball feet. NA



GEORGE III FAUTEUIL

One of a set of six, this elegant, French-style George III painted and gilded *fauteuil* has scrolling rails, arms, and legs. It is upholstered in silk from a later date, which features a floral design. L&T

FURNITURE TYPES

Linen chests or clothes presses remained popular, as did mahogany chests of drawers. Neoclassical styling sometimes appeared as canted corners and carved, fluted corner columns.

Large dining tables were made from about 1770 onwards. The most formal tables had rounded ends with centre sections and gatelegs. Additional leaves were made to fit in between. Gateleg tables were sometimes placed side by side to be used as dining tables well into the 1790s. Towards the end of the 18th century, long pedestal dining tables were introduced. These always had extra leaves that could be inserted

to extend them. The pedestal form also became popular for a variety of other types of table, including drum, breakfast, and centre tables.

Other tables suitable for dining included the Pembroke table, which was easy to move because it was nearly always fitted with casters. It had two leaves on either side of a rectangular centre section, and frequently had a drawer or shelf under the top. Pembroke tables were often decorated with exquisite marquetry patterns that could only be seen in their entirety when the table was open.

Armchair designs continued to be influenced by those emerging from

France and the *fauteuil* adapted well to Neoclassical style. Increasingly, chairs had oval rather than square upholstered seats and backs, and square, tapering legs with spade feet, or columnar legs with fluting.

The shield-back chair was one of five designs popularized by George Hepplewhite, which also included the oval, heart, camel, and wheel. Shaped like a shield, with a double carved crest rail and tapering uprights, the back splat of the shield-back chair was pierced and decorated with typical Neoclassical motifs, such as wheat sheaves or fleur-de-lys. Such chairs tended not to have stretchers.

MARQUETRY COMMODE

This fine George III ormolu, rosewood, satinwood, kingwood, and marquetry commode is serpentine and slightly *bombé* in shape. The top is inlaid with a musical trophy and foliate scrolls. The two doors have ormolu banding and open to reveal shelves within. The side panels are inlaid with vases. The commode has ormolu shoulder mounts and scrolled feet. c.1770. H:90cm (35½in); W:142cm (56in). PAR

The intricate marquetry depicts a musical trophy and scrolls.



The ormolu mounts run down the sides of the commode to the feet.

Ormolu mounts protect the veneer on the feet and provide decoration.

The doors are framed with contrasting chevron inlays in a lighter veneer.

The sides of the commode are inlaid with Classical vases.

BRITAIN: LATE GEORGE III

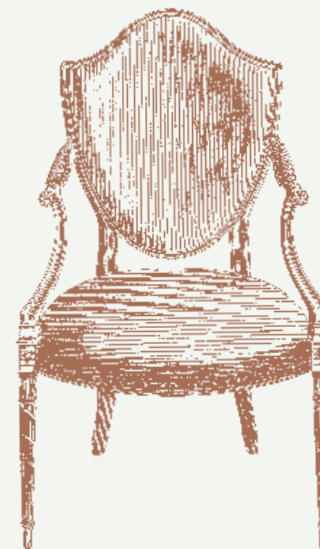
AS GEORGE III'S REIGN continued, furniture design evolved. By 1770, Neoclassical styles were being made and soon became the favourite in fashionable circles. However, Rococo styles co-existed with Neoclassical designs for several years and furniture from this time often has elements of both styles. French influences and Gothic taste can still be seen in some pieces. Furniture that was Neoclassical in shape, for example, occasionally had elements of Gothic-style decoration.

Chinese lacquer also remained popular as a method of decoration for some of the more important pieces of furniture, but overall shapes were straight and elegant.

Many important cabinet-makers worked in the Neoclassical style, including George Seddon, Ince and Mayhew, and John Linnell. Their work, together with that of many other makers, shows how important exotic woods and marquetry were in George III furniture.

INFLUENCE OF THE GRAND TOUR From the 1750s onwards, many of the aristocracy had been going on the Grand Tour of Italy (see pp.132–33). On their return to England, they wanted to build new houses that emulated the Classical architecture, interiors, and furniture they had seen on their travels. As souvenirs, many of these Grand Tourists shipped back marble tops from Italy and they wanted tables made to match – the obvious style to choose was, of course, Neoclassical.

Cabriole chair design This design, from Plate 10 of *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide* of 1788 by George Hepplewhite, shows a Neoclassical upholstered chair entitled a "cabriole chair", described as being "in the newest fashion".



SCOTTISH LINEN PRESS

This linen press has rosewood crossbanding around the doors' central mahogany ovals, which are outlined with boxwood stringing. It has graduated drawers, a central inlaid tablet in the shaped skirt, mirrored in the plaque in the cornice, and bracket feet. c.1780. H:211cm (83in). L&T

GILLOWS FURNITURE

GILLOWS OF LANCASTER DESIGNED AND MADE A VAST QUANTITY OF FURNITURE FOR THE NOBILITY, THE GENTRY, AND THE GROWING MIDDLE CLASS.

The Gillows firm of cabinet-makers was established in Lancaster, in the north of England, around 1730. It made furniture for a varied clientele and opened a London branch in 1769.

Most of the furniture it produced in the late 18th century was of Neoclassical design, without decoration, and followed the designs of Hepplewhite and Sheraton. Pieces were made in fine mahogany or satinwood and took into account the grain of these timbers. After 1770, Gillows

furniture had an austerity reflecting contemporary architecture. Writing, library, and dressing furniture often had ingenious arrangements of small drawers and hidden compartments.

Unlike many 18th-century cabinet-makers, the firm did not publish any of its designs, preferring to keep them exclusive to clients. Gillows consistently produced furniture of high quality, and made pieces for the domestic and export markets well into the 19th century.



Small, lockable compartment.

The frieze drawer is fitted with writing implements.

Square, tapering legs are joined by an undertier.

Small bonheur-du-jour The upper section has lockable compartments either side of a short drawer. The bowed front has a central frieze drawer, and the square, tapering legs have brass caps and casters.

Forms became lighter and more elegant with straight, square legs, rather than cabriole legs. By about 1780, legs had become square and tapering. Caned seats became popular once again.

Classical emblems often reflected the purpose of the piece of furniture; music rooms would have furniture decorated with musical trophies or Neoclassical figures playing instruments such as lyres.

Some architects such as Robert Adam designed whole rooms, including door fittings, in the Neoclassical style and commissioned

Chippendale to make the furniture for specific places within the rooms.

Provincial furniture was also made in the Neoclassical style but was usually simpler and did not have elaborate inlays.

NEW FORMS

Several new types of furniture were first made during this period. Long dining tables became common and the sideboard evolved from two pedestals flanking a serving table to one piece of furniture. Long sets of chairs were made to complement longer tables.

Mirrors increased in size, as the technology evolved to create larger

plates of glass. New types of desk were also made. The Carlton House desk, made in 1795 for the Prince of Wales (the future George IV), was named after his London residence. It took the form of a table with raised drawers along the sides and back.

Other new forms of furniture at this time included cylinder desks that closed with tambour tops; dressing tables incorporating elaborate compartments and a folding mirror; and games tables with removable sliders and reversible tops. Smaller items such as tea caddies and sewing boxes were also made in the Neoclassical style.

SHIFTING STYLES

Towards the end of the 18th century, styles became less elaborate and the use of marquetry and inlay decreased. Despite being at war with France, British styles were influenced by the French taste for plainer furniture with the use of well-figured veneers. Changes were subtle, such as square, tapering legs being replaced with turned, tapering legs. Furniture became slightly heavier in form, but was still very elegant.

Nelson's successful campaign in Egypt had an influence on English designers and Egyptian motifs began to appear in English furniture.



GEORGE III DINING CHAIRS

Part of a set, these mahogany chairs have moulded, oval backs. The carved decoration on the chair backs is of wheat ears and paterae, with a flower-head at the top of each upright rail. c.1785. H:91.5cm (36in); W:52.5cm (20½in); D:53cm (20¾in). PAR



The serpentine-shaped table top has a moulded edge.

The frieze drawer has a baize-lined writing slide.

The central marquetry design is repeated on each drop leaf.

The tapering legs terminate in brass shoes and leather-lined casters.



Carved anthemion

MAHOGANY CARD TABLE

This card table is in the French Hepplewhite style. The serpentine top opens to reveal a playing surface, above a serpentine frieze. The table is raised on cabriole legs, which have carved knees and terminate in scroll feet. W:102cm (40in). L&T



Table top

BREAKFAST OR PEMBROKE TABLE

This satinwood table has a serpentine-shaped top inlaid with an oval medallion surrounded by swags and ribbons. The drop leaves have matching veneers and the tapered legs are inlaid with satinwood flutes and bellflowers. c.1780. H:71cm (28in); W:35.5cm (14in); D:28cm (11in). PAR

ROBERT ADAM

THE INTERIORS OF THE SCOTTISH ARCHITECT ROBERT ADAM BECAME SO WELL KNOWN THAT THE TERM “ADAM STYLE” WAS COINED TO DESCRIBE HIS DISTINCTIVE LOOK.

ROBERT ADAM began his career by training as an architect in Edinburgh, under his father William, a classical architect. Robert spent five years studying in Italy, drawing the sights frequented by scholars on the Grand Tour. On his return in 1758 he established an office in London, where he was later joined by his elder brother James.

Adam's designs were primarily for interiors, rather than whole buildings, and he designed every element of them, to create an integrated whole, from ceilings and matching carpets down to mirrors and urns. As a result, his designs included a wide variety of furniture, including chairs, sofas, commodes, stools, and mirrors. He also designed console tables, bookcases, and sideboards as “wall furniture” – an integral part of his decorative scheme for walls.

Adam did not make furniture himself, but commissioned established London cabinet-makers, including Chippendale and Linnell, to make it. In his first decade in London, Adam developed the style of decoration that was to remain the dominant feature of his work throughout his career.

KEY DATES



Robert Adam

1728 Robert Adam born at Kirkcaldy, Scotland.

1743–45 Adam attends Edinburgh College.

1746–48 Adam works with his elder brother John as an architect's apprentice

to his father, William, until William's death in 1748.

1750 Robert and his brother James begin their first major commission, Hopetoun House, near Edinburgh.

1754–58 Adam goes on the Grand Tour.

1758 Adam returns from Italy and goes to London. Becomes a member of the Royal Society of Arts.

1761 Adam is appointed “Architect of the King's Works”, a position he holds jointly with William Chambers, the architect of Somerset House.

1764 William Adam & Co. established, with offices in London and Scotland.

1773 The first volume of *Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam* is published, (the second in 1779, the third posthumously in 1822).

1792 Adam dies and is buried in Poet's Corner at Westminster Abbey.



PIER GLASS

This carved giltwood and gesso pier glass in the Neoclassical style was made for hanging on the wall between two windows, with a pier table below. The margin of the mirror's frame allows a greater expanse of glass, with anthemion marking where the separate pieces are joined.



“FRENCH-STYLE” ARMCHAIR

This painted and gilded fauteuil has an oval back, a half-round seat, splayed rear legs, and fluted front legs. c.1775. H:94cm (37in); W:65cm (25½in). NOA



ORMOLU-MOUNTED URNS

Designed by Robert Adam, these pine, lime, and mahogany urns were made by John Linnell and have removable tops. Urns with pedestals like this were usually made for dining rooms. The pedestals often served as plate warmers and were fitted with metal racks and a small oil burner at the base. 1767. H:155cm (61in); W:44.5cm (17½in).



ALCOVE AT KEDLESTON
Adam designed the alcove at the west end of the dining room at Kedleston Hall in Derbyshire. He also designed the furniture for it, such as the semicircular sideboard, specifically to fit the given space and echo the filigree design and pastel colours of the alcove ceiling above. Adam frequently designed new shapes of rooms, such as alcoves, galleries, and libraries, to add a sense of movement to an interior.

GILTWOOD SIDE TABLE
One of a pair, this table has a carved frieze and fluted, tapering legs, the tops carved with plumes and acanthus. The white marble top is inlaid with scagliola showing storks and entwined bands of ribbon.
 c.1770. H:87cm (34½in); W:150.5cm (59½in); D:74cm (29in). PAR



The most important influence on this style was Roman antiquity, of which he had made many drawings while in Italy. Visits to Herculaneum and Rome inspired him to incorporate tripods, urns, oval medallions, Vitruvian scrolls, Greek keys, anthemia, and many other Classical motifs into his work. Adam also used Renaissance motifs, such as grotesques, chimeras, and sphinxes.

The Italian artist Giovanni Piranesi became a close friend and inspiration to Adam. Many motifs in Adam's designs can be found in Piranesi's drawings of Roman views and fantastic interiors, and while Adam's chimney pieces were not as wild as Piranesi's engravings, many were inspired by them.

EARLY INFLUENCES

The Palladian style had a strong influence on Adam's early work. Armchairs and sofas that he designed for Sir Laurence Dundas – made by Chippendale – had typically Palladian, rectangular backs. However, the sphinxes on the curved seat rails showed the influence of Renaissance grotesques, and the use of anthemia harked back to Classical motifs.

By the late 1760s, Adam had begun to develop a more sophisticated style. His furniture designs became more delicate, the carving less dramatic, and he began to use straight legs. Case pieces were still rectangular but Adam began to use new shapes in other types of furniture. In 1767, he designed furniture for the dining room at Osterley Park in West London and the dining chairs introduced a new shape of chair back – known as a harp- or lyre-back, inspired by Classical shapes.

THE LATER YEARS

By the 1770s, Adam's fame had grown and he carried out many commissions for the aristocracy. His elegant furniture designs were widely imitated. His tables and chairs had slender, tapered legs and armchairs had oval backs and slender frames. Mirrors were an important feature of his interiors and included simple designs intended to be positioned above pier tables, as well as enormous pieces with slight frames that were designed to cover an entire wall.

COLOURS AND DECORATION

Adam's designs were usually for furniture made from light woods, such as satinwood and harewood (sycamore that was dyed grey). Adam favoured delicate, painted designs, in soft pastel colours, such as pale green and lilac pink, and gilding.

The intricate, swirling arabesques that he used to decorate ceilings and floors were repeated in the filigree decoration used on his furniture. He also frequently used scagliola, not just on pieces of furniture but also as architectural features of an interior, such as the intricate scagliola columns at Syon House in West London.

GUSTAVIAN

IN SWEDEN, as in Britain, the last 40 years of the 18th century were a golden age of design, and the beginning of a recognizable Swedish furniture style. The term “Gustavian” is used to describe the Swedish Neoclassical style, and refers to the period from about 1755 to 1810.

GUSTAV III

The greatest exponent of the Swedish Neoclassical style was King Gustav III. He spent time at Versailles before being crowned in 1771, and developed a love of the French Neoclassical style. On his return to Sweden, he invited French cabinet-makers to Sweden to

make furniture. When he was unable to pay them, they returned home, leaving behind their furniture. This was copied by the local craftsmen, but in a less ornate style that became known as “Gustavian”.

Walnut was often used in these earlier pieces; later furniture was usually made from local woods such as pine and schubirch, and then painted rather than gilded because it was cheaper – Sweden was a much poorer country than France at the time.

Gustav’s enthusiasm for Neoclassical design led him to incorporate the style into his ancestral home, Gripsholm Castle. The Grand Cabinet, an official

reception room (*see opposite*), was lavishly decorated in this way.

NEOCLASSICAL DESIGN

The designs most favoured in the Swedish Neoclassical era were light, elegant interpretations of the Louis XVI style. Grand reception rooms were decorated with architectural elements such as pilasters and columns. Others were panelled or painted in Gustavian colours: light grey, blue, or pale green.

In these rooms, the most important item was the faience stove. In larger rooms, pairs of stoves – often of huge proportions and in Neoclassical style – with brightly painted faience tiles

graced the spaces usually occupied by pairs of pier tables.

Swedish cabinet-makers decorated their furniture with figured veneers and banding made of mahogany and other tropical woods, such as kingwood, and ebony for sophisticated pieces. High-style furniture used imported gilt mounts in the French style. The mounts never overwhelmed the furniture, but were discreetly used on the sides of case pieces and at the ends of legs. Intricate marquetry, with typical Neoclassical motifs such as urns, reflected the influence of British fashions in some Gustavian furniture, although it was less common.

The marquetry swags are set within an ebony border.

The table top is inset with specimen marble squares.



The table legs are joined by a flat cross-stretcher.

OCCASIONAL TABLE

The top of this satinwood Neoclassical table is decorated with different coloured marbles. The frieze is decorated with marquetry swags, and there

is a single drawer for storage. Strips of ebony are inlaid into the legs to imitate Classical columns. The table was designed by George Haupt, and was probably made for serving coffee. 1769. H:75cm (29½in); W:43cm (17in).



GUSTAVIAN ARMCHAIR

This painted and gilt chair has a splat in the form of entwined “Gs”, to represent Gustav III. The upholstered seat rests on a decorated frieze above a carved apron with gilt foliage decoration. c.1780. Bk



GILTWOOD CONSOLE TABLE

The marble top of this table rests above a guilloche-decorated frieze. The tapering legs are joined by flat stretchers, on which a decorative urn is centred. c.1780. H:77cm (30½in); W:92cm (36¼in); D:47cm (18½in). Bk



PAINTED CABINET

This painted side cabinet is made in two parts. The upper section has leaf-tip carved cornice moulding above two fluted panel doors and a niche below. The lower section

of the cabinet has two matching panel doors on square, fluted, and tapered feet. It is painted pale green – a typically Gustavian colour. c.1800. H:252.5cm (101in); W:132.5cm (53in); D:41.25cm (16½in). EVE



FASHIONABLE HOMES

Furniture and floor-and-wall coverings were all designed as part of an integral interior. The most fashionable floor-coverings were inspired by those of Louis XV's carpet factory, the *Savonnerie*. However, floors were often bare, so were panelled to resemble marquetry designs.

Upholstered furniture was covered in red, blue, or green damasks, which matched the wall coverings. Chairs were oval- or square-backed, with turned, fluted legs. Daybeds (see

below) and *badkarsoffas*, or bathtub sofas – where the sides of the sofa were the same height as the back and curved to create a bathtub form – were typically Gustavian and proved popular.

LATE GUSTAVIAN FURNITURE

Swedish furniture design became more austere later in the period. The rectilinear two-part cabinet is a provincial example of this.

Gustavian pieces are clearly influenced by European, especially French, styles of furniture. However, Swedish designers interpreted the style in a way that is instantly recognizable as Scandinavian.

The Grand Cabinet of Gripsholm Castle Heavy laurel swags and panels adorn the room, which is furnished with giltwood chairs and benches.

GEORG HAUPT

AS THE PRINCIPAL CABINET-MAKER TO THE SWEDISH ROYAL FAMILY, GEORG HAUPT WAS THE GREATEST EXPONENT OF SWEDISH NEOCLASSICAL STYLE.

The son of a cabinet-maker, Georg Haupt worked in Amsterdam, London, and Paris, before finding fame in Sweden. He returned to Sweden around 1768 where his work was much in demand, and he became principal cabinet-maker to King Adolf Frederick in 1769.

Most of his furniture designs were inspired by French styles, including commodes, night stands, and *secrétaires*. Haupt was especially famed for his use of exotic tropical woods for veneers. He is also believed to be the first cabinet-

maker after the Rococo period to use birch for veneer. This pale wood was indigenous to Sweden and could be easily stained to create different colours.

Like French marquetry designers, Haupt used geometric formulae: a trellis pattern with centred quatrefoils. His furniture often featured ormolu mounts used in an understated way that was subordinate to the overall design. He produced work of the highest quality, and his masterpiece was a desk given by King Adolf Frederick to Queen Louisa Ulrika.



GUSTAVIAN ARMCHAIRS

These white-painted and gilt armchairs are square in form with upholstered seats and backs. The sweeping arms have upholstered elbow rests. The seat rail is decorated in each corner with a gilded rosette and is supported

on tapering, fluted legs. These armchairs are typical of Gustavian furniture in that they are painted and the upholstery is of a pale pink colour. However, they are regarded as coarse, provincial examples of the style, even though they were originally made for a sophisticated home. *c.1790. Bk*



GUSTAVIAN DAY BED

This painted day bed is probably made from pine and has deep, upholstered sides and back. Each end has an arched and scrolled top rail with central foliate carving and curved uprights, above tapering, stop-

fluted legs headed by rosettes. The seat rail is carved with floral motifs. The 20th-century upholstery replaces what probably would have been silk, decorated with much stronger Neoclassical motifs. The pale colours mimic the Swedish Gustavian style. *c.1780. Bk*



Detail of inlay

The lower drawers are sans traverse, meaning they have no distinguishable break in the marquetry design.

The inlay includes foliage and nautical symbols.

Commode One of a pair, this has a marble top over a conforming case. The side panels are inlaid with a vase shape. Four slightly cabriole legs support the case. *c.1775. H:84cm (33in); W:51cm (20in). Bk*



Imported mounts trail to the feet of the front legs.

SCANDINAVIA

THE ADVENT OF NEOCLASSICISM coincided with the first emergence of identifiable national styles in Scandinavia. Previously, much of the furniture made in these countries had been a wholesale imitation of British or French design. During the late 18th century, however, designers exploited lighter-coloured indigenous woods as an alternative to mahogany – partly out of economic necessity – and a fashion for painting furniture, rather than gilding, developed.

DENMARK

The dining room of A.G. Moltke's palace at Amalienborg, Copenhagen's smartest address, was decorated in the Neoclassical style by the Frenchman Nicolas-Henri Jardin, in 1757. This was one of the earliest incursions of the Neoclassical style into Scandinavia, and was typical of the almost slavish manner in which the Danes and their neighbours emulated French fashions.

The pattern books of English masters such as Hepplewhite and Sheraton were also very influential, particularly in the design of commodes, whose Continental-style parquetry and marble-slab tops were phased out in favour of plainer English veneers. Chairs often had splat backs, a direct appropriation from the English Neoclassical style. In common with the rest of Europe, mahogany became the timber of choice for chairs and case pieces. Furniture was frequently embellished with gilt Neoclassical motifs such as shells, acanthus leaves, and urns.

NORWAY

Norway was administered from Copenhagen until the Napoleonic Wars in 1814. As the dominant member of this union, Denmark exported many manufactured goods to Norway, including furniture.

Neoclassical design emerged in Norway in the 1770s, just as it was gaining popularity in Denmark. Many of the wealthiest Norwegian families had close ties with Britain, and their homes were furnished with imported English furniture, or copies made by local cabinet-makers in the late Georgian style. Alongside mahogany, Norwegian cabinet-makers began to use birch, a light-coloured, deciduous

wood that was indigenous to Norway and that became synonymous with vernacular furniture.

SWEDEN

Gustav III (*see pp.154–55*) was responsible for introducing the Neoclassical style to Sweden. Touring in France when informed of his father's death, he completed his visit to Versailles before journeying home to take up the crown, and returned full of enthusiasm for the Neoclassical style he had seen there. George Haupt, who had worked in France and Britain, was a key figure in the development of Swedish Neoclassicism and went on to become the principal court cabinet-maker.

Case furniture made during this period tended to be rectilinear, with tapered legs. Chests had chamfered sides or carved quarter columns, and often incorporated fluted brass mounts and cock-beading in the manner of German commodes. As an alternative to gilding, furniture was often painted in pale colours. British influence can be seen in the adoption of forms such as the tea table and the splat back chair, and the polished mahogany finishes that became popular towards 1790.

FINLAND

Something of a backwater until granted her status as an independent Duchy by the Russians in 1809, Finland was slow to adopt the Neoclassical style that had swept across the rest of Europe. Until around 1770, apprentice cabinet-makers in Finland continued to present elaborate Rococo-style cabinets to the furniture guilds as examples of their most accomplished work.

Neoclassical style did not really flourish in Finland until Carl Ludvig Engel introduced it from Russia in the 19th century, but furniture of the late 18th century did take on some aspects of more fashionable European pieces. Economic depression compelled Finnish cabinet-makers to use local woods such as pine and beech and stain them to imitate the more expensive imported timbers demanded by the Neoclassical aesthetic. In the last years of the 18th century, the Finns began to use veneers of oak, walnut, and finally mahogany.



DANISH CORNER CABINET

This mahogany corner cabinet is in two parts, and is decorated with Neoclassical motifs. The upper section has a moulded, fluted pediment, which sits above a carved dentil and Greek-key frieze. Below this, the two panelled doors are

flanked on either side and centred with fluting and roundels. They open to reveal a shelved interior. The lower section has a bow-fronted, fluted, frieze drawer above three long drawers, and the whole is supported on squared, block feet. *c.1780–90. H:228.5cm (90in); W:114cm (45in). EVE*



GILTWOOD CONSOLE TABLE

This carved wooden console table has exceptionally fine rosettes and beading. The frieze, legs, and raised plinth are gilded. It has a rectangular marble table top and is supported on four fluted column legs that terminate in square feet. *c.1800. H:92cm (35in); W:80cm (31½in); D:44cm (17¼in). GK*



DANISH MIRROR FRAME

This mirror plate is surrounded by an ornate Louis XVI giltwood frame, with a beaded inner edge and a leaf-carved outer edge. The top of the frame is surmounted by a carved ribbon crest. *c.1790. H:74cm (29in); W:53cm (21in). EVE*



DANISH COMMODE

The rectangular top of this Louis XVI-style mahogany commode has a moulded edge and sits above a similarly shaped case with three drawers, flanked on either side by fluted quarter-pilasters. The case stands on raised bracket feet. *c.1790. H:72.5cm (28½in); W:71cm (28in); D:43cm (17in). EVE*



SWEDISH TEA TABLE

This tilt-top, tripod tea table has a circular top made from alder root veneer. The turned pedestal leads into cabriole legs, and both parts are made from ebonized birch. The table bears the stamped signature of the maker Jakob Sjölin. *H:73cm (28¾in); Diam:85cm (33¾in). Bk*

Classical motifs decorate the tops of the upper cupboards.

The case is made of mahogany.

The locks are made of bronze.

Greek key motifs decorate the frieze.

Bronze details decorate the lower section.

DANISH CUPBOARD

This mahogany cupboard is decorated with bronze ornaments. The piece consists of an upper section with three cupboards, and a larger lower section with two doors. The piece was designed by Caspar Frederik Harsdorff, a noted Neoclassical architect. *Late 18th century.*



SPAIN, PORTUGAL, & COLONIES

SPAIN CAME UNDER French Bourbon rule in the 18th century and this continued with the ascension of Charles III to the throne in 1759. Previously King of Naples, Charles III brought to Spain both Italian architects and designers, notably the Neapolitan, Gasparini, who ran the *Manufactura Real* from 1768. However, although the Italians had some influence on Spanish furniture design, the French style continued to dominate.

Spanish society was largely rural and was conservative about interior design: it was not until 1788, for example, that Neoclassicism was widely accepted. Spanish society was also content with

far fewer items of furniture than was normal in other parts of Europe. Some forms, such as the day bed, did not exist at all, and chests of drawers, sideboards or china cupboards, and commodes were seldom used.

Instead, *vargueño* cabinets – which still represented around half of the furniture made – cupboards, armarios, *secrétaires*, and chests remained the standard case pieces.

Secrétaires showed either an English influence, with straight sides, or were inspired by French or Low Country design, with a *bombé* lower case. However, Spanish examples were more flamboyant and theatrical than

either French or English pieces, and lacquered *secrétaires*, especially in red, were particularly popular.

English-style chair backs, whether a solid splat or pierced, were used on Spanish settees. They usually had a four-chair splat back and a caned seat. Later versions were made of mahogany, but unlike English examples, carved details were gilded.

PORTUGAL

The country's politics and its colonial expansion opened Portugal to influences from both France and England. However, dependence on the English maritime trade and the

influential port-wine merchant communities, meant that British influence was often stronger. Northern Portugal tended to follow



The roll top has a marquetry scene with foliage surround.

Pull-out slide for writing

The edge is inverted and bowed.

The case stands on short, cabriole legs.

The overall shape of the case indicates the piece is transitional.

Shaped apron

Neoclassical handles with swags

The sides are decorated with an inlaid medallion held by a ribbon.

SPANISH ROLL-TOP DESK

The roll-top front of this desk pushes back to reveal a fitted interior. Below this is a pull-out writing slide, above three long, slightly serpentine drawers. The roll top and side panels are inlaid with medallions containing

a landscape design in the former and an urn with flowers and foliage in the latter. The drawers are inlaid with swags of flowers. The escutcheons bear Neoclassical swag-and-medallion motifs. The case has a serpentine base on short cabriole legs. Signed and dated by Sevilla Jh de Varga. 1786. EGU



SPANISH MIRROR AND TABLE

This elaborately carved mirror frame and demi-lune table are made entirely of gilded wood. The table has a deep, curved frieze and stands on six splayed legs, which are joined by wavy stretchers. Late 18th century.



PORTUGUESE CONSOLE TABLE

This ivory-painted and parcel-gilt table has a marble top above a pierced frieze. The table stands on leaf-carved fluted legs, joined by a stretcher centred by a classical urn. H:96cm (38½in); W:117cm (46¼in) D:67cm (26¼in).

British taste, while Lisbon and the Court were inspired by France.

Portuguese furniture also shows the influence of Italy, the Low Countries, and the Far East due to trade links and colonial possessions – the latter fuelling a taste for Asian styles.

The resulting furniture was unique. The exaggerated styles often bore similarities to Italian pieces but were made from foreign woods such as mahogany or jacaranda, which were particularly suitable for carving.

The furniture also continued to incorporate elements from earlier Portuguese designs such as turned spiral legs, though by the late 18th

century these elements had become less prominent.

The English tripod table form was extremely popular in Portugal, due to the style's appearance in the third edition of *The Gentleman and Cabinet-maker's Director* in 1762.

Commodes first appeared in 1751 and by the 1770s were being created in a Portuguese interpretation of Louis XVI style, with rectilinear breakfronts, deep aprons, and handles with embedded medallions.

Portuguese chairs resembled English ones with solid back splats and cabriole legs. However, the use of elaborate curves, scrolled feet, and numerous

C-scrolls was unique to furniture from Portugal. Chairs were often made of rosewood, a denser wood than mahogany, which made them look heavier than their English counterparts, such as Chippendales.

MEXICO

Mexican furniture was originally inspired by European styles introduced in the 16th century. Spain and Portugal introduced the advanced art of furniture-making to their colonies, and soon countries such as Mexico started to produce furniture in their own right. By the 17th century,

Mexican furniture had acquired a distinctive style of its own, which continued to be dominant in the 18th century. It was characterized by massive dimensions and exuberant but rural decoration, often incorporating the use of silver.

The "friary" chair was a continuation of a medieval shape, with a square back upholstered in leather with decorative brass tacks positioned around the edge of the frame. The square seat was also upholstered, and it had straight back supports, which flowed into the legs; the front legs were often carved.



SPANISH COLONIAL ARMCHAIRS

The wooden frame of each chair features repoussé silver plaques, an arched, decorative top rail, an arched, padded back, inscrolled arm terminals, and squared, cabriole legs with claw-and-ball feet. 1780-1800.



CABINET-ON-STAND

This heavily carved and gilded cabinet-on-stand has a carved cornice surmounted by an elaborate asymmetrical carved crest. The panelled doors are decorated with alternate squares of gilt to create a chequered effect.

The whole piece is raised on four caryatids, which are joined by a carved cross-stretcher with an urn at the centre. Late 18th century.



PORTUGUESE CENTRE TABLE

This rosewood table has cedar linings. The rectangular top is edged all round with silver mounts. The frame has two drawers to the front, each with a silver escutcheon and bale handle. The base of the table has exquisitely

turned legs, which terminate in small, turned feet. The legs are joined by similarly turned stretchers. c.1760. H:76cm (30in); W:132cm (52in); D:84cm (33in). BL

AMERICA: CHIPPENDALE TO FEDERAL

NOT LONG AFTER the American Congress signed the Declaration of Independence on 4 July, 1776, the Revolutionary War began in earnest. While the colonists fought for their independence they had neither the energy nor the enthusiasm to keep up with British fashions, as they had in the past. And so, while the British embraced Robert Adam's Neoclassical designs, American cabinet-makers continued to develop the Chippendale-style furniture they had been making for the past 30 years.

NEW STYLES

It was only after the war ended in 1783 that the new styles were seen in America, and they were probably not actually made there until after 1790. For some years, the old Chippendale and new Federal styles were made alongside each other, or even combined. In fact, the new American furniture did not adhere to Adam's Neoclassical designs, but followed the styles seen in the latest British pattern books from George Hepplewhite and Thomas Sheraton, often adding a regional twist to these forms. It did, however, borrow Adam's use of marquetry, caning, painted surfaces, and the use of exotic woods.

A NATIONAL STYLE

This emerging style became known as Federal because it reflected the new identity of America, which now had a Federal government, a Federal party, and was building a Federal city. Confusingly, the style is sometimes called Sheraton or Hepplewhite, depending upon which style it was based. With the new politics came prosperity, and Baltimore and New York joined Philadelphia, Newport, Boston, Charleston, and Williamsburg as centres of fine furniture production.

Early Federal furniture was restrained in form and shows great attention to detail. Pieces had simple, geometric shapes. Those that were Hepplewhite in style had slender, tapered, square legs, while the Sheraton-style pieces had round, slightly vase-shaped or reeded legs. The feet were usually shaped like spades or arrows.

Early Federal chairs typically had shield, oval, or square backs, or painted finishes. They were

upholstered in silk, cotton, or wool, either in plain colours or had Classical, striped, or lattice patterns.

NEW FORMS

As America became more prosperous, the variety of furniture increased. Traditional candlestands, serving tables, and dining tables were joined by Pembroke tables, side tables, and pier tables, along with small card, sewing, and worktables. These were made from New England, through New York and Philadelphia to the southern States. Dressing tables began to replace lowboys, especially in Maryland, New York, Philadelphia, and Salem. Chests of drawers were made in the latest styles in all the states.

Escutcheons usually matched the pulls on doors and drawers. Where wood, ivory, or bone plates were used, they were inset into the wood. Brass pulls on Hepplewhite-style designs usually had an oval mount and a bail handle. On Sheraton designs, which were popular in Salem, they often had an oblong plate and a bail handle, a rosette with a ring, or were in the form of a lion's head with a ring pull.

In Baltimore, Newport, Salem, and New York, furniture was generally made from mahogany, but maple was favoured in Boston. Cabinet-makers used satinwood, ebony, ash, and other contrasting veneers. Baltimore, in particular, was known for its painted gilt glass panels and delicate inlays.

DECORATIVE FEATURES

The grain of the wood often provided the only form of decoration, but some pieces featured carvings in low relief, veneers, inlays, or paint. Carved decoration was confined to the early years of the period, while painted Federal furniture is rarely seen today.

Popular motifs inspired by antiquity included patera, bellflowers, thunderbolts, sheaves of wheat, and vases of flowers. Many pieces of furniture from this period were carved or inlaid with patriotic symbols, including the American Eagle, the symbol of the Federal Union.



PHILADELPHIA SIDE CHAIR

This Chippendale chair has a serpentine crest with a carved central shell. The vase-shaped splat is flanked by shaped stiles. It has cylindrical rear legs, and cabriole front legs, ending in claw-and-ball feet. 1760–80. NA



PHILADELPHIA SIDE CHAIR

This chair's crest has a carved shell motif and moulded ears. The pierced splat has scroll volutes. The shell motif is repeated on the front rail. The chair has cylindrical rear legs, cabriole front legs, and claw-and-ball feet. c.1770. NA

The cupboard doors are crossbanded to look as though there is a drawer above the door.

The demi-lune top is inlaid along the edge for contrast.



The oval, stamped brass escutcheons have bail handles.

Turned and reeded legs were often used by New England cabinet-makers on Federal furniture.

MASSACHUSETTS SIDEBOARD

This Sheraton mahogany *demi-lune* (half-moon) sideboard from Massachusetts is inlaid with various woods. The elliptical top has an inlaid edge. Three crossbanded central drawers are

flanked by cupboard doors, which are inlaid to resemble a drawer above a door and open to reveal shelves. The case stands on turned, reeded legs. This design was popularized by English pattern books. c.1795. H:90cm (36in); W:135cm (54in); D:55cm (22in). NA



NEW ENGLAND SECRÉTAIRE

Attributed to John Seymour, this Hepplewhite mahogany desk has inlaid pilasters and two tambour doors concealing pigeonholes and drawers. The hinged writing surface with a banded edge is above two drawers, and the square legs terminate in tapering feet. 1785-95. H:103cm (38in).



NEW ENGLAND BUREAU

This mahogany desk has a fall front lid that opens to reveal a fitted interior. The oxbow-shaped case has four graduated drawers above base moulding with a central, concave, carved-shell drop. The desk stands on short, cabriole legs with claw-and-ball feet. c.1770. H:112cm (44½in). NA



NEW ENGLAND CHEST OF DRAWERS

This Sheraton carved, mahogany, bow-front chest of drawers has a D-shaped top with outset rounded corners above four wide drawers the same shape. The stiles are carved with leaves above barley-twists and terminate in turned feet. c.1790. W:99cm (39½in).



NEW HAMPSHIRE CABRIOLE SOFA

This small mahogany cabriole sofa comes from the Winslow Pierce family of Portsmouth, New Hampshire. It has an arched, moulded top rail that extends to curved arms with rosette terminals resting

on moulded, curved supports. The frame is upholstered and the seat cushion is covered in a matching fabric. Square tapering legs at the front terminate in spade feet. This sofa was probably one of a pair in the Pierce Mansion, Portsmouth. 1790-1800. W:160cm (63in).



RHODE ISLAND CHEST-ON-CHEST

This cherry bonnet-top chest-on-chest is constructed in two parts: the upper part has twin drawers above three graduated drawers; the lower part has a case of four graduated drawers, and stands on a base moulding supported on ogee bracket feet. c.1770. H:217.5cm (87in); W:93.75cm (37½in). NA



PHILADELPHIA CARD TABLE

This mahogany card table has a rectangular top above a moulded frieze with a single cockbeaded drawer. Pierced frets decorate the corners of the front legs, which are moulded with tapering feet. When open, one of the rear legs swings back to support the top. c.1785. W:90cm (36in). FRE



PENNSYLVANIA TABLE

Made of walnut, this simple, Chippendale-style drop-leaf table from Pennsylvania has a rectangular top and two leaves with notched corners. The frame has a shaped skirt and cabriole legs terminating in carved claw-and-ball feet. c.1780. W:104cm (41½in). FRE

AMERICA: SOUTHERN STATES

BY THE TIME the Revolutionary War was under way, the southern states of Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia were home to some of America's wealthiest people.

EUROPEAN INFLUENCE

Successful trade with Europe had enabled the local planters and merchants to live the lives of a sophisticated elite who kept abreast

of London fashions. By visiting Europe and importing European, and especially British, goods, they were able to give their homes a British feel. Those who did not import the latest London furniture designs could have them copied locally by some of the finest craftsmen in the country. It used to be thought that all good southern furniture originated in Britain, but research over the past

few years has proved that much of it was made in the south, by immigrant British and other craftsmen.

POST-WAR FURNITURE

After the war, southern furniture started to be influenced by furniture from New York and New England; many southern Neoclassical chairs were very similar to New York ones of the same period.

Dining tables were usually simpler in design following the English taste. Corner tables and other small, drop-leaf tables were used for dining, tea, writing, gaming, and sewing. Cards were a popular pastime in the south

and so many tables were designed for this purpose.

Sofas, which had been expensive to upholster, became more affordable after the war and many were made by urban and rural craftsmen. However, early examples were likely to be British.

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

Wealthy families in the coastal areas, who had once furnished their principal rooms with chests, moved them to less important bedchambers and passages, using chests of drawers and clothes presses for storage instead.

Inland, in West Virginia, families continued to use chests in the main



Panelled doors are a feature of southern furniture.

A fall front conceals drawers and cubby holes.

The drawer handles are made of brass.

SOUTHERN SECRÉTAIRE

The primary wood of this bookcase is walnut, but the poplar and yellow pine interior woods identify this as a southern piece. The upper part is flat-topped with two hinged, panelled doors; doors of this type are rarely seen in the

northern states. The lower section consists of a slant-front desk above four graduated drawers supported on bracket feet. The slant front conceals an interior with drawers and cubby holes flanking a central prospect door. c.1770. H:223.5cm (88in); W:96cm (39in); D:61cm (24in). BRU



WRITING OR DRESSING TABLE

This small walnut table with a single drawer has a rectangular top with a large overhang, a typical feature of southern furniture. The brass handle and plate were imported from Britain. c.1760. W:82.5cm (32½in). POOK



VIRGINIA CHEST

This mahogany and yellow pine chest has a rectangular top, two-over-four graduated and dovetailed drawers, and ogee feet. Late 18th century. H:100.3cm (39½in); W:99.6cm (39¼in); D:52.7cm (20¾in). BRU



SOUTHERN CHEST

This rectangular southern chest is made of pine. It has a flat top with a small overhang. The case retains much of its original painted surface, comprising blue-and-white latticework decoration with painted pinwheels on a salmon-

coloured background. It was probably made as a dowry chest: a special piece that was designed to hold wedding finery and textiles. The moulded base terminates in bracket feet, which are decorated with pierced spurs. c.1780. W:101cm (39¾in). POOK



bedchamber and other formal parts of the house. These were often painted, German-American examples.

Desks, rather than *secrétaires*, continued to be made as well as desks and bookcases with wooden or glazed doors to protect the books from the sun and dust.

The British trend for sideboards was also fashionable in the south and, along with buffets and china presses, provided a useful place to display valuable objects.

Southern style The Heyward-Washington House in Charleston, South Carolina, built in 1772, houses a fine collection of Charleston furniture. The dining room is furnished in typical styles and colours.

Bottle cases – a type of free-standing cellaret – were more typical in the south than the north. This was because drinking cider, beer, and wine was seen as a healthy, acceptable way to cope with the intense heat and humidity in the south.

Outside the major towns, people tended to keep to the old, British furniture styles and so rural craftsmen did not learn the new Neoclassical skills such as inlay-making and veneer-cutting. However, as the number of furniture-makers in the towns grew, competition often forced some of them out into the country. As a result, their skills gradually spread outwards.

ENGLISH INFLUENCES

AN ENGLISH-STYLE CHINA TABLE GAVE IMPORTANT CLUES TO A SOUTHERN HOUSEHOLD'S SOCIAL STANDING WITHIN ITS COMMUNITY.

In the late 18th century, tea drinking was a sign of wealth and good taste. As a result, well-to-do families were proud to show off the paraphernalia needed to enjoy this pastime.

China tables were used both to display the ceramic tea set when it was not in use, and to act as a tea table when it was time to take tea. The gallery that ran around the rim of the table protected the precious china from falling off the edge of the table.

These tables originated in Britain, where they were popular. However,

they were less fashionable in America, apart from areas such as Boston and Portsmouth, New Hampshire in the north, and Charleston, South Carolina, and Williamsburg, Virginia, in the south, where the British influence was strong.

China tables were often far more ornate than typical southern American furniture, and were frequently adorned with fretwork and carved decoration. This probably shows their importance both in the social hierarchy and as a focal point in the tea-making ritual of the time.



KENTUCKY CHEST OF DRAWERS

This bow-fronted chest is made of yellow pine decorated with cherry veneer. The drawers have cockbeading edging. The shaped skirt ends in flaring French bracket feet. c.1800. H:97.75cm (38½in); W:100.5cm (39½in). BRU



VIRGINIA CHEST OF DRAWERS

This walnut-on-pine chest is similar to British copies of Chinese cabinets. The top has no overhang or moulding, which is rare in American furniture, but popular in Chinese design. c.1780. H:91.5cm (36in); W:106.5cm (42in). BRU



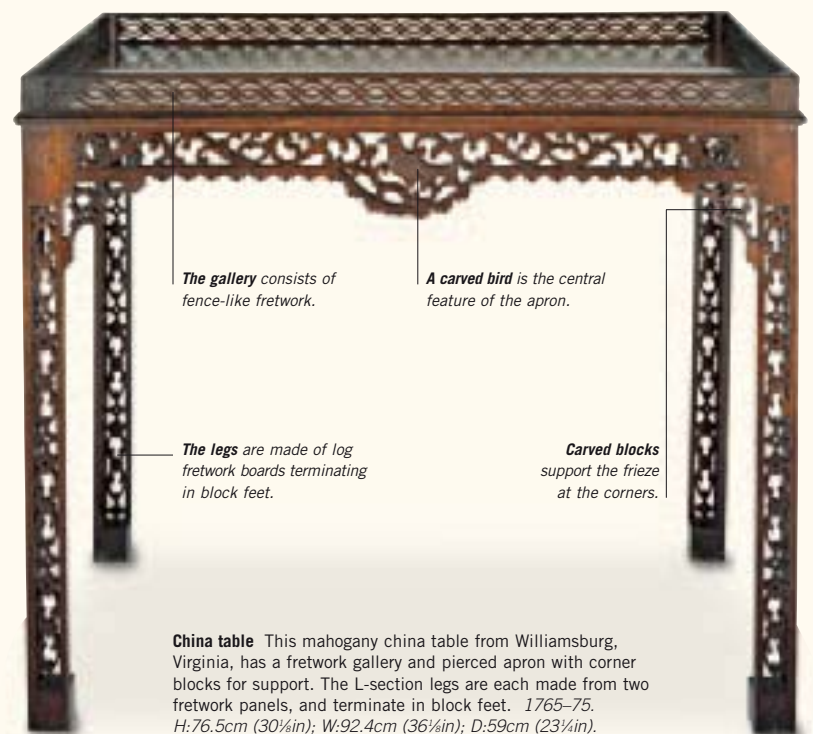
VIRGINIA SIDE CHAIR

This mahogany chair has a serpentine top rail, and tapering stiles that continue into squared back legs. The chair has an elaborately pierced back splat. 1760–75. H:94cm (37in); W:54.5cm (21½in). BRU



NORTH CAROLINA DINING CHAIR

This mahogany chair has a simple top rail, tapered stiles, and an upholstered slip seat. The square, beaded legs are joined by H-stretchers. The pierced vase-shaped splat with a cut-out heart is a typical southern detail. c.1790. POOK



The gallery consists of fence-like fretwork.

A carved bird is the central feature of the apron.

The legs are made of log fretwork boards terminating in block feet.

Carved blocks support the frieze at the corners.

China table This mahogany china table from Williamsburg, Virginia, has a fretwork gallery and pierced apron with corner blocks for support. The L-section legs are each made from two fretwork panels, and terminate in block feet. 1765–75. H:76.5cm (30¼in); W:92.4cm (36¼in); D:59cm (23¼in).

BRITISH INFLUENCES

BY THE LATE 18th century, American furniture styles were once again very similar to those in Britain. This was partly due to the number of British craftsmen emigrating to the colonies, and partly because of the continuing popularity of British pattern books in America. Craftsmen moved to wherever they could find work, taking their designs and techniques with them. As a result, styles were gradually disseminated over a wide area.

Differentiating between a piece of British or American furniture can be difficult, since craftsmen in both countries used similar techniques to create similar styles. Many American craftsmen were technically as proficient as their British counterparts, and their wealthy American customers wanted furniture that was just as elegant and well made as pieces imported from Britain. American Chippendale, which was still being made at this time, was not just a provincial adaptation of the British style but

also an elegant interpretation.

However, the origin of a piece can often be determined by the material used. Mahogany was imported to both Britain and the ports of the east coast of America, for example, so the secondary, or inner wood, used for parts such as drawer linings, often identifies the place of manufacture. Maple and cherry were more commonly used in American furniture, whereas oak and elm were typical of British pieces.

American cabinet-makers developed distinctive pieces of their own, such as a desk-and-bookcase combination in which the secretary drawer protrudes over the others. However, due to the fact that they often followed the same original design as British cabinet-makers, the only clue to where a piece originated is usually buried in the details. American craftsmen often used brass finials, for example, and turned feet on American pieces tended to be higher than those made in Britain.



ENGLISH CHEST-ON-CHEST

This mahogany chest-on-chest is Neoclassical in style. It has a moulded cornice above an architectural frieze and chamfered sides designed to look like pilasters on the upper case. The lower case has three drawers and bracket feet. 1760-70. H:183cm (73¼in). L&T 3



AMERICAN CHEST-ON-CHEST

This Massachusetts piece is made of native maple. The upper case is similar to that of the English example, as it has little carving, but the pulls and moulded base are Chippendale in style. The lower case has graduated drawers and high, bracket feet. c.1765. PHB 3



SIDE CHAIR

Made for a merchant in Massachusetts, this chair is interesting, as it is not possible to tell whether it was made in the colonies or imported from England. The complex back splat is typically English, as is the serpentine, carved top rail. The moulded back stiles terminate in raked rear legs, which are typical of Boston furniture. c.1760. NA

The back splat is wider than typical English examples.

The lower back is slimmer than English chairs.

The chair rail is wider than English examples.

The knee is well carved, but not as wide as on English chairs.

The rounded, raked-back rear legs are typical of furniture made in Boston.

The cabriole legs are carved and terminate in claw-and-ball feet, which were no longer fashionable in England.



IRISH DROP-LEAF TABLE

Commonly described as a wake table in Ireland, this mahogany piece has a drop-leaf top with oval leaves supported by a simple frame. The legs swing out to support the table when it is open. 1760-70. H:72cm (28½in); W:138cm (55¼in) (open). L&T 5



AMERICAN DROP-LEAF TABLE

This large drop-leaf table is made of walnut, indicating that it was probably made in Pennsylvania or further south, where walnut was common. The oval leaves have moulded

edges and the frame is supported on eight square-section legs. The colloquial term in the United States for this type of table is a coffin table, which links it to the Irish wake table above. c.1790. H:73.5cm (29in); W:224.75cm (88½in); D:155cm (61in). SL 3



ENGLISH CHEST OF DRAWERS

This mahogany, serpentine-shaped chest has a matching top with a moulded edge. The graduated drawers have cast brass bail handles. Both the sides of the chest and the bracket feet, which have large C-scrolls on either side, are canted. *c.1765. W:112cm (44in). L&T 5*



AMERICAN CHEST OF DRAWERS

This New England chest is of reverse serpentine form. The top and drawers are edged with bead moulding. The base has a central pendant, which is typically American, and C-scroll bracket feet. The brass bail escutcheons and handles are English. *c.1765. H:87.5cm (35in). NA 5*



ENGLISH CHEST OF DRAWERS

Made of mahogany and pine, this bow-front chest of drawers is veneered with cross-banding. The drawers are graduated in size and descend to a shaped apron. The case sits on flared feet. The brass drawer pulls are simple in design. *c.1780. W:92cm (36½in). NA 3*



MID-ATLANTIC CHEST

This bow-front mahogany chest has a rectangular top with a crossbanded veneer edge. The graduated drawers are emphasized by further crossbanded veneer. The tapered legs flare out at the base – known as French bracket feet. *c.1790. W:106cm (41¾in). SI 3*



ENGLISH TRIPOD TABLE

The top of this mahogany table tilts back when a latch under the table top is released. The top rests on a turned baluster column, which is joined to a tripod base with a mortise-and-tenon joint. The cabriole legs have pad feet. *c.1770. Diam:90cm (36in). DN 2*



PHILADELPHIA TRIPOD TABLE

This mahogany tea table has a dish top birdcage device, which holds the top onto the turned base. The claw-and-ball feet are a typical feature of American Chippendale pieces, but were no longer fashionable in Britain. *c.1770. Diam:82.5cm (33in). NA 6*



ENGLISH DROP-LEAF TABLE

This oval-topped mahogany table is made up of a rectangular section with two leaves. A hinged butterfly bracket supports the extended leaves. Tapering legs end in brass casters. These tables are known as Pembroke tables. *c.1780. H:72cm (28½in); W:116cm (46½in) (open). L&T 4*



MID-ATLANTIC DROP-LEAF TABLE

This mahogany Pembroke table has an oblong top and hinged D-shape leaves, with a bow-shaped frieze. The frieze is inlaid with lily-of-the-valley flowers and the table is supported on square, tapering legs. *c.1800. W:81.5cm (32in). FRE 4*



ENGLISH CORNER WASHSTAND

This bow-fronted mahogany piece has a hole for a basin, flanked by two sunken saucers and an arched splashback. The shelf has a central drawer flanked by two false drawers. The splayed legs are joined by a shaped stretcher. *c.1790. H:111cm (44½in); W:61cm (24in). L&T 1*



AMERICAN CORNER WASHSTAND

The shaped splashback has a small shelf at the top with a central basin hole. The inlaid medial shelf has a drawer, and a pierced flat stretcher joins the splayed legs. *c.1790–1800. H:97cm (38¾in); W:57cm (22½in); D:40.5cm (16in). NA 4*



ENGLISH DROP-LEAF TABLE

This mahogany table has hinged, drop leaves. The frieze contains one drawer with a dummy drawer on the opposite end. The square, tapering legs are joined by a cross-stretcher. A hinged, butterfly bracket supports the leaves. *c.1790. W:51.5cm (20¼in). WW 2*



MID-ATLANTIC DROP-LEAF TABLE

This mahogany table has hinged leaves, which are supported by a butterfly bracket. The beaded frieze has a cock-beaded drawer and a dummy drawer. The square, tapering legs are joined by a cross-stretcher near the bottom of the legs. *c.1790. W:73cm (29¼in). FRE 3*

GOTHIC

MEDIEVAL-STYLE Gothic design, or Gothick, as the 18th-century revival is known, became popular in the 1750s. The style coexisted with Neoclassical but was never the dominant style. The Gothic revival was primarily an English phenomenon, but by the end of the century there were new Gothic-style buildings in France and Germany.

In 1742, the English architect Batty Langley published *Gothic Architecture Improved*, an influential publication that provided Gothic designs for architecture and interiors. He also published Gothic furniture designs. His work was not concerned with historical accuracy, but emphasized the visual, emotional appeal of the Gothic versus the formal architecture of Neoclassical design.

EXPONENTS OF THE STYLE

As with the Neoclassical style, Gothic furniture was based on an idea, rather than on original pieces, and the designs published by Langley, William Kent, Matthew Darley, Thomas Chippendale, and others were romanticized interpretations of medieval Gothic designs. Darley's publication *A New Book of Chinese, Gothic and Modern Chairs* (1750–51) and Thomas Chippendale's *Director* (see pp.98–99) both contained interpretations of 18th-century Gothic furniture. The

cabinet-maker, Sanderson Miller was also famous for his Gothic pieces.

ARCHITECTURAL INFLUENCE

Furniture in the Gothic style was decorated with applied architectural motifs taken from Gothic architecture. These included tracery, fretwork, arches, and compound columns derived from 12th- and 13th-century Church architecture.

Library furniture was considered particularly suitable for the Gothic style. A magnificent mahogany library table made for Pomfret Castle in London was decorated with carved "rose windows" on the sides, and compound columns flanking the kneehole arches.

The Gothic Windsor chair was very popular. It had a back of three pierced splats carved to look like Gothic window tracery without using standard Windsor spindles; sometimes the bow back was shaped like a pointed arch. Underneath the curved arm support was another row of smaller pierced splats. Some of the finest examples of these chairs were made primarily of yew, although oak, beech, and elm were popular. Windsor chairs were seldom made from just one wood, as the shaped elements required different types of timber.

Gothic furniture remained whimsical throughout the 18th century. Robert Adam made armchairs inspired by the Coronation Chair in Westminster Abbey, with backs shaped like church windows with tracery. Pinnacles sprouted from the top rails and pendants hung from chair rails. Adam combined these Gothic elements with Neoclassical acanthus leaves and tapered square legs.

STRAWBERRY HILL

Horace Walpole, the influential author of the Gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto*, had his country house near London, Strawberry Hill, designed and decorated in the Gothic style. The gallery was fan-vaulted; mirror glass placed between the vaults created a glittering space. The library had trefoil-shaped windows and a three-panelled Gothic window with arches; it was fitted with massive bookcases, complete with crockets and pinnacles, tracery, and arches.



ENGLISH CHEST

This rare, painted and gilt oak chest is in the style of the Gothic medieval painted oak chest. However, it does not have the wrought iron bands that would be used to hold a medieval chest together. The top of the chest

is plain, but the panelled sides and front are decorated with Gothic-style tracery and figures in carved gilt, and the metal escutcheon in the centre of the chest is decorated in a similar style. The piece rests on bracket feet. Mid 18th century. H:65cm (26in); D:57cm (22½in). L&T

GOTHIC CHIPPENDALE

THOMAS CHIPPENDALE APPLIED GOthic DESIGN TO CONTEMPORARY FURNITURE IN *THE GENTLEMAN'S & CABINET-MAKER'S DIRECTOR*.

Chippendale was the first designer to use the term "Gothic" in relation to furniture, and his Gothic-style designs for chairs and bookcases were particularly popular. The design of his Gothic chair backs was derived from elements of Church architecture. He combined decorative motifs such as ogee arches, lancets, arcades, crockets, and pointed arches with tracery. These details

English armchair This chair displays typical Gothic elements: quatrefoils across the back rail, arched astragals in the back and under the arms, and pendants under the seat rails. c.1775.

combined well with the Rococo scroll motifs, which were still popular at the time. Cluster, or compound, columns were often used as chair legs, although Chippendale's designs indicate that other leg shapes could also be used on Gothic chairs. These chairs were intended for use in halls, passages, or summer houses.

At the time of Chippendale's Gothic designs, follies were popular and it was fashionable to build them in landscape settings. Gothic-style architecture was a favourite choice and sometimes furniture was made to match.



Hall Chair, Plate XVII, *The Gentleman & Cabinetmaker's Director* This design is one of several for use in a hall or a garden room and is an alternative to the realised design on the left. 1762.



Cologne Cathedral, Germany This is the largest Gothic cathedral in the world. Building began in the 13th century and it took 632 years to complete. The cathedral displays all the architectural elements that inspired furniture-designers in the late 18th century.



LONG CASE CLOCK

This standard oak and mahogany clock has Gothic decoration on the case. The door is arched and flanked by compound columns, which also decorate the case. The base of the hood is decorated with pendants. 1770.



ENGLISH SIDE CHAIR

This mahogany side chair is actually a music stool with a back. The adjustable round seat also revolves. The back has pierced Gothic arches together with leaf-carved finials. The legs resemble compound piers. c.1800. DN

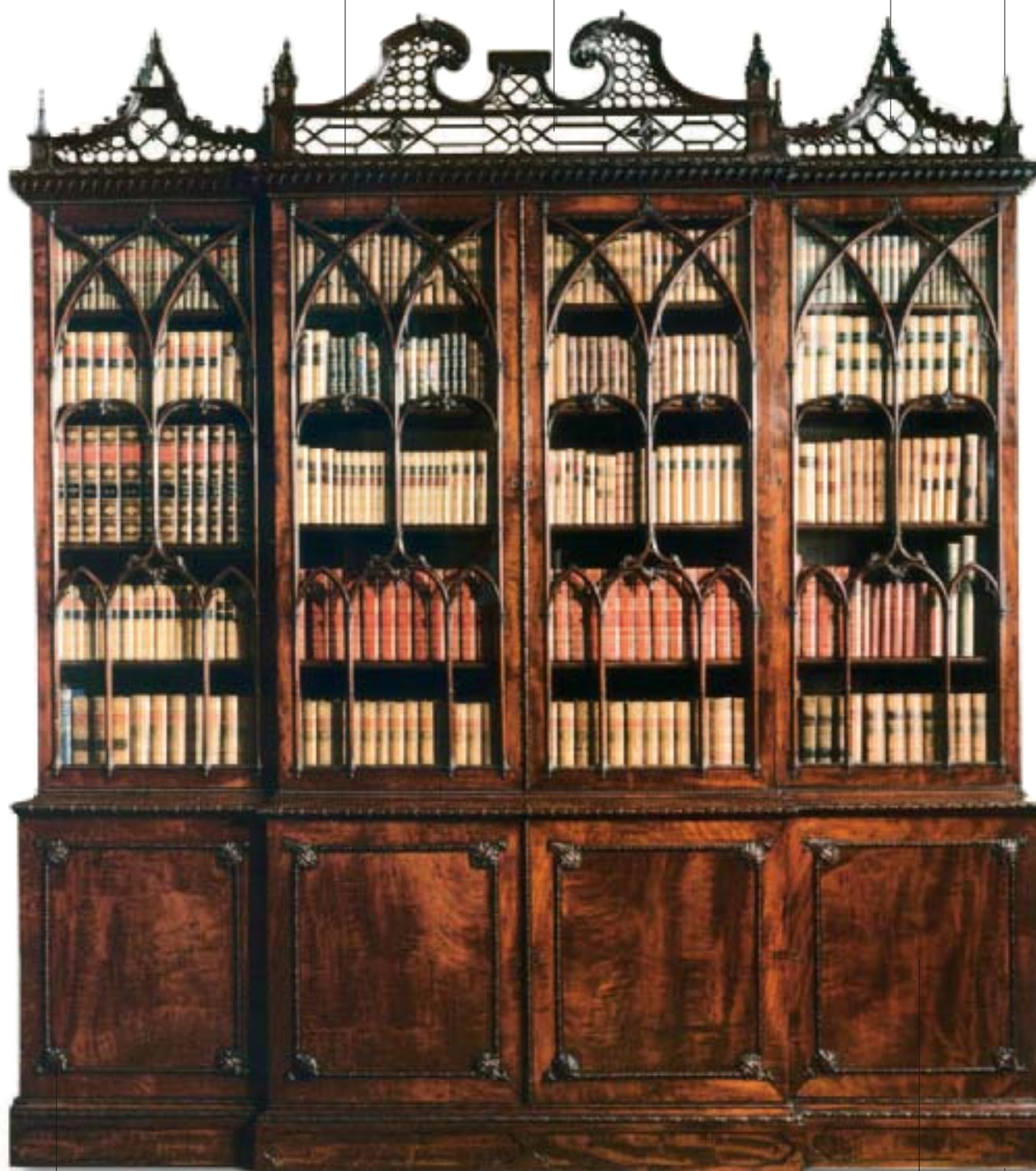
ENGLISH BOOKCASE

This mahogany piece is decorated with Gothic, Chinoiserie, and Neoclassical motifs. The pierced cresting with a central, scrolled swan-neck pediment has Gothic pinnacles at each end and Chinoiserie lattice decoration. The glazed doors feature Gothic arched astragals. c.1765. H:282cm (112 $\frac{3}{4}$ in); W:254cm (101 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); D:71cm (28 $\frac{1}{2}$ in). PAR

The glazed doors have Gothic arched astragals dividing the glass sections.

The lattice decoration is Chinese in style.

Gothic quatrefoils and pinnacles decorate the top of the bookcase.



Acanthus leaf carvings decorate each corner of the panelled doors.

The plinth base is panelled and moulded.

The side doors conceal three drawers, while the middle section has fitted shelves.

SOUTH AFRICA

CAPE TOWN was established by the Dutch East India Company as a halfway station between Amsterdam and the East Indies in 1652. However, it was not until the late 18th century that the population of settlers in Cape Town reached 3,000 – large enough to support a number of local craftsmen.

By the end of the century, settlers were establishing towns outside Cape Town and the more

affluent farmers built homes in the gabled Cape Dutch style. The few wealthy settlers who desired European furniture had it imported and by the 1770s and 80s, large quantities were shipped over from both England and the Low Countries.

Initially, furniture made in South Africa itself showed the influence of Dutch, French, and English

design; the Dutch Baroque style continued well into the 18th century, with Neoclassical being largely restricted to decoration.

PATRICIAN AND COUNTRY
By this time, there was a clear distinction between the “patrician” and “country” furniture that was being produced. Patrician furniture encompassed the fine-quality pieces commissioned by and made for the merchant classes, mainly in the areas immediately surrounding Cape Town.

The designs closely followed those of French and English

cabinet-makers and, although made from indigenous woods, the pieces were finished using exotic woods from the East. Country furniture mimicked these designs but was primarily restricted to local woods, and rarely exhibited the fine craftsmanship found in the city.

South Africa’s remoteness meant that there was a significant delay in the technical advances already used by European cabinet-makers. Therefore, furniture did not have sophisticated veneering or marquetry until the end of the century, and the mortise-and-tenon joints adopted by European cabinet-makers were seldom employed. Instead, framed panel construction



STINKWOOD CABINET

This cabinet is made primarily of stinkwood with heavy moulding. The cornice has a carved acanthus key block and a chevron-pattern inlay runs down the centre of the upper section. It has serpentine doors above graduated drawers, and a moulded base. The overall styling is still predominantly influenced by Dutch Baroque furniture. *c.1785. H:280cm (110¼in); W:190cm (74¼in). PRA*

The serpentine cornice has a central carved cartouche.

A chevron design inlay is created using a combination of satinwood and stinkwood veneers.

The bombe shape is derived from Portuguese and Low Countries furniture.

Carved animal claw feet are common supports for cabinets of this type.



CORNER CABINET

This triangular-shaped corner cabinet, one of a pair, is made from local yellowwood with exotic veneers, including satinwood door panels, amboyna frames, and ebony. It has square, tapering, fluted legs. *c.1790. H:100cm (39¼in); W:120cm (47¼in); D:63cm (24¼in). PRA*



TEA TABLE

This table is made of imported teak. The shape is reminiscent of French styles, although simplified. It has a flat, moulded top above a shaped apron with a single drawer, and is raised on cabriole legs. *c.1790. H:71cm (28in); W:88cm (34¼in); D:56cm (22in). PRA*

was common and solid timber was used for an entire piece. This timber was the local stinkwood or yellowwood. It was not until the end of the century that fine South African furniture was made from imported woods such as satinwood, partridge, ebony, and teak.

FURNITURE TYPES

By the late 18th century, the massive cabinet had replaced the Baroque flat-topped cupboard. These cabinets usually had a serpentine-shaped cornice, and a serpentine-, blocked-,

or *bombé*-shaped base with serpentine moulding, and ball or animal-claw feet. The cabinet was one of the most distinct pieces of Cape furniture and differed greatly in their styling from the Neoclassical cabinets made in Europe during this period.

Slant front desks on stands were also popular, and were known as “Bible desks”. Corner cupboards were loosely based on the French *encoignure*. Towards the end of the century, the English-style chest of drawers was adopted, and was thickly

veneered in imported woods such as satinwood, coromandel, and ebony. Stinkwood was used for the case – an often striking colour contrast.

Tables with both cabriole and spiral-turned legs were made. Towards the end of the century, gateleg tables, with rectangular or oval tops, were made with tapered legs.

EUROPEAN INFLUENCE

Seating furniture made around the time was also heavily influenced by European trends, particularly English, and sometimes combining stylistic details of several countries in one piece. Ebony chairs with caned seats were often used

by the wealthier residents of Cape Town, or in churches, and showed the influence of the Far East colonies. Caning also appeared on day beds.

Chairs with two back splats and baluster-turned legs and uprights remained popular until the 1780s. English Queen Anne-style chairs, with solid back splats and cabriole legs were made well into the late 18th century, and corner chairs were also fashionable long after they were in Europe. The popularity of the shield-shaped back on chairs and settees was due to the increasing influence of English designs after 1795, when Britain gained control of Cape Town.



SIDE CHAIR

This stinkwood chair is influenced by English Queen Anne chairs with its simple carved crest rail, solid vase-form splat, seat with shaped apron, cabriole legs, and pad feet. However, it differs in the overall dimensions. c.1750. H:106cm (41 $\frac{1}{4}$ in); W:60cm (23 $\frac{1}{2}$ in).



ARMCHAIR

This stinkwood chair is a simplified version of Dutch chair styles with its pierced back splat within a square back, inlaid patera in the centre of the seat rail, and inlaid “columns” on the front legs. c.1795. H:99cm (39in); W:59.5cm (23 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); D:45cm (17 $\frac{1}{4}$ in). PRA

CAPE CHIPPENDALE

THE SUCCESS OF CHIPPENDALE’S *DIRECTOR* WAS WIDESPREAD AND, ALTHOUGH RARE IN SOUTH AFRICA, IT INFLUENCED SOME LOCAL CRAFTSMEN.

Interpretations of furniture inspired by the work of Thomas Chippendale have been documented in South Africa and include the occasional ladder-back settee, some chairs, and a four-seater bench, as well as the sideboard table with a marble top (see below). Certainly, Chippendale’s designs for Gothic and Chinese-style pieces seem to have inspired at least one cabinet-maker in the Cape region. Although the provenance of such pieces is not always known, all of them would have been intended for use in the homes of wealthy clients.

It is likely that copies of Chippendale’s *The Gentleman’s and Cabinet-Maker’s Director* (see p.99) found their way to South Africa with immigrant craftsmen or fashion-conscious merchants, much as they had done to America (see pp.104–05). It is also possible that actual pieces of Chippendale furniture were imported from England to the Cape during the 1770s and 80s, and were subsequently copied by native craftsmen. Perhaps a client commissioned a chair or table in the style of furniture he had brought with him, so that all pieces in any given room matched, as was the fashion of the day.

Teak sideboard table

This table has a marble top, which was probably imported from Europe. It has a simple apron with a moulded edge, central, carved, entwined C-scrolls, and brackets between the chamfered legs and skirt. c.1775. H:85cm (33 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); 138cm (54 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); D:48cm (19in). PRA



GATELEG TABLE

This simple gateleg table is made of stinkwood. It has a plain rectangular top with wide drop leaves. The extent of the drop leaves provides a very generous top surface when the table is opened, while making this an extremely economical piece to store when it is not in

use. When the table is open the apron is supported on eight squared and fluted, tapering legs – the fluted decoration is the only concession to the patrician Neoclassical style in what is otherwise a rustic-style piece. The table has a single drawer at one end for storage. c.1795. H:76cm (30in); W:186cm (73 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); D:138cm (54 $\frac{1}{2}$ in). PRA

EUROPEAN CHINOISERIE

FROM THE START of the 17th century, Europeans had been fascinated by rare and exotic objects from China and Japan. The fine silks, porcelain, and lacquerware imported by the East India Company created a demand for Asian designs. The prohibitive cost of these imports inspired European designers and craftsmen to create imitations of the originals. The style was called Chinoiserie, from *chinois*, the French word for Chinese.

Europeans had a vague and romantic notion of Far Eastern culture and Chinoiserie combined fanciful, exotic motifs with luxurious materials. Entire rooms, particularly bedrooms and

dressing rooms, were decorated with fantastic landscapes with jagged mountains, golden willow trees, delicate pagodas, dragons, Chinese figures, and exotic birds.

ORIENTAL SETTINGS

The fashion for Chinoiserie interiors reached its height between 1750 and 1765, overlapping with the Rococo style, which had a similar frivolity and love of asymmetry, but Chinoiserie continued into the 19th century. Interiors often featured genuine Chinese objects, such as painted wallpaper, which had been made for the Western market since the mid 17th

century, lacquer screens, or porcelain, but European designers also created their own Chinese-style furnishings.

In 1765, Thomas Chippendale redecorated the State Bedchamber at Nostell Priory in Yorkshire in the Chinese style. He created a suite of green lacquer furniture decorated with Chinese landscapes and figures and a mirror frame featuring the mythical ho-ho bird and a Chinese pagoda.

Genuine lacquer was unavailable in Europe because, although people had imported it, it did not travel successfully, so furniture-makers recreated the style in other ways. European furniture of the period made

in the Chinese style was often “japanned” rather than decorated with actual lacquer. John Stalker and George Parker’s influential book *A Treatise of Japanning* (1688), provided technical advice for japanning and contained Chinoiserie designs, which were widely copied. Layers of pigmented varnish, usually in gold on black or red, recreated the striking effect of genuine Asian lacquer.

ELEMENTS OF STYLE

In the 1750s, Chinese-style pieces began to assume new and more exotic forms of decoration. Designers such as Thomas Chippendale and Ince and



LACQUERED COMMODE

This Louis XV piece has a marble top and is decorated with re-used panels of Chinese lacquerware. The curved body depicts a landscape of pagodas and Oriental trees in gold and red. The commode has gilt-bronze mounts, escutcheons, and gilded feet. c.1760. H:87cm (34½in); W:113cm (45¼in); D:52cm (20¾in). GK



LACQUERED BOMBÉ COMMODE

This European gilt-decorated lacquer commode is fitted with three drawers. The top is made of wood, rather than marble and the handles and escutcheons are Rococo in style. The edges of the body are decorated with relief carving, and the piece terminates in hoofed feet. c.1760. W:117.5cm (47in). NA



LACQUERED SCREEN

This Chinese screen is typical of the type that inspired European interpretations of the style. It is decorated with two tones of gold on a red lacquered background and depicts an Oriental landscape. It has a flat top and a curved base terminating in simple feet. c.1780. H:212cm (84¼in). GK



PAINTED SCREEN

This French screen with interpretations of Oriental motifs and design is typical of Jean-Baptiste Pillement’s work. The panels show exotic birds and children in an idealized garden landscape. The screen is made from panels of painted canvas attached to a timber frame. c.1770. H:190cm (76in). GK

LACQUERWARE

THE ORIENTAL TRADITION OF LACQUERWARE DATES BACK THOUSANDS OF YEARS.

Oriental lacquer is derived from the sap of the tree *Rhus vernicifera*, which is native to China, Japan, and Korea. There is evidence that lacquer was used in China and Japan as far back as Neolithic times.

Lacquered surfaces are made up of very thin layers of the product, which are allowed to dry completely before another is added. The result is a hard, glossy surface that is resistant to water and heat, and is even safe to be used on food containers.

Oriental lacquerware was much sought after in Europe during the 17th and early 18th centuries. By the middle of the 18th century, the lacquerware was often stripped from its original carcass and veneered onto contemporary French furniture, then further embellished with gilt-bronze.



Detail of inlay

Gilded lacquerwork depicts maidens in a pastoral setting. The figures have applied ivory faces.

Chinese oval table

This tilt-top table is decorated with exquisite lacquerwork. The tripod base and table edges are decorated with Greek key motifs. The table has scroll feet. c.1780. D:104cm (41in). Cato



Mayhew published designs for Chinese-style furniture, including chairs with pierced latticework backs and pagoda-shaped top rails. The motif of interlaced batons appears repeatedly on the furniture in Chippendale's *Director* – on chair backs, stretchers, bookcase doors, bed boards, and chimney pieces. Few of these elements were based on actual Oriental furniture but, like the Chinese pieces made for the European market, they formed part of the 18th-century European idea of Chinoiserie. As trade with the Orient increased, the designs became more accurate.

Although Chinoiserie was popular throughout the late 18th and 19th centuries, it was at the peak of its popularity during the 18th century. Many pieces were embellished with decorative panels: entirely lacquered or japanned Neoclassical furniture is rare.

The principal colours for English lacquerwork were black, a red that

resembled the colour of sealing wax, yellow, green, brown, tortoiseshell, and, more rarely, blue. Although Chinese-style motifs were highly fashionable, European pieces were

usually decorated to appeal to European tastes. So, motifs were inspired by, rather than copies of, original Chinese or Japanese images. Due to these style differences, it is easy to distinguish between genuine pieces of Oriental 18th-century furniture and European interpretations of lacquerwork and Chinoiserie.



CABINET-ON-STAND

This George III cabinet is decorated with Chinoiserie figures and animals. It has gilt-metal engraved hinges on the doors and escutcheon. The interior of the cabinet contains ten small drawers. The stand is of a later date than the cabinet. c.1760. W:98cm (38½in). WW



ORIENTAL-STYLE SETTEE

This George III faux-bamboo settee has a caned back and sides. Caning was often combined with faux bamboo frames. The frame consists of a rectangular back and downswept arms and the seat has a separate squab cushion. The slender legs are raised on open brackets. c.1765. W:185cm (74in). L&T



The insides of the doors are decorated with painted trees and birds.

The interior drawers are decorated with japanned patterns.

A fall front lowers to reveal a velvet-covered writing surface.

Mythological beasts feature throughout the cabinet.

The drawer fronts are decorated with figural scenes.

The cabinet base provides additional storage.

Bracket feet support the cabinet.

GEORGE I SECRÉTAIRE-CABINET

This rare white-japanned cabinet has bow-shaped moulding on the cornice. Although this is an early piece, it is an extremely fine example of European Chinoiserie. Mirror-glazed doors open to reveal an array of drawers and pigeonholes. The blue and white discs painted on the interior drawers are inspired by the design of

Oriental-style plates. The base has a fitted drawer containing a writing surface and more drawers and pigeonholes. The whole cabinet is decorated with delicately painted figures and patterns on a japanned background. The fine decoration draws its inspiration from genuine Chinese porcelain, rather than from Stalker and Parker's *A Treatise of Japanning* (1688). c.1725. H:228.5cm (90in); W:109cm (43in); D:56cm (22in). PAR

PAINTED FURNITURE

THE PRACTICE OF PAINTING furniture was popular in the Middle Ages but reached its zenith in the second half of the 18th century. In some regions, particularly Italy, painting had never fallen from favour on either formal or vernacular furniture. However, in English and French furniture, painted decoration had been much less common in high-style furniture, unless it was deliberately copying lacquer in the early 18th century, and had generally been used on cheaper furniture.

Furniture was often painted to disguise an inferior type of wood in regions where better-quality imported timbers were prohibitively expensive, as was the case in Italy. Imitation surfaces, or *faux bois* mimicked the grain of woods: pine, for example, was coloured to imitate Spanish mahogany.

French interiors during the reigns of Louis XV and Louis XVI began to feature lighter colour schemes in delicate pastel shades, greys, and white. As an alternative to furniture, such as *bergère* frames, which were

waxed to emphasize the grain of the wood, pieces were painted to match a room's overall colour scheme.

In England, architects such as Robert Adam also designed colour-coordinated interiors. The design motifs used on the painted ceilings of grand rooms were repeated in the textiles and the furniture. At first, this repetition came through the use of lighter woods and marquetry decoration but, as the style developed, furniture such as chairs, pier-glasses, and tables was sometimes painted to match the overall scheme.

Painting had advantages over marquetry, as it allowed more intricate details, such as miniature landscape paintings, to be added to a piece. High-style painted designs were imitated to various degrees in vernacular, regional furniture, which also used painting as a substitute for carved designs. The trend for traditional painted motifs on vernacular furniture was particularly popular with artisans who had travelled to the colonies.

The white marble semicircular top has a stepped edge with a band of ormolu beading.

The central medallion contains a painted Classical female figure.

The frieze and apron are painted with Neoclassical scrolls and anthemias.



The reeded, tapering legs terminate in bun feet.

ENGLISH COMMODE

This ormolu-mounted, *demi-lune* commode has a front that is divided into three painted panels within borders of gilt waterleaves. Each panel has a circular painted medallion containing a

Classical female figure. The two side panels have doors. The case has a giltwood guilloche apron and four reeded, tapering legs with bun feet. Attributed to George Brookshaw. c.1790. H:89cm (33½in); W:122cm (48in); D:20.25cm (52in). PAR



GERMAN CHEST

Primarily made of spruce, this vernacular "farmer's" chest originates from the Franconia region of Germany. The moulded lid is decorated with panels and lifts to reveal the interior

storage space. The rectangular panel decorations on the front and sides, and the central arched panel around the lock, are painted with brightly coloured floral motifs. The chest stands on flattened bun feet. c.1800. W:124cm (49in). BMN 1



AMERICAN DOWER CHEST

This vernacular chest is made of poplar, a wood native to Pennsylvania. The lift lid, with moulded edge, covers a case that is supported on bracket feet. The case has a central, salmon

and ivory, double-arched tombstone panel enclosing stylized tulips in a double-handled urn. The urn is incised with the maker's name and date. Two similarly decorated panels flank the central image. Painted by Johann Rank. 1798. W:129.5cm (51in). POOK 6



ENGLISH COMMODE

This *demi-lune* commode has a crossbanded, veneered, satinwood top, which is painted with a seated woman reading. Swag-hung paterae and bellflower borders surround this scene.

The *demi-lune* case has a central hinged cupboard door painted with a figure of a courtier writing. Two similarly decorated oval reserves flank the centre. The entire case is supported by short, tapering, spade feet. c.1790. W:122cm (48in). FRE 5



SWEDISH ARMCHAIR

Made in Stockholm, this armchair has a squared back with a shaped back rail. The open armrests flare slightly to the outside. The square seat is supported on tapered legs that have cups just below the juncture of the seat rail. The chair is painted white with highlights, such as the flutes in the tapered legs, picked out in bright blue. *c.1790. BK 2*



FRENCH SETTEE

Known as a *canapé*, this small, upholstered settee has a beech frame, a wood often used by French chair-makers. The back rail encloses the sitters and it is supported on turned, tapering legs. The frame is painted and gilded. Originally, the paint would have echoed the room for which it was made and complemented the upholstery. *c.1760. W:105.5cm (41½in). DL 4*



PARISIAN BERGÈRE

This is one of a pair of *bergères* with beech frames. The top rail is carved with flowers at the centre – a motif echoed in the centre of the seat rail and on the knees. The arms are swept back and are upholstered above the frame, and the chair has a large cushion. The frame is painted light grey. *c.1760. H:96cm (37¾in); W:73cm (28¾in); D:63cm (24¾in). CHF 6*



ENGLISH BUREAU

This slant-front desk is veneered with satinwood and painted. It has two shorter top drawers over three graduated drawers. The base is shaped and terminates in high, bracket feet. Painted

ribbon-tied foliate swags and scrolling foliage adorn the drawers. The slant front has a central painted medallion depicting a Classical female with two cherubs. This piece is a 19th-century imitation of a late 18th-century style. *c.1800. H:106cm (42½in). FRE 4*



CANADIAN ARMOIRE

This simple pine wardrobe was made in Quebec. It has a stepped, moulded cornice above a pair of fielded panel doors with hand-wrought rat-tail hinges. Behind the doors are shelves. Stile feet

support this case piece. The green-blue paint has faded, but when originally painted would have made a striking statement. Blue pigment was very expensive and so the paint would have cost more than the original armoire. *c.1790. W:137cm (54in). WAD*

MECHANICAL PIECES

THE SCIENTIFIC advances of the 18th century led to the creation of ingenious pieces of mechanical furniture, which had secret drawers and compartments operated by hidden springs and levers. In France and Germany, in particular, mechanical furniture became an art form during the second half of the 18th century.

Abraham Roentgen is usually credited with introducing mechanical devices to cabinet-makers. Between 1742 and 1750, he perfected the harlequin table, which had secret drawers and compartments.

David Roentgen, his son, also created mechanical furniture, primarily to amuse the nobility. In 1768, he made a bureau-cabinet with a commode-shaped base containing a mechanical device that sounded like a piano.

In France, Jean-François Oeben made mechanical furniture for Madame de Pompadour. He also developed the *bureau à cylindre*,

which had a flexible, sliding cover known as a *tambour*. The most elaborate *bureau à cylindre* had candlesticks, clocks, and drawers hidden inside it.

Another French novelty was the *secrétaire à la Bourgogne*. This looked like a table with small drawers, but the top of the table was divided in two. The rear section rose to reveal a set of drawers and the front opened forward to create a writing surface.

The rent table, which appeared in England at about this time, was a circular, revolving table that contained labelled drawers for filing correspondence. Some versions also had a concealed well for holding money. A hinged, locking, central section could be opened by a catch concealed in one of the drawers. Since banks, security boxes, or safes did not exist at this time, desks were a favourite hiding place for valuables, which is why many of them had secret drawers.

The top drawer is divided into compartments for cosmetics.

An easel mirror lies flat when not in use.



The serpentine case stands on shaped, bracket feet.

ENGLISH DRESSING CHEST

Although this chest looks like a standard mahogany serpentine chest of drawers with four graduated drawers on shaped bracket feet, it can also be used as a dressing chest. The top drawer

contains an easel mirror, various powder boxes, and divisions for bottles. This drawer is concealed under a brushing slide – a mahogany section that pulls out from the case and fits into a groove on the sides. c.1780. H:81cm (31½in); W:93cm (36¾in); D:59cm (23½in). HauG 5



Ormolu mounts

FRENCH ROLL-TOP DESK

This bureau has a flexible cylinder, or roll top, made of thin wood slats, which rolls back into the frame so that it is concealed when open. The bureau is inlaid in tulipwood, in a basket-

weave pattern, and has rectangular ormolu scrolls and a foliage border. The lower section contains four drawers. The bureau stands on fluted, tapering legs. Stamped by Ferdinand Bury. c.1780. H:126cm (49½in); W:146cm (57½in); D:84cm (33in). PAR 1



Floral marquetry

BUREAU À CYLINDRE

This gilt-bronze-mounted satinwood, tulipwood, and burr walnut *bureau à cylindre* has a rectangular top with a pierced gallery above a frieze drawer and a roll-top. The fitted interior

has a leather writing surface. The kneehole drawer is flanked on either side by drawers, which, when activated by a spring mechanism, reveal additional drawers. The legs are square and tapering. c.1775–80. H:129cm (51in); W:113cm (44in); D:67cm (26½in). DL 4



SECRÉTAIRE À LA BOURGOGNE

The top of this French desk has two sections: the front opens forwards on a hinge, and the back rises on a spring mechanism to reveal four drawers. The side drawer, right, has a pounce pot and inkwell. *c.1765. H:71cm (28in); W:51cm (20in); D:40cm (15½in). PAR 1*

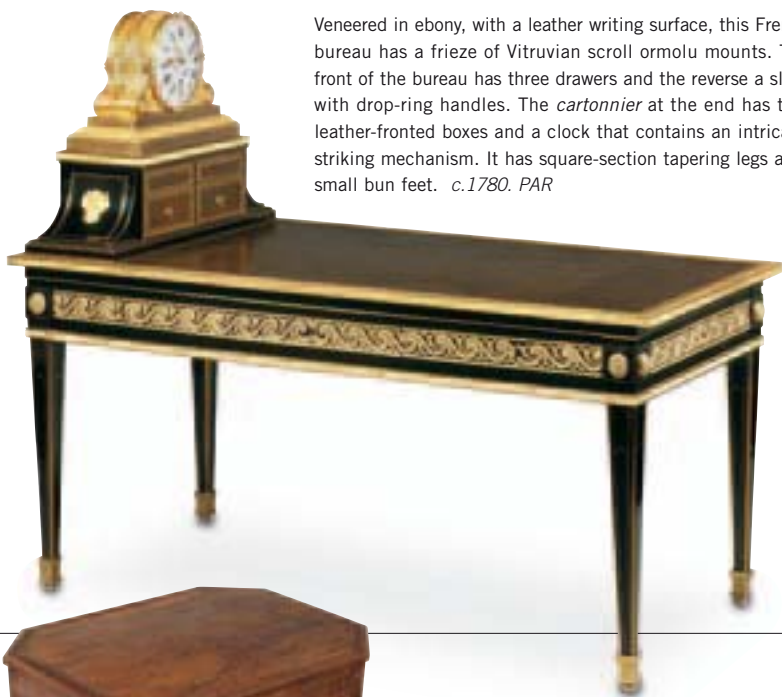


GERMAN COMMODE

The front of this mahogany, cherry, and pear harlequin table moves forward when a mechanism is triggered, making the rear section, with its drawers and compartments, spring out of the case. It was designed by Abraham Roentgen. *c.1755. OVM*

BUREAU PLAT AND CARTONNIER

Veneered in ebony, with a leather writing surface, this French bureau has a frieze of Vitruvian scroll ormolu mounts. The front of the bureau has three drawers and the reverse a slide with drop-ring handles. The *cartonnier* at the end has two leather-fronted boxes and a clock that contains an intricate striking mechanism. It has square-section tapering legs and small bun feet. *c.1780. PAR*



ENGLISH RENT TABLE

The circular brown leather top of this rent table has a hinged, locking, central section that opens with a catch concealed in one of the drawers to reveal a sunken well. The frieze contains eight wedge-shaped drawers with swan-neck handles for correspondence.

The top also rotates on its square plinth base, which itself contains a cupboard with a single shelf. This table was made by Gillows of Lancaster. *c.1790. H:88cm (30½in); D:117cm (46in). PAR 1*



ENGLISH GAMES TABLE

The top of this mahogany table swivels open, while the legs remain stationary, to provide an inlaid surface for checkers. There are two drawers in the case: the top one is a dummy. *c.1790. H:73.5cm (29in). DL 4*



FRENCH ARCHITECT'S TABLE

The rectangular top of this table lifts up on a ratchet and has pull-out slides on either side. This entire section can be raised several centimetres by a winding mechanism on the side. The frieze contains a writing drawer, which

opens to reveal a leather surface. The table sides have two more pull-out slides. Stamped by Adam Weisweiler. *c.1790. H:129.5cm (51in); W:87.5cm (34½in); D:54cm (21½in). PAR*

FALL-FRONT DESKS

AS FURNITURE MADE especially for writing grew in popularity in the 18th century, different styles were developed. The *secrétaire à abattant*, a tall French writing desk, was first produced in the 1760s in Paris by the cabinet-maker, Jean-François Oeben.

The *secrétaire à abattant* looked, from its flat-fronted exterior appearance, like an armoire, or wardrobe. However, its upper section was hinged and, when opened, fell forward to reveal a leather-lined writing surface. The lower section had drawers or doors, behind which were shelves or drawers for storage. In many examples, an additional drawer was located below the cornice of the upper section, often concealed by decoration.

Many *secrétaires à abattant* were tall and narrow. Their rectilinear shape, which was sometimes softened by the use of legs and rounded corners, was Neoclassical in style, and made the earliest ones very influential in furniture design.

High-quality woods were used in the construction and marquetry was often employed, particularly on the fall-fronts, in geometric or Classically inspired designs. Panels of Oriental lacquer were also popular, and during the 1770s and 80s *secrétaires à abattant* incorporating Sèvres porcelain plaques were produced. Neoclassical motifs such as Vitruvian scrolls, keyhole escutcheons of laurel leaves, and inlaid urns were sometimes used.

The design of the *secrétaire à abattant* quickly spread across Europe. In the Low Countries, lacquer and marquetry were sometimes combined with Dutch floral marquetry, while in Germany, Eastern Europe, and Scandinavia, decoration was more restrained. British pieces became particularly good examples of the country's Neoclassical furniture.



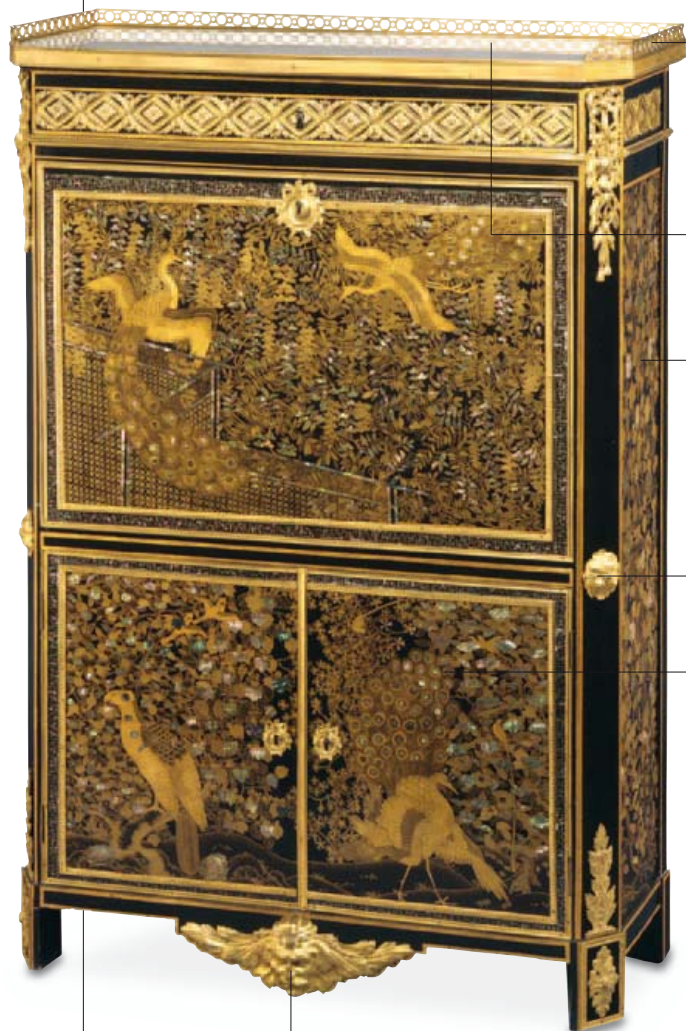
ENGLISH FALL-FRONT *SECÉTAIRE*

This *secrétaire* has tulipwood and satinwood crossbanded inlays. Its fall front and cupboard door are quarter-veneered, with a central oval fan medallion and vase. c.1780. H:124.5cm (49in); W:79cm (31in); D:40.5cm (16in). PAR



FRENCH *SECÉTAIRE À ABATTANT*

This Parisian marble-topped, hawewood *secrétaire* is inlaid with geometric marquetry. Ormolu borders surround its panels. Below the long drawer is a fall front and a pair of doors. c.1780. H:124cm (48½in); W:71cm (28in). PAR



A pierced ormolu gallery runs around three sides at the top.

The white marble top with canted corners is set into a brass frame.

The side panels are lacquered, decorated with foliage, and inlaid with mother-of-pearl.

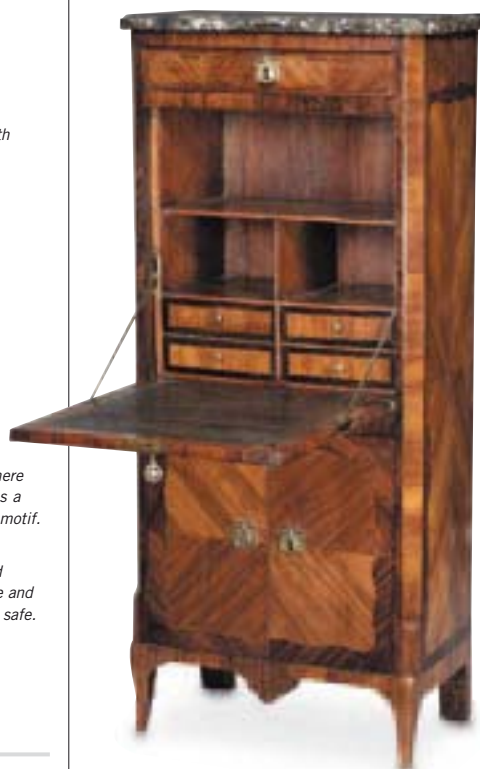
The lion's head mask, here made of gilt bronze, is a common Neoclassical motif.

The doors – inlaid and lacquered with an eagle and a peacock – conceal a safe.

FRENCH *SECÉTAIRE À ABATTANT*

This Parisian *secrétaire* is covered with black lacquer, with mother-of-pearl decoration, and gilt-bronze mounts. Made by Philippe-Claude Montigny. c.1770. H:149cm (59in); W:97cm (38½in). PAR

The apron is centred by a grotesque ormolu mask.



FRENCH *SECÉTAIRE À ABATTANT*

This kingwood and rosewood veneered desk, has a maple inlay and marble top. Under the cornice is a locking drawer that opens, supported by metal hinges, to reveal a fitted interior. The legs are high and tapered. c.1780. H:138cm (55½in); W:64cm (25½in); D:36cm (14¼in). BMN 3



ENGLISH CABINET

This writing cabinet is made of mahogany, the grain of the wood providing its decoration. A writing slide pulls out from the lower case, which has a drawer below. The upper section doors open to reveal drawers and pigeonholes. c.1800. H:148.5cm (58½in). DL 5



LOW COUNTRIES SECRÉTAIRE À ABATTANT

This mahogany *secrétaire* uses different veneer patterns to create ornament and movement. Its doors are quarter-veneered and crossbanded. A shell-shaped oval patera adorns the centre of the fall front, and a geometric ribbon inlay decorates the canted corners of the case. c.1790. H:150cm (60in). L&T 3



FRENCH SECRÉTAIRE À ABATTANT

This piece is made of rosewood, kingwood, and other exotic woods. It has marquetry decoration and gilt-bronze mountings. Below the cornice is applied ormolu, in a Vitruvian scroll, which in this piece serves to conceal a drawer. c.1780. H:139cm (55½in); W:93cm (37¼in); D:48cm (18¾in). GK 7



SWEDISH SECRÉTAIRE

This *secrétaire* lacks a lower cupboard, but its upper section is a writing surface that opens in the same way as a French *secrétaire*. It has a marble top, a geometric brass band across the top, and decorative inlay on the fall front and side panels. c.1780. H:127cm (50in); W:102cm (40¼in); D:46cm (18¼in). BK 6



LOW COUNTRIES SECRÉTAIRE À ABATTANT

The corners of this Dutch piece are rounded, with etched escutcheons in the Chinese style as the decorative focal point. It is also japanned, in imitation of Chinese lacquer, with a design of idealized landscapes and figures, using two shades of gold on a black ground. The fall front opens to reveal drawers, pigeonholes, and shelves. c.1800. H:151cm (60½in). GK 5



INLAID SECRÉTAIRE

The marble top of this *secrétaire* rests above a case with canted corners. The fall front opens onto a fitted interior with six drawers and a green leather insert. Below are two drawers, each with Japanese-style light wood inlays. With gilt-bronze mounts throughout, this piece stands on fluted, tapering feet with sabots. c.1780. H:97cm (38in); W:63cm (24¾in); D:44cm (17½in). GK 7



FRENCH SECRÉTAIRE À ABATTANT

This Parisian piece is made of woods including rosewood and kingwood, with floral inlays. Decoration comes from its geometric patterns, as its mounts are limited to the central drop and feet fronts. Its fall front opens to reveal green, gilded leather. The lower section doors cover three drawers either side of a large shelf. 1778. H:140cm (55in); W:120cm (47½in); D:40cm (15½in). GK 4

COMMODES

THE COMMODE EVOLVED slowly during the late 18th century, only gradually incorporating Neoclassical elements into its design. In its early transitional stage, in the 1760s, its shape retained many Rococo features, such as rounded corners and cabriole legs, but, the case became more rectangular and the decoration Neoclassical.

However, by the 1770s, the shape of commodes had also been refined, as commodes became plainer and more linear in design, with straight legs. Their angular shape was sometimes augmented by the adoption of a breakfront – the result of inset drawers being placed on either side of protruding drawers – a feature that was particularly popular.

By the 1790s, the French commode generally had two or three short frieze drawers with long parallel drawers below them. Columns of term figures, headed by female masks in Classical or Egyptian garb, flanked the drawers. The columns were also often headed by engine-turned, plain, Tuscan, gilt-bronze capitals. Commodes with three

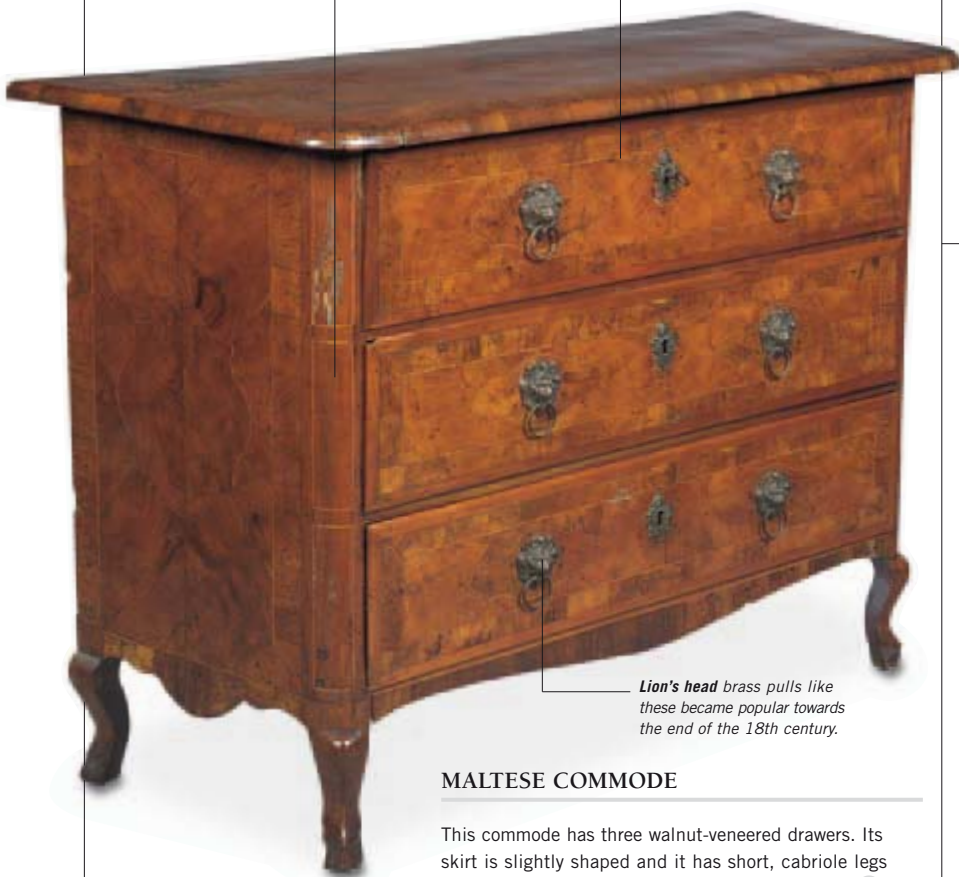
deep drawers on short feet turned like tops were also common.

In the 1770s and 80s, commodes with sumptuous ormolu mounts and pictorial marquetry were still made for royal households, but decoration became more sparing after 1790. Mounts were rare and plain ring handles and escutcheons, inspired by simple Grecian design, were used. Transitional commodes used satinwood veneer or mahogany but, as designs became more refined, plain, well-figured wood such as mahogany, or fruitwood for provincial pieces, was used with marble tops. Decoration was provided by moulded wood, ebonized columns, and grisaille panels.

In Britain the side cabinet became plainer but was still of good quality. No particular shape was favoured, but some designers were influenced by Egyptian campaigns. Italian designers used walnut, olive, and tulipwood, combining a pictorial frieze drawer with two plain drawers. Geometric marquetry was used to emphasize the commode's rectangular shape.

The rounded corners of the case are inlaid with three rectangular panels corresponding to the depths of the drawers.

Crossbanded veneers and light boxwood string inlays emphasize the edges of the drawers.



Lion's head brass pulls like these became popular towards the end of the 18th century.

MALTESE COMMODE

This commode has three walnut-veneered drawers. Its skirt is slightly shaped and it has short, cabriole legs with carved toes. c.1700. W:127cm (50in). FRE 4



FRENCH COMMODE

This three-drawer walnut commode has a moulded top over three graduated panelled drawers and a shaped and moulded apron.

Short, scroll feet, each with a block terminus, support the case. It is decorated with pierced, foliate C-scroll escutcheons and handles. The style of this commode is provincial and rather old-fashioned. c.1765. W:139cm (54½in). 4



FRENCH DEMI-LUNE COMMODE

This mahogany commode has a semicircular, or *demi-lune* shape. It contains three central drawers, and curved side doors, which open to

reveal shelves. It has a marble top, gilded bronze escutcheons that are Neoclassical in design, and pulls with swags surrounding them. c.1795. H:87cm (34½in); W:136cm (53in); D:57cm (22½in). GK 4



FRENCH VENEERED COMMODE

This commode has a breakfront shape, created by three short drawers inset either side of three protruding long drawers. It has a moulded

white marble top and geometric marquetry veneer, which includes kingwood, tulipwood, and rosewood. The cabriole legs are squared and veneered, and terminate in gilt-metal sabots. c.1770. W:131cm (51½in). FRE 3



MILANESE VENEERED COMMODE

This kingwood-veneered commode has three long drawers, a straight apron, and square, almost bracket-shaped legs. Its light, distinctive colour is a result of the inner sapwood of the kingwood being used for the veneer. Its pulls are Neoclassical in design. *c.1790. W:188cm (74in). Cdk 5*



ITALIAN COMMODE

This rectangular fruitwood commode has three drawers, the upper one narrower than the others, and stands on short, tapering feet. It has a floral inlay, and its central cartouche, outlined in a darker veneer, is inlaid with birds and flowers. *c.1780. H:95cm (37½in); W:125cm (49¼in); D:68cm (26¼in). MAG 5*



SWEDISH COMMODE

This three-drawer commode has a marble top. Its case has canted corners, as do the feet, which taper slightly towards the base. Its side panels and drawers are veneered, and the central drawer has an inlay of musical instruments. *c.1790. H:84.5cm (34in); W:120.5cm (48¼in); D:56cm (22¼in). Bk 7*



ITALIAN COMMODE

This rectangular walnut commode has three drawers, the top one narrower than the two below. Its drawers have floral marquetry and a central oval inlaid with an architectural scene. Its handles are lion's head masks with a circular pull held in each lion's mouth. *c.1780. W:117.5cm (46¼in). DN 4*



ENGLISH CHEST OF DRAWERS

This mahogany chest of drawers is serpentine in shape. It has a moulded edge, four graduated drawers, a moulded plinth, and the piece terminates in four ogee bracket feet. The top drawer of the chest is fitted as a dressing chest. *c.1770. W:105cm (41¼in). L&T 5*



GERMAN COMMODE

This commode's rounded, breakfront shape is echoed in the conforming top, which slightly overhangs the case. It has three drawers of equal size with Rococo-style drawer pulls. Its base moulding is shaped and the case stands on small bracket feet. *c.1770. W:136cm (54¼in). BMN 3*



PARISIAN À LA GRECQUE COMMODE

This commode has three drawers, the upper one hidden by an applied ormolu entrelac frieze. Its two lower drawers are covered with a veneer pattern. The four cabriole legs end in feet ornamented with sabots. *c.1775. H:84.5cm (33¼in); W:124.5cm (48¾in); D:56.5cm (22¼in). GK 7*



SWEDISH COMMODE

This breakfront commode, with three small drawers flanking three larger central drawers, is closely related to French styles. This one is slightly heavier, particularly in the canted corners and the marginally tapering legs. *H:86cm (35in); W:120cm (48in); D:57cm (23in). Bk 4*



PARISIAN MARBLE-TOPPED COMMODE

This rectangular commode has three drawers, and doors in the central section, flanked by a single door on each side. It has rounded pilasters on the sides that connect with its turned and tapering legs. It has circular escutcheons with swags, and circular pulls. *c.1775. W:128cm (51¼in). GK 5*

TABLES

DINING TABLES, although not described as such in Chippendale's *Director*, were a new type of table. During the first half of the 18th century, people tended to sit at small tables to eat, arranged in groups in a dedicated eating room.

Around the 1750s, people began to eat at longer tables. Quite often, these consisted of a central, rectangular gateleg table to which two D-ends were joined to make one long piece. When not assembled as such, the D-ends might be used as pier tables.

For the most part, these dining tables were plain, with either square or tapering legs. This began to change from around 1780, when tables were often supported by pedestals.

Early examples of dining tables, such as those supplied by Chippendale in 1770, had half-round ends and deep, rectangular drop leaves. These were supported, when raised, on gate legs and secured using stirrup clips.

Table legs were influenced by Neoclassical style and became more slender and tapering in shape as the century progressed.

As the passion for games and gambling now pervaded every level of society, large numbers of games tables

were made, particularly in England and the American colonies, and these gained popularity in Europe towards the end of the century.

Many games tables had a top that folded back to reveal a baize-lined surface or an inlaid games board, and one or two legs that swung back to support the open top. When not in use, the table would usually be stored against the wall, so the side facing the wall was generally left undecorated.

Pembroke tables were multi-purpose, and could be used for dining, games, or as worktables, depending on the occasion. Being small and on casters, they could be moved around a room as required.

Like other occasional tables, Pembroke tables were usually highly decorative. Those made of satinwood or mahogany were often inlaid with Neoclassical designs, although painted decoration was also popular. Marquetry remained fashionable throughout the period.

Dressing tables were often designed like deep tables with drawers. These usually featured ingenious mechanical fittings such as dressing mirrors that rose and fell in slots.



ENGLISH CARD TABLE

This mahogany, D-shaped card table has a fold-over top and baize-lined interior. It is veneered with satinwood banding, with ebony and boxwood string inlay. *c.1785. H:74cm (29in); W:92cm (36¼in); D:46cm (18in). L&T 3*



ENGLISH PEMBROKE TABLE

This small mahogany table is intricately inlaid with various woods, including harewood, a veneer from the sycamore tree that is stained to produce a brown-green colour similar to khaki. *c.1780. W:94cm (37in). DL 6*



SCANDINAVIAN TABLES

Made of satin birchwood, each table has a *demi-lune* top placed at an angle on a frame above three square-section, tapered legs. The D-shape or *demi lune* is often associated with card tables that were designed to be placed

against a wall when not in use. However, these tables are more likely to have been used as side tables because they are too tall to sit at. *c.1790. W:87cm (34¼in). L&T 3*



The protruding, square corners are also functional, as their concave insides hold counters.

Metal hinges hold the two top sections together.

The escutcheons and handles are made of brass.

Carved acanthus adorns the knees of the table.

The rear legs do not have claw-and-ball feet, as the table was not designed to be seen from all sides.

ENGLISH GAMES TABLE

Made from mahogany, this games table has a rectangular top that folds back to reveal a baize-lined playing surface. The concave corners hold counters. *c.1760. W:87.5cm (35in). NA 3*



SWEDISH PIER TABLE

This table is made of painted and gilded softwood, with a faux-marble top and plinth. Gilt balls top each turned, tapered leg, below which are carved and gilded acanthus leaves and gilt supports. *c.1790. H:81.5cm (32in). DL 4*



FRENCH TABLE

Made of mahogany, this rectangular table has a single frieze drawer. The square, tapering legs have brass terminals and casters, which allowed the occasional table to be moved easily. *c.1785. H:71.5cm (28¼in). DN 3*



ENGLISH FOLD-OVER TEA TABLE

This mahogany tea table is made in the French Hepplewhite style. The serpentine top has a moulded edge and rests on a serpentine frieze, which is raised on cabriole legs. The legs are carved at the top of the knees with stylized anthemia. *c.1770. W:102cm (40in). PAR*



ITALIAN PIER TABLE

This imposing table has a rectangular faux-marble top. The frame is painted and decorated with applied gilt scrolls and rosettes. The circular, tapered legs are also painted. Gilding is applied to the concave sections of the stop-fluted legs. *c.1780. H:88cm (34½in); W:110.5cm (43¼in); D:56cm (22in). BL 6*



ENGLISH DRUM TABLE

This table has an inset-leather surface, four frieze drawers, one of which is fitted with an adjustable writing slope, and four dummy drawers. The table revolves on a turned central column, which is set above four inlaid sabre legs with brass lion's paw casters. *c.1800. H:72cm (28¼in); D:109.5cm (43in). RGA 6*



DUTCH OCCASIONAL TABLE

The top of this *demi-lune*-shaped piece is decorated with an inlaid urn surrounded by crossbanding. Tambour doors slide sideways to open. It stands on three square-section, tapering legs decorated with boxwood and ebony stringing. *c.1790. H:75cm (29½in); W:75cm (29½in); D:38cm (15in). C&T 2*



FRENCH DROP-LEAF DINING TABLE

This Cuban mahogany table has a rounded, rectangular top with two D-shaped leaves. It has a plain frieze and six squared, tapered legs with brass caps and casters. The legs move out to support the open leaves and additional leaves. Signed Jean-Antoine Brunet. *c.1795. H:74cm (29in); W:255cm (102in); D:124cm (48¼in). GK 5*



SWEDISH CARD TABLE

This *demi-lune*-shaped table has a frieze and squared legs. It is very similar to an English card table, apart from the two legs, which are awkwardly bunched together. One of them swings back to support the top when opened. *c.1780. H:77.5cm (30½in); W:88.5cm (34½in). BK 4*



ENGLISH OVAL TABLE

This is one of a pair of French-style tables decorated with marquetry and parquetry. The oval top has a central panel with an inlaid spray of flowers and ribbons and the frieze has a floral inlay. The table has cabriole legs. *c.1785. H:65.5cm (25½in); W:59cm (23¼in); D:44cm (17½in). DN 6*



ENGLISH PIER TABLE

The top of this *demi-lune* table is inlaid with satinwood, rosewood, ebony, and boxwood. The marquetry features a fan, echoing the shape of the table. Inlaid paterae are inserted at the tops of the square, tapering legs, which terminate in spade feet. *c.1790. W:133cm (56¼in). DN 5*



SWISS GAMES TABLE

This walnut and cherrywood table has a heavy, hinged, fold-over top, with rounded corners and a brown, gilt-leather inner surface. The shaped table skirt is carved and the cabriole legs are carved at the knees and tips. The rear leg swings back to support the open top. *c.1780. H:72cm (28¼in); W:90cm (35½in). GK 1*

OCCASIONAL TABLES

IN THE SECOND HALF of the 18th century, occasional tables became more varied in style. They were small and light, and so could be moved into reception rooms as required. Many of these tables were highly decorative, but gradually they became more utilitarian and were often designed for specific purposes.

A passion for games and gambling resulted in a proliferation of card tables. By the end of the century, French card tables were fitted for every sort of game: roulette, chess, backgammon, and *jeu de l'oie*.

A wide variety of writing tables was developed. The larger, portable tables made for writing were called *tables à écrire*. Some were fitted with candle slides that pulled out from the sides.

The newly fashionable custom of gathering to drink tea and coffee required two or even three tables: one table with a gallery around the edge, on which to place the china; a round table at which people sat and conversed; and a kettle stand. In the grandest homes, the kettle stand had a silver salver shaped to fit the top, with a silver coffee- or tea-pot on top of it.

Worktables first appeared in the second half of the 18th century. Those made for sewing often had tops that lifted up to reveal small drawers for holding reels of thread and other sewing accessories. Some sewing tables had fabric bags hanging beneath them, in which the needlework was kept. These were made from wooden frames covered with fabric that slid into runners in the base of the frames. French sewing tables, *tables en chiffonnière*, did not usually have these. Some English worktables were also fitted with a leather surface for writing.

The French *table de salon*, meaning “sitting room table”, served many purposes. It had an ormolu gallery around the top, with three drawers and a shelf below. The intricate decoration meant it was elegant enough for formal reception rooms.

Many portable tables contained a fire screen, often made of the finest textiles or displaying needlework skills. The screen protected the face and legs of anyone sitting in front of a fire, and was particularly important for ladies who wished to protect their wax-based cosmetics from melting.



The top is inlaid with flowers and has protruding rounded corners.

The frieze is inlaid to simulate fluting. It has a single front drawer.

The sides are inlaid with crossbanded borders with geometric banding and Neoclassical decoration.

The cabriole legs are gently curved.

The legs terminate in foliate ormolu sabots.

The tambour front slides back to reveal six small, ring-handled drawers.

ENGLISH WORKTABLE

This transitional-style worktable has an inlaid top above a single drawer. The table has a tambour front and an incurved shelf, and terminates in cabriole legs. *c.1770. H:76cm (30in); W:46.5cm (18½in); D:34.5cm (13½in).*



FRENCH TABLE DE SALON

This satinwood and holly table has a pierced ormolu gallery. The case, three drawers, and shelf are ornately inlaid. The tapering legs end in ormolu sabots. *c.1780. H:72.5cm (28½in); W:41cm (16¼in); D:35.5cm (13½in). PAR 1*



ITALIAN FIRE SCREEN TABLE

The entire surface of this olivewood table is veneered. It has a serpentine skirt and slender cabriole legs. The silk-lined fire screen moves up and down at the back of the table. *c.1780. H:68.5cm (27in). DL 4*



ENGLISH WRITING TABLE

This one-drawer, mahogany table has a leather-inlaid top. A silk-upholstered, adjustable face screen is fitted at the back. It has square, tapering legs with brass casters. *c.1790. W:43cm (17in). FRE 2*



FRENCH WORKTABLE

This diagonally veneered, single-drawer table has a cambered top and cabriole legs. It has a drawer in the mid-shelf, and a fire screen at the back. *c.1760. H:72cm (28½in); W:38cm (15in); D:28cm (11in). GK 4*



ENGLISH KETTLE STAND

This small mahogany stand has a circular top with a brass-lined spindle gallery. The fluted column has a leaf-carved baluster knob above a tripod base, with claw-and-ball feet. *c.1760. H:58.5cm (23in); D:33cm (13in). LT 7*



FRENCH SEWING TABLE

This table has a marble top surrounded by a pierced three-quarter gallery. The parquetry-veneered case contains two drawers. It has a shaped frame, lower shelf, cabriole legs, and ormolu feet. *c.1765. H:71cm (28in). S&K 1*

BONHEURS-DU-JOUR

A SMALL, FEMININE WRITING TABLE FOR LADIES, THE *BONHEUR-DU-JOUR* WAS FIRST MADE IN FRANCE IN THE 1760S. ITS NAME REFERS TO THE FACT THAT SUCH PIECES SOON BECAME EXTREMELY POPULAR.

The *bonheur-du-jour* ("pleasure of the day") is a small, light, elegant desk or dressing table. It is different from other writing tables in that it has a raised back, like a miniature cabinet, made up of shelves, drawers, or pigeonholes designed to hold papers, writing accessories, and sometimes toiletries. Occasionally, a mirror was also included. The top of the table is usually surrounded by a brass or gilded gallery, which often served for displaying small ornaments. Beneath it are drawers, or a small cupboard. These sometimes have tambour doors that slide into the case – another example of the technical skill of the cabinet-maker. The table invariably has long, graceful, slender legs, occasionally with a shelf attached to them about halfway down.

The *bonheur-du-jour* was made by many of the famous French cabinet-makers, such as Martin Carlin, who designed 11 of them. The most exquisite examples, such as Carlin's, were mounted with plaques of Sèvres porcelain and painted with delicate floral patterns, or richly decorated with fine marquetry, Oriental lacquer panels, and ormolu.

Bonheurs-du-jour were valued both for their delicate beauty and for the skill and ingenuity with which hidden drawers and compartments were concealed within such a small space. Originating in France, their popularity soon spread, partly due to the increased importance of women in society at this time. They appeared in grand British houses from about 1770 onwards.



ENGLISH WORKTABLE

This satinwood table has contrasting ebony stringing, an inset leather top, and two candle slides. The case has a fitted drawer over a wool box and is supported on square, tapered legs. c.1785. H:56cm (22in). GORL 3



FRENCH TABLE

This sycamore, kingwood, and floral marquetry table has a Sèvres-style plaque in the top. It has a pierced brass gallery and mounts, three drawers, and a lower shelf. c.1780. H:73.5cm (29in) W:41cm (16½in). GK 7



Louis XV cherrywood *bonheur-du-jour* The upper section has two doors, and the lower section holds a long, single drawer. The case is set on cabriole legs. H:99cm (39in); W:80cm (31½in); D:54cm (21¼in). PIL 3



Louis XVI mahogany *bonheur-du-jour* This desk has a marble top and a brass three-quarter gallery, with a glazed upper section and a roll-top desk element. H:129cm (50¾in); W:79cm (31in); D:23cm (9in). PIL



GERMAN GAMES TABLE

This provincial walnut, cherry, and native fruitwood table top is supported on tapered legs. The surface is inlaid with a chess board; the interior is fitted for back-gammon. c.1780. H:75cm (30in). GK 4



GERMAN DRESSING TABLE

This solid cherry table from southern Germany has a wide, overhanging top above two small drawers. It stands on tall, tapering legs. Late 18th century. H:76cm (30in); W:68cm (26¾in); D:44cm (17¼in). BMN 1



FRENCH WRITING TABLE

The table top has a gilt-bronze-edged frieze and is inlaid with flower-heads and a ribbon border. The drawer is fitted with a sliding writing surface, inkwell, pounce-pot, and pen tray. c.1780. H:72cm (28¼in); W:61.5cm (24¼in). PAR 1



FRENCH WRITING TABLE

The top is inlaid with lozenges and a central floral cartouche. The frieze has a geometric inlay and a drawer. Each side has a pull-out writing slide. c.1780. H:69.5cm (27½in); W: 62cm (24¼in); D: 39.5cm (15½in). PAR 1

CHAIRS

THE VARIETY OF CHAIRS burgeoned in the mid to late 18th century, with French styles remaining popular. Although elements of the Rococo style lingered, chairs began to look more Neoclassical and became squarer and straighter. Cabriole legs were rejected in favour of turned, tapered supports, often fluted or decorated with reeding, and oval and rectangular chair backs became more common.

Different types of chair evolved: the *bergère* remained the same stylistically, but the frame was often simply waxed, rather than painted and gilded, as in the first half of the century. Desk chairs and corner chairs, which were popular at the beginning of the period, had shaped backs. The shield back became fashionable towards the end of the century, with the pierced splats incorporating a wide range of Neoclassical motifs. Desk chairs

usually had rounded seat rails and often had an extra leg at the centre of the seat rail, making five legs in total.

Corner chairs, like hall chairs, were small and designed to be decorative rather than useful. They were usually rather fragile, as they were not designed for regular use.

At first, chairs were ordered individually, but from the mid century onwards, sets of furniture known as suites became more popular. These varied from small groups of matching chairs to extensive suites that included a number of pieces, such as armchairs, side chairs, *bergères*, window seats, stools, and sofas.

Any decoration on hall and corner chairs was likely to be carved, but more expensive armchairs and their matching side chairs, designed for grander rooms, were often delicately painted or highlighted with gilding.



The top rail is waxed, rather than painted.

The sides of the chair are fully upholstered.

The armrest is upholstered where the sitter's arm is placed.

A simple C-scroll connects the arm to the cabriole leg.

The rear leg extends outwards.

LOUIS XV BERGÈRE

This chair shows how Rococo style adapted to Neoclassical fashion. The beech frame retains a carved, serpentine top rail and cabriole legs, but is waxed. The chair is upholstered in blue silk. c.1765. H:92cm (36½in). GK 4



LOUIS XVI DESK CHAIR

This French tub desk chair has a curved and lightly carved seat rail, and the seat, back, and sides are all upholstered in leather. It has Neoclassical turned and tapered armrests and legs. c.1780. H:82cm (32¼in). CdK 3



QUEEN ANNE CORNER CHAIR

This walnut chair has a crest rail with a raised yoke centre, shaped arms, and solid, vase-shaped splats. It has one front cabriole leg and three turned legs, all with slipper feet. c.1770–1800. H:76cm (30in); W:71cm (28in). BDL



SOUTH AFRICAN CORNER CHAIR

This chair is made from native stinkwood and yellow wood. The pierced back splats are reminiscent of Chippendale designs. The square, chamfered legs are connected by stretchers. c.1780–1800. H:83cm (33¼in). PRA



NEW YORK CORNER CHAIR

This mahogany chair has a top rail with a raised yoke centre, carved knuckle handholds, and vase-shaped splats. The deep seat rail is supported on three cabriole legs with slipper feet and one rear turned leg. c.1750. NA 3



GEORGE III HALL CHAIR

This mahogany hall chair has a cartouche-shaped back. Within the C- and S-scrolled frame are carved heraldic elements, including an Irish harp and crown. The piece terminates in panelled, tapering legs. c.1770. L&T 2



GEORGE III HALL CHAIR

One of a set of four, this mahogany chair has a typically Neoclassical oval back. The solid mahogany seat overhangs the front rail. Tapering legs support the frame and a stretcher connects the rear legs. c.1780. L&T 4



CHINESE CORNER CHAIR

This rosewood chair has a central leg with a shell carved on the knee, and it terminates in a claw-and-ball foot. Attenuated turned stretchers anchor the legs. c.1780. H:86cm (34in). MJM



GEORGE III CORNER CHAIR

This provincial oak chair is one of a pair. The seat is composed of three planks of oak. Turned spindles connect the seat to the rounded back, a technique often seen on Windsor chairs. c.1800. H:81.5cm (32in). DL 4

HALL CHAIRS

HALL CHAIRS, AS THEIR NAME IMPLIES, WERE DESIGNED TO STAND ALONG THE WALLS OF HALLWAYS, RATHER THAN IN RECEPTION ROOMS.

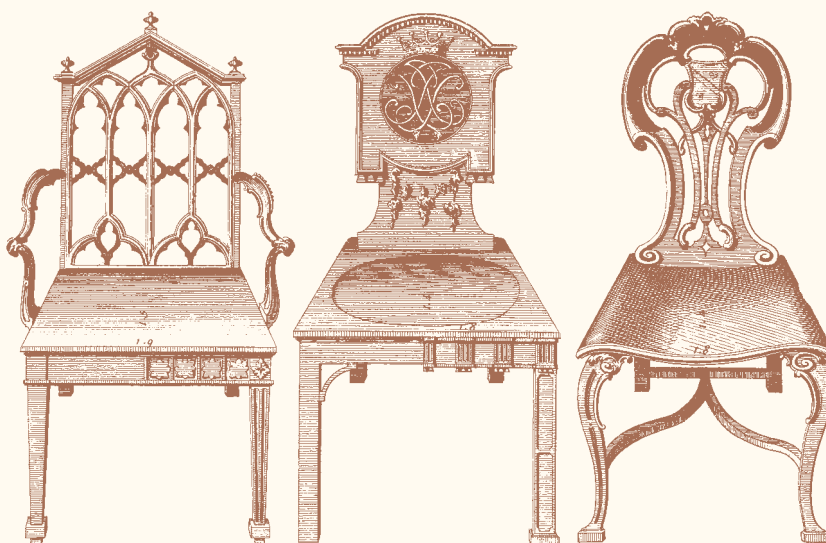
Small, formal, and more decorative than functional, hall chairs were first named by Robert Manwaring, a furniture designer, in *The Chair-Maker's Real Friend and Companion*, published in 1865.

Thomas Sheraton noted in *The Cabinet Dictionary* that “chairs such as those that are placed in halls are for the use of servants or strangers waiting on business”. These wooden chairs were usually smaller than side chairs. They had turned seats and often had the crest or arms of the family carved or painted on the chair back. Some chairs were made with plain backs so that families could have their own insignia carved or painted onto the basic chair.

The hall chair first appeared when Thomas Chippendale illustrated six designs of chairs for “Halls, Passages, or Summer-Houses” in his *Director*.

Rival cabinet-makers, William Ince and John Mayhew published three designs for hall chairs in the “gothic taste” in their serialized pattern book, *The Universal System of Household Furniture* (1759–62). If it was too expensive to carve the decorative crest on the back, then it was considered acceptable to “be painted, and have a very good effect”.

Hall chairs These illustrations are from Thomas Chippendale's *The Gentleman & Cabinet-Maker's Director*, 1762 (Plate XVII).



ENGLISH HALL CHAIRS



These mahogany hall chairs have central veneered tablets, and pierced, waisted supports. The seats are slightly bowed and framed with panels. The turned, blocked legs are joined by cross-stretchers. c.1780. L&T 4



ENGLISH HALL CHAIR

This mahogany chair has a balloon-shaped back that fits into a shoe at the base. The seat is solid mahogany with a circular lowered section. The tapered legs terminate in squared ends. c.1790. H:96.5cm (38in). DL 4



CHINESE HALL CHAIR

This chair was made for export to the West. The solid splats are decorated with an inlay. The dish-moulded seat is shaped at the edges. Square, chamfered legs are joined by stretchers. c.1760. H:95cm (37½in). HL 6



ENGLISH HALL CHAIR

One of a pair, this mahogany chair is modelled on the Renaissance *sgabello* chair. It has a shaped, waisted back and shaped seat. The front support and seat have indented panels, designed to bear a crest. c.1780. H:99cm (39in). DL 3



ENGLISH HALL CHAIR

This chair, one of a set of four, has a pierced wheel back with a central, raised, circular plaque. The wide, slightly dished seat is supported on tapered legs, and the front legs terminate in spade feet. c.1770. GorL 5

CHIPPENDALE CHAIRS

THE CHAIR DESIGNS that Chippendale created and reproduced in his book *The Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director* (1762) offer a sample of the various design trends in the mid to late 18th century, such as Rococo, Chinese, Gothic, and Neoclassical. Chippendale's name has become generic for 18th-century furniture and, in particular, chairs, but his designs borrowed from published English and French work. His most original work can be found in his Neoclassical pieces, which he created from 1760 onwards, inspired by the interiors of architect Robert Adam.

Despite the variety of influences on his designs, many Chippendale chairs follow a basic pattern, with their stylistic influence being most obvious

in their carving. Therefore, while most chair backs had pierced and interlaced splats with carved scrollwork, it is the shape and carving that reveals the predominant influence: cartouche shapes and scrolling acanthus for Rococo, Gothic arches, Chinoiserie fretwork, and interlacing ribbons, or the lyre and fan shapes typical of Neoclassicism. The importance of deep-cut, detailed carving in Chippendale's designs meant that mahogany was most commonly used, although provincial versions were still often made in walnut or fruitwoods.

The top rails of the chairs were usually serpentine in shape, sometimes ending in carved ears, with stiles curving outwards. Most of them had squared or trapezoidal seats, and while Chippendale preferred stuff-over upholstery, many cheaper or colonial versions had slip-in seats. Designs often had different front and back legs. The front legs could be cabriole with a claw-and-ball foot, tapered, or straight with stretchers.



Mahogany is well suited for the elaborate carving of the back splat.

The drop-in seat is upholstered in pale yellow floral silk damask.

The cabriole front legs terminate in elegant carved scroll feet.

GEORGE III DINING CHAIR

This mahogany chair, part of a set of 11 together with one later copy, has a serpentine top rail above an interlaced, pierced splat headed by C-scrolls carved with leaves. The cabriole legs are flanked by C-scrolls, also carved with leaves, and the legs taper towards scrolled toes. c.1775.

Rear legs were often simply chamfered, as these chairs were placed against the wall.



NEW HAMPSHIRE DINING CHAIRS

Each of these mahogany dining chairs has a serpentine top rail with rounded shoulders and flaring stiles with scribed borders. The interlaced back splat includes an inverted heart cut-out shape. The over-upholstered,



seat is a trapezoidal shape and has a serpentine front. The piece is supported on square-moulded, chamfered legs. The legs of the chair are joined by recessed box stretchers. The chairs retain an old or original finish, and are attributed to Robert Harold of Portsmouth. c.1765-75. 5



ENGLISH DINING CHAIRS

The serpentine top rail of each mahogany chair is carved at the shoulders with scrolls and foliage. The pierced, vase-shaped back splats are carved with acanthus and trailing foliage. The curved arms with scrolling ends have



downward-sweeping supports, and stretchers join the straight front legs and sweeping back legs. The saddle-shaped seats are covered in red leather with a double row of studs. c.1770. Chair: H:95cm (37½in); W:62cm (24in); D:59.9cm (23½in). Armchair: H:95cm (37½in); W:65cm (25½in); D:65cm (25½in). PAR



ENGLISH DINING CHAIRS

These mahogany chairs have serpentine top rails carved with trailing acanthus and side rails with flowers and trelliswork. The pierced, vase-shaped back splats are carved with acanthus and *rocaille*. The curved arms have



downward-sweeping supports. The chairs have drop-in seats with egg-and-dart-moulding on the seat rails. The square front legs have chamfered back corners and foliate brackets, while the back legs are sweeping. c.1760. H:98cm (38½in); W:57cm (22½in); D:48cm (19in). PAR



COLONIAL INDIAN SIDE CHAIR

This Asian hardwood chair has a serpentine top rail above a pierced, vase-form back splat. The shaped seat rail has a padded drop-in seat. The cabriole legs have acanthus-carved knees. *c.1770. H:100cm (39in); W:71cm (28in). MJM*



AMERICAN DINING CHAIR

This is one of a pair of fine Delaware Valley walnut chairs. Each has a serpentine top rail centred by a carved shell over a pierced, vase-form splat. The moulded seat rail has a drop-in seat. *c.1770. P&P*



AMERICAN CARVED SIDE CHAIR

This walnut chair has a serpentine top rail centred by a carved shell over a pierced, vase-form splat. It has a moulded seat rail, padded drop-in seat, cabriole legs, and claw-and-ball feet. *Late 18th century. SI 4*



ENGLISH DINING CHAIR

This mahogany chair has an arched, moulded top rail and carved shells at the corners of the uprights, in the centre of the pierced splat, and at the centre of the shaped apron. *c.1770. H:88.5cm (34½in); W:57cm (22½in). PAR*

CHIPPENDALE'S CHAIR DESIGNS

IN THE 1762 EDITION OF THE *DIRECTOR*, 25 PAGES WERE DEVOTED TO SEATING, WITH OVER 60 SEPARATE DESIGNS FOR CHAIRS AND CHAIR BACKS.

In the notes that accompany his illustrative plates, Chippendale wrote that there “are various designs of chairs for patterns. The front feet are mostly different, for the greater choice.”

Elsewhere, he was more specific, as with his instructions that chairs should be upholstered in the same material as the window-curtains and the height of the back should seldom exceed 55cm (22in) above the seat – although sometimes these dimensions could be less to suit the chairs to the room.

Chippendale felt that “seats look best when stuffed over the rails and have a

brass border neatly chased; but are most commonly done with Brass Nails, in one or two Rows.” Despite the number of designs in his *Director*, not all the chair patterns that are termed “Chippendale” are included: the ladder-back design, for example, does not appear.

Chippendale's designs for chairs and backs of chairs were perhaps the most influential of his designs to appear in the *Director*. His designs were interpreted by craftsmen throughout the world, who followed his instructions to varying degrees, and so increased the variety of “Chippendale” chairs.



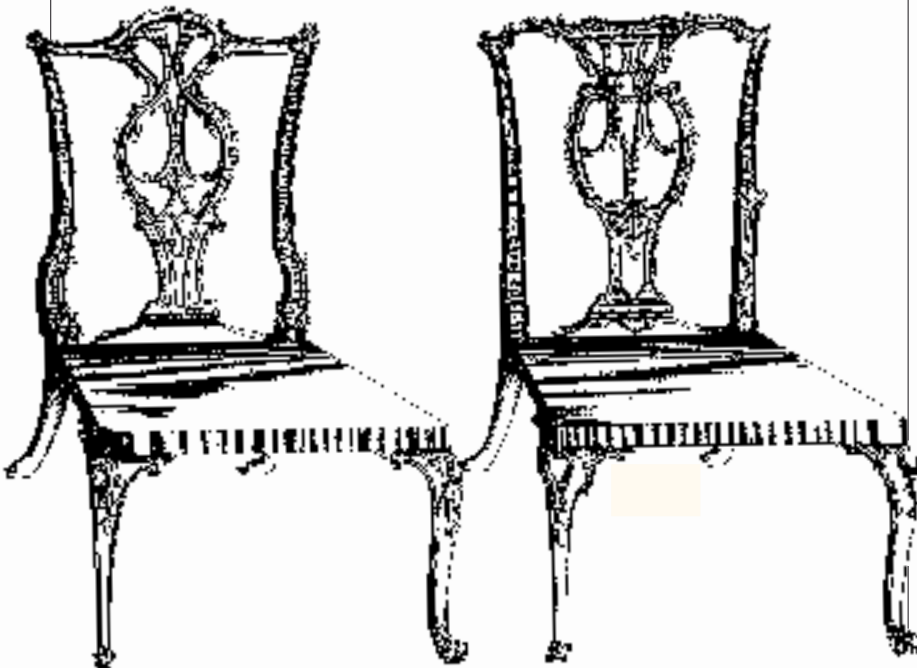
AMERICAN ARMCHAIR

This mixed wood armchair from Philadelphia has a serpentine top rail, an urn-shaped splat, and flared arms with scrolled knuckles. It has a straight seat rail, a slip seat, cabriole legs, and oad feet. *Mid to late 18th century. FRE 4*



GEORGE III ARMCHAIR

This child's open mahogany armchair has a serpentine top rail and a ladder-back splat. The scroll arms have fluted uprights. The stuff-over seat rests on square, tapering legs. *c.1790. FRE 1*



GEORGE III SETTEE

This early George III mahogany chair-back settee has a C- and S-scroll top rail above two pierced, vase-shaped splats with an open outscrolled arm at each end. The stuff-over seat rests on chamfered, square-section legs joined by stretchers. *W:147cm (57½in). L&T 3*



ARMCHAIRS

ARMCHAIR DESIGNS based on the French *fauteuil* shape were still popular in the latter half of the 18th century. The shape of the chair was slow to adopt Neoclassical styling and, until the 1780s, chairs with undulating curves and cabriole legs, like those of Rococo chairs, continued to be made.

However, the shape gradually developed as the fervour for “antique” or Neoclassical designs grew. These changes could be seen in the shape of chair backs: first they became more oval, then they became rectangular and were often flanked by colonettes.

Seats also changed shape and became round rather than rectangular. Towards the end of the century they became square, to accompany the rectangular chair backs.

Chair legs gradually became straight and tapered. They were often reeded,

spiralled, or fluted, the latter being a reference to Classical architectural columns – part of the new craze inspired by Greco-Roman styles.

Further carved decoration was used in the form of rosettes at the tops of the legs, and guilloche or chain motifs around the bowed seat rails.

Many chairs still had painted and gilt decoration, although polished mahogany was more popular in the Low Countries, due to imported timber from its Far Eastern colonies and from foreign trading links.

Coverings for armchairs were varied at this time, and ranged from Aubusson tapestries to silk or needlework. Silk finishes tended to match the wall coverings of the rooms for which the chairs were intended. Horsehair was generally used as a stuffing for upholstered seats.

The studs are made from brass or gilt-metal.

The *petit-point* needlework upholstery is original.

The chair arms are upholstered where the sitter's arm is placed.

The back of the seat rail is stamped with the maker's name: N. Blanchard.

The frame is carved with flower-heads and leaves.

The legs form a continuous line with the seat rail.

FRENCH FAUTEUIL

This French *fauteuil à la Reine* is carved and gilded, with a shaped back separated from its seat by curved rear stiles. It has outswept arms and cabriole legs. The chair is generously proportioned, and the needlework has been made to fit the chair. The maker's stamp appears on the back of the seat rail.

c.1755. H:95cm (37½in); W:71cm (28in); D:59cm (23¼in). PAR



ENGLISH ARMCHAIR

This armchair has a fan-like back, and the upper section is wider than the lower section. The seat is wider and lower than most French examples. The cabriole legs are connected to the seat rail, but they lack continuous undulation. The frame is painted and gilded and the chair has been upholstered in a silk fabric that has been dated later than the frame itself. c.1780.



PARISIAN FAUTEUIL

This carved beech armchair has an oval back, outswept arms, and a wide seat. The seat and back are upholstered in silk. The back and rail are carved with a Neoclassical guilloche pattern, punctuated with a rosette at the top of each leg. The turned, tapered legs are carved with stop-fluting, a pattern representing fluted architectural columns that was typically Neoclassical. c.1773. Bk 5



GUSTAVIAN ARMCHAIR

This armchair is in the Gustavian style. The shaped oval back and wide seat are upholstered in fabric with a blue and white Classical design and the chair is supported on a white-painted frame – a typically Gustavian feature. The top rail, arms, and legs are all carved with Neoclassical motifs. The chair is raised on stop-fluted legs, which are also typically Neoclassical. Bk 1



SWEDISH ARMCHAIR

Painted white and gilt in the Gustavian style, this square-backed, upholstered armchair has outswept arms, a rounded seat frame, and turned and tapered legs. The carved decoration is in the Neoclassical guilloche pattern, and rosettes appear above its tapering, columnar legs. Gilt highlights the decoration. This armchair is one of a pair. c.1780. Bk 5



SOUTHERN GERMAN ARMCHAIR

The frame of this armchair is probably walnut and is neither painted nor gilded. The seat and back are upholstered in silk. The rounded back is small compared with its wide seat, and with other examples of *fauteuils*. The arms are upswept at the ends, widening as they join the chair rail. The fluted legs terminate in small button feet. c.1780. H:92cm (36in). BMN 2



ENGLISH ARMCHAIR

This *fauteuil* shares many attributes with its Parisian prototype, including the proportions of the back and seat. The simple carved floral motif in the centre of the back rail is also very French in style. However, the arm terminus is an English interpretation, as are the fluted arm supports. The tapered, single-flute, columnar legs are more slender than most French examples. c.1780. BOUL 4



ITALIAN ARMCHAIR

This armchair incorporates several Neoclassical elements with its shield-shaped back, acanthus-carved arms, and the spray of laurel leaves that decorates the front chair rail, an element derived from ancient Greece. The chair is caned, the frame is painted green and gilded, and it has flat stretchers. c.1790. H:94cm (37in); W:61cm (24in); D:61cm (24in). BRU 2



SOUTHERN GERMAN SIDE CHAIR

Although this is a walnut, caned side chair, its back and seat frame are very similar to the shape of a French *fauteuil*. The centre of its back chair frame and the seat rail both have simple, carved floral details. The cabriole legs are higher than most French examples, and terminate in stylized paw feet. This side chair is one of a pair. c.1780. H:92cm (37in). BMN 2



SQUARE-BACKED ARMCHAIR

This square-backed armchair is larger than most French examples. The square arms curve down from the upper chair back and slope towards the legs. These legs are slightly turned and feature flutes. The starkness of the design, accentuated by the white paint, is barely relieved by the vibrant red and white striped silk upholstery. This is one of a pair of armchairs. c.1790. Bk 4



GERMAN SIDE CHAIR

Made of beech, and one of a pair, this chair has a square back with a pierced centre, reminiscent of Chippendale Gothic designs. However, the fluted legs show a greater degree of French influence. Its upholstery is tacked over the top of the seat, but it leaves the frame showing. Simple, tapered legs with a slight flair support the frame. c.1785. H:92.5cm (37in). BMN 2

FRENCH CHAIRS

SUCH WAS THE *FAUTEUIL'S* APPEAL THAT IT WAS COPIED THROUGHOUT EUROPE. THOMAS CHIPPENDALE PRODUCED NUMEROUS VARIATIONS OF IT.

Parisian furniture was particularly coveted by the English, but it was the *fauteuil* that was imitated across Europe.

In his *Director*, Thomas Chippendale published ten designs of "French Chairs", two of which had "Elbows" (arms). Accompanying the illustrations is the claim that "The Feet and Elbows are different", giving chair-makers a wider range of options. Chippendale's instructions stated that "some of them are intended to be open at the Back: which make them very light, without having a bad Effect... The Seat is twenty-seven Inches wide in Front, twenty-two Inches from the Front to the Back, and twenty-three Inches wide behind; the Height of the Back is twenty-five Inches, and the Height of the Seat fourteen Inches and an Half, including Casters."

Chippendale also noted his preferences for upholstery – "Both the back and the seat must be covered with Tapestry, or other sort of Needlework" – and that the backs and seats should be stuffed and nailed with brass nails.

While the *Director* certainly helped the popularity of the *fauteuil*, looking at the variety of chairs from this period it is clear that many of Chippendale's dictates were not followed to the letter.



Plate no. XXIII *The Gentleman & Cabinet-Maker's Director*, by Thomas Chippendale. 1762.



EARLY 19TH CENTURY

1800-1840



REBELLION AND EMPIRE

THE TURN OF THE 19TH CENTURY WITNESSED VIOLENT REBELLION AND UNPRECEDENTED SOCIAL CHANGE, USHERING IN A NEW WORLD ORDER.

ON 14 JULY 1789, French peasants stormed the Bastille prison in Paris in a gesture that has become a symbol of the beginning of the French Revolution. This national uprising was to have major international consequences, not only political, but more significantly, social. Over the next decade the *ancien régime* and its absolute monarchy gave way to a new world order.

In January 1793, Louis XVI was executed. The Reign of Terror that followed led to the deaths of around 40,000 people. From 1794, France was ruled by a Directorate of five members, appointed by councils, but in 1797 a young army general, Napoleon Bonaparte, helped the Directorate stage a coup d'état.



The Regency Pavilion, Brighton This elaborate Indian-style palace with domes and minarets, was created for the Prince Regent by John Nash. The building took more than 30 years to complete, and the interior decoration mixes Eastern exoticism with British style. 1826.

EUROPE AT WAR

Although the revolution in France caused great unease in other European countries, it was France, still notionally under Louis XVI, that declared war on the rest of Europe in 1792. The war lasted until 1815 and left many European countries economically exhausted. In conquering other states, France sought to create republics on the French model, thus changing the social order of the continent. Holland, Milan, Genoa, Rome, Naples, and Greece all became republics by 1799.

Britain, meanwhile, remained steadfastly royalist. The Prince of Wales spent lavishly, buying up the spoils of the French Revolution and building exotic palaces. However, the French struck indirectly at the British establishment by helping Irish republicans and by trying to block the route to India through Egypt, a move that had unexpectedly wonderful consequences for the decorative arts, since it inspired a craze for Egyptian design.

Bonaparte became First Consul in 1800 and declared himself Emperor in 1804. He introduced the Civil Code to French law in the same year, having invigorated the French economy by establishing the Bank of France. This prosperity enabled him to combine the luxury of pre-revolutionary France with the grandeur of Imperial Rome and ancient Egypt in the decorative arts. The resulting Empire style became the most pervasive decorative influence of the period.



Tea service by Sèvres This porcelain and gilt tea service was a gift from Emperor Napoleon I to his wife, Josephine. The set is decorated with Classical motifs, and is the epitome of Empire style. 1808.

CHANGE AND RESTORATION

The French empire reached the height of its power around 1810, but it was under strain. French inroads into Spain in 1808 were eroded by a Spanish people supported by the British. Napoleon's Russian campaign in 1812 was disastrous, and there was a revolt the following year against the French in Germany. In 1814, Napoleon abdicated and the monarchy was restored under Louis XVIII. Napoleon mustered one final show of force, but was defeated by the Duke of Wellington at Waterloo and exiled. Europe, however, had changed forever.

Meanwhile, Britain found herself at war with the United States once again; a war that ultimately saw the British burn the White House. By the end of the 18th century, the Americans were very proud of their fledgling nation, and patriotic symbols, including the bald eagle and images of famous Americans, were enthusiastically displayed.

Politics in the 19th century was henceforth dominated by nationalism and liberalism. At the same time, industry and the arts began a process of rapid industrialization and modernization. The modern world was born.

TIMELINE 1790–1840

1791 The *Corporation des Menuisiers-Ébénistes* (Guild of Joiners and Cabinet-Makers) is banned.

1793 Louis XVI of France is executed by guillotine; the Reign of Terror begins.

1797 Napoleon wins the Battle of the Pyramids in

A Pennsylvania Federal walnut tilt-top lamp table This piece has a round top inlaid with an eagle holding an olive branch and arrows.



A Wedgwood jasperware vase and cover The moulded cover is in the shape of a Pharaoh's head and the body is decorated with Egyptian motifs.

Egypt. The French capture Rome.

1799 Napoleon is made First Consul: the Consulate period begins. George Washington dies.

1800 Washington D.C. is declared the



capital of the United States; an ambitious building plan is undertaken, modelled on the palace and gardens of Versailles.

1801 Alexander I is made Tsar of Russia after the execution of Paul I. Architects Percier and Fontaine publish *Recueil des Décorations Intérieures*, including the first known use of the phrase "interior decoration". These drawings set the standard for the Empire style, which spreads throughout Europe.

1803 France and Britain renew war.

The Roman city of Pompeii While Naples was under French rule, excavations at Pompeii were expanded.

France sells Louisiana to the United States to finance the war.

1804 Napoleon crowns himself Emperor of France. Thomas Sheraton publishes the first volume of his *Cabinet Maker*,





The picture gallery at Pavlovsk Palace, Russia The Tsar's summer palace near St. Petersburg was redecorated after a fire in 1803 to the designs of Friedrich Bergenfeldt, possibly the finest bronzier of the age. *Early 19th century.*

A giltwood fauteuil This chair is carved with stylized flowers and volutes and has arm supports in the shape of sphinxes. It stands on straight legs. *c.1810. H:98cm (38 1/2in); W:78cm (30 3/4in). PAR*

Upholsterer and General Artist's Encyclopaedia.

1806 Napoleon defeats the Holy Roman Empire, which had ruled for almost 900 years. Second British occupation of the Cape of Good Hope.

1808 Joseph Bonaparte usurps the Spanish throne. George Smith publishes *A Collection of Designs for Household Furniture and Interior Decoration.*



A Prattware oval plaque The relief is moulded with the head of a Classical maiden, decorated in blue, brown, green, yellow, and ochre.

1811 George III declared mad and the Prince of Wales becomes Regent. The Regency period begins.

1812 The United States declares war on Britain. Napoleon's Russian campaign ends in abject failure.



1814 Napoleon abdicates. Ferdinand VII retakes the Spanish throne: the Ferdinandino period begins in Spanish furniture.

1815 Napoleon is exiled to St. Helena after his defeat at Waterloo.

Cleopatra's needle Made for Thotmes III in 1460 BCE, it was shipped to London in 1878 to commemorate Britain's victory over Napoleon.

Helena after his defeat at Waterloo.

1829 Greece gains independence from the Ottoman Turks.

1834 Victoria crowned Queen in Britain.

French candlesticks These take the form of columns and Corinthian capitals supported on a tripod base.



EMPIRE FURNITURE

A GREAT DEAL OF the furniture produced in Europe, the United States, and South Africa from the time of the French Revolution to around 1830 owes some stylistic allegiance to the French Empire style. The British Regency and German Biedermeier styles (see pp.206 and 216) were both highly idiosyncratic and, although indebted to the Napoleonic manner, were influential in their own right. It is one of the ironies of the period that countries so hostile to Napoleon and French rule, including Britain, Germany, and Russia, adopted a style derived from Paris fashions.

NEW CUSTOMERS

The period is also notable for a subtle shift in market from the aristocratic patrons of pre-revolutionary France to the bourgeoisie. It is sometimes argued that the rise of the middle-class buyer heralded a decline in the quality of furniture, but the discerning eye will appreciate that fine Empire furniture is of an equal quality to that which preceded it. The Industrial Revolution also affected furniture workshops, which, throughout the 19th century were increasingly mechanized. This process was aided by the disbanding of the guild system in France early in the Revolution, freeing cabinet-makers and bronze founders from the restrictive procedures formerly enforced upon them.

EXPANDING THE EMPIRE

The Empire style, which was closely tied to the taste of the Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, was in part disseminated across Europe through members of Napoleon's family, whom he appointed to rule the countries France had conquered, including Spain, Italy, and the Netherlands. However, these were not the only countries to be influenced by the new Empire style, and even Russia, which Napoleon famously failed to conquer, still enthusiastically adopted this fashion.

Empire furniture was a stricter, more austere and truer version of the pre-revolutionary Neoclassical style, which had now been abandoned as too ostentatious for the new political climate. The Empire style favoured sparsely adorned surfaces punctuated only by Neoclassical or revolutionary gilt-bronze motifs and mounts.

The campaigns in Egypt had engendered a scholarly and decorative interest in the land of the Pharaohs, and sphinx heads and other Egyptian motifs, known as *Egyptiennerie*, consequently often appear in furniture design of the time. The Empire style remained the height of fashion until 1815 when the Emperor was finally exiled for good. Thereafter, it became heavier in proportion and freer of decoration such as ormolu mounts.

However, as the Empire style was taken up in various other countries in Europe, it was combined with the local traditions and techniques. In the Netherlands, this often meant a combination with floral marquetry.



Fauteuil and footstool Part of a large suite, these pieces exemplify the French Empire style: the sabre back legs, the sphinx-carved front legs and arms, the lion's paw feet, and the X-form of the stool are all typical features. Attributed to Jacob Frères. c.1800. Fauteuil: H:94cm (37in); W:63.5cm (25in); D:55cm (21½in). PAR

In Italy, where good-quality timber was hard to come by, furniture was frequently painted and gilded, or retained some of the sculptural qualities associated with Italian furniture. In Russia and the United States, British Regency style, which had developed in Britain from the francophile Neoclassical designs of Thomas Sheraton and Thomas Hope, was as important as French Empire, whilst in South Africa, it was diluted to its most basic forms.

MODIFICATION AND REVIVAL

Around 1820, a squatter version of the Empire style began to be combined with a confused historicism. Materials changed, and light-coloured woods (*bois clairs*) became fashionable. This was partly due to the scarcity of mahogany, which the British stopped exporting from their colonies during the Napoleonic wars. This change in fashion varied from country to country. In Britain, by the end of the 1810s, the firm of Bullock and Bridgens led a taste for 17th-century-styled oak furniture, although the full flowering of the Gothic revival was still a decade away. A late Regency style, sometimes referred to as the styles of George IV and William IV, lingered on in vernacular furniture, reinterpreting Regency forms with an increased clumsiness that anticipated Victorian furniture. In Italy, although the occasional Gothic motif appeared, it was largely ignored, while Baroque traditions were revived in Florence. Other countries looked to their own histories for inspiration as the Empire style was adapted and modified to suit national tastes.



Federal mahogany sideboard This is typical of American furniture, which was largely influenced by British style: the shaped back panel, bowed front and tapering legs display the Classical influences of the period. Early 19th century. H:131cm (51½in); W:199cm (78¼in); D:70cm (27¼in). BRU

FURNITURE SHOWROOMS

From the late 18th century, manufacturers began opening showrooms in London from which to sell their wares. Josiah Wedgwood opened some of these warehouses in the 1780s, whilst a German visitor to London in 1803 noted the brilliant displays in the city's shop windows. This brought the latest styles to an ever-wider audience, and enhanced the desirability of fashionable furniture.

This commercialism was aided by fashion magazines, such as Rudolph Ackermann's *The*

Repository of Arts, which was published from 1809. Whilst guiding taste, it also promoted certain shops and suppliers, such as Morgan and Sanders, the patent furniture-makers, which had premises off the Strand.

In Paris, furniture dealers such as Rocheux, the Treattels, and Jean-Henri Eberts had been operating since the 18th century.

"Messrs Morgan & Sanders, Catherine St, Strand" This is from a colour lithograph, Number 8 of Ackermann's *Repository of Arts*. Published on 1 August 1809. AR



A ROYAL FRENCH CENTRE TABLE

Centre tables became increasingly popular in the early 19th century. Designed to stand in the middle of a room, this piece was intended to be seen from all angles. Consequently, the tessellated marquetry top is decorated on all sides, and the top even swivels. Placed over planks, which make up the top, the veneers include alternating petals of maple and mahogany. The outer border is crossbanded with tulipwood and encloses several thuyawood panels “inlaid” with trophies of Science, Painting, Gardening, Architecture, Music, and Navigation.

Technically the use of the word “inlaid” is inaccurate here as the trophies and the thuyawood ground are cut from veneers of equal thickness and pieced together (more like parquetry). In other words, the trophies are not laid into a thick piece of timber but are veneered on top of the secondary carcass of the table top. The pentagonal column and the concave-sided plinth are veneered in burr elm. This local light-coloured wood, like the maple veneers on the top, is typical of the taste for *bois clairs* during the Empire period.

Equally typical of this style are the ormolu mounts on the column and plinth, depicting

winged figures of victory. This choice of subject is of great significance, as the table bears a print label inscribed *Château des Tuileries/1929 and 1047 Salon de la famille du Roi*.

This table was made for Louis XVIII of France by Louis-François-Laurent Puteaux around 1815. The victory figures could, therefore, refer to the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy after the final exile of Napoleon in that year.

An exceptional piece, it is unusual for the period, as most pieces relied on well-figured veneers for decoration rather than parquetry.

A burr-elm and marquetry centre table This piece has a circular swivelling top, with a central geometric-inlaid rosette and broad border. It is raised on a pentagonal column and supported on a concave-sided pentagonal plinth. The table rests on bun feet. Made by Louis-François-Laurent Puteaux. c.1815. H:75.5cm (29½in); Diam:141cm (55½in). PAR

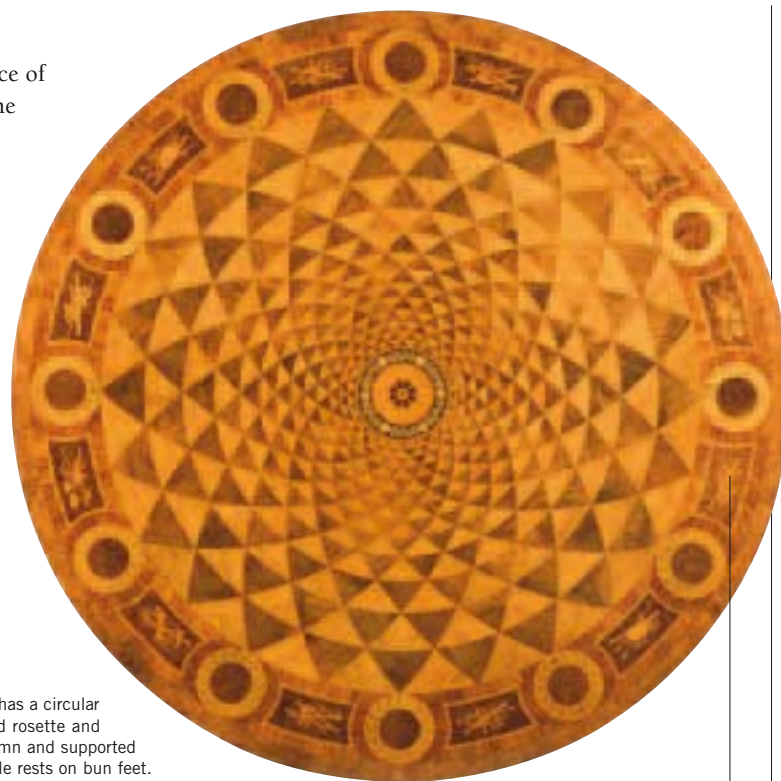


Table top

The trophies of Science, Painting, Gardening, Architecture, Music, and Navigation are divided by green-stained wreaths.



The pentagonal column has chamfered corners.

The column is decorated with winged figures of victory.

The table top is inlaid with hundreds of triangular pieces of veneer carefully pieced together into a radiating pattern.

The plinth is decorated with laurel wreaths cast in gilt-bronze.

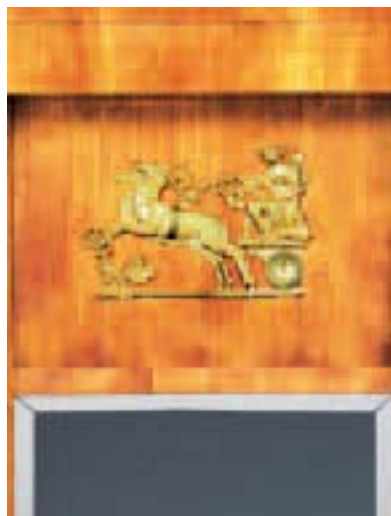
ELEMENTS OF STYLE

The two most influential countries in the early 19th century, France and Britain, looked rigorously – almost archaeologically – to the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Greece, and Rome for stylistic inspiration. From the late 1820s, they also began looking to the historical styles of their own countries, and Gothic (and later) motifs started to appear. Rich and diverse materials, often imported from far afield, combined to give furniture both luxurious comfort and a sense of the exotic.

Detail from a brass-inlaid table top

Exoticism

Luxurious, exotic materials, such as calamander or amboyna, brass, ivory, mother-of-pearl, and tortoiseshell were used as veneers and inlays on furniture. Exotic motifs from China and India appeared on Regency furniture, whilst Empire-styled furniture looked to ancient Egypt and Rome for its influences.



Classical gilt-bronze chariot

Neoclassical motifs

Strict Grecian lines and Classical motifs characterize the decoration of the early 19th century. At times, even the ancient forms of furniture were copied, as in the case of the klismos chair. These motifs often took on a war-like or revolutionary tone, in the case of fasces or trophies of weapons.



Detail from an armchair

Bois clairs

The British stopped the import of mahogany from her colonies during the Napoleonic wars, so continental craftsmen turned, instead, to local, light-coloured veneers, such as bird's-eye maple or walnut. Birch (shown in the example above) was more commonly used in Central Europe than in France.



Serpent motif

Brass fittings

In Britain, the vogue for brass fittings and inlays was revived during the first two decades of the century. The moulded brass rope-twist was fashionable; the serpentine motif is a variation on this, inspired by ancient Egypt. On the Continent, gilt-bronze or ormolu mounts were more popular.



Upholstered seat on a sofa

Textiles

Upholstery became increasingly important as sofas and chairs became more comfortable and windows were more elaborately dressed. Some rooms were even tented to look like a military camp. Popular fabrics included silks, damasks, and velvet in Regency stripes or Neoclassical motifs.

Detail from a *guéridon* top

Specimen marble

Specimen marble tops were imported from Italy at this time, or were bought by gentlemen on the Grand Tour, and then placed on stands made in their home country. Some countries also made use of local marble, such as malachite in Russia, or Derbyshire stones in England.



Detail from an occasional table

Penwork

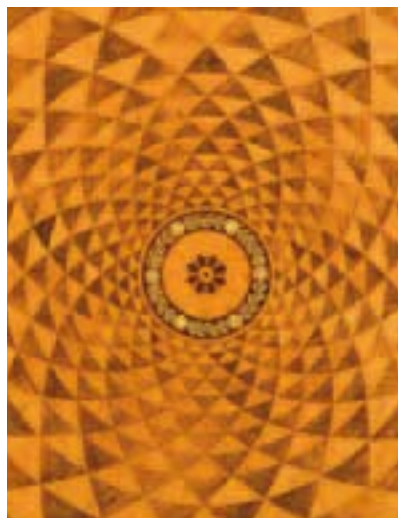
Penwork is a type of decoration japanned in black and white, with the details worked in India ink. Typical of British design, penwork decorated various objects from a tea caddy to an entire cabinet. Designs often incorporated Chinoiserie. Penwork was a popular pastime for ladies.



Ram's head capping

Animal motifs

Animal motifs were popular with both Regency and Empire designers. They often capped pilasters, or casters, and were carved, of gilded softwood or gilt-metal. The swan motif is usually associated with the Empress Josephine, whilst fish motifs appear on a suite of furniture marking Nelson's victories.



Detail of a marquetry table top

Marquetry

Although large expanses of timber were increasingly popular, marquetry remained fashionable. Maggiolini specialized in this technique in Italy, whilst in Britain and France specimen woods were sometimes arranged on a table top in geometric marquetry patterns, almost like specimen marble.



Detail from an Empire chest

Flame veneers

Although luxurious, flame veneers had been characteristic of British 18th-century furniture. An appreciation for richly figured mahogany only entered the French decorative vocabulary in the late 18th century. As an essential feature of the Empire style, this was disseminated across the Continent.



Brass mount

Lion's mask motif

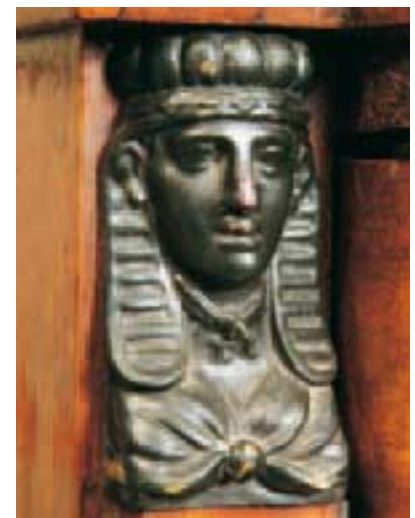
The lion's mask was especially popular in Britain where the motif was used on table friezes, as a chute mount on a side cabinet, or as the capping for a table leg, to which the caster was attached. It could also be made in brass or gilt-metal as a loop handle support – popular with Thomas Hope.



Detail from a Regency cabinet

Gothic arches

From the late 1820s, most European countries experienced a revival of interest in the Gothic style. As a consequence, features such as pointed arches and crockets were sometimes applied to Empire-style furniture. King George IV, in fact, extended Windsor Castle in the Gothic style.



Detail from a bow front chest

Egyptiennerie

Napoleon's campaigns in Egypt inspired a fashion for Egyptian motifs. Furniture on both sides of the channel was covered in sphinx heads, crocodile motifs, lotus leaves, and palmettes. However, designers only used motifs at this time; Egyptian forms were not copied on furniture until the 1920s.

FRANCE: DIRECTOIRE/CONSULAT

FOLLOWING THE REIGN OF TERROR in France, the *Directoire* was established in October 1795. It was followed by Napoleon's first government, the *Consulat*, which he established after a coup d'état in November 1799, appointing himself as First Consul. This survived until the declaration of the Empire in 1804. The styles that take their names from these political arrangements are difficult to tell apart, and represent a transition between the light, aristocratic Louis XVI style and

the proud, austere Empire manner of the early 19th century. However, *Directoire* style or, as it was sometimes known, *le style républicain*, shows the effect of the Revolution on the style of Louis XVI, while the *Consulat* style lays the foundations of the Empire style.

DESIGN INFLUENCES

Directoire style shows the effect of a weakened economy and the position that cabinet-makers found themselves in after the period of the Convention (1792–95). The Revolution had deprived furniture-makers of their traditional patrons; furniture had even

been burnt beneath a Tree of Liberty in front of the celebrated Gobelins factory. The *Corporation des Menuisiers-Ébénistes* (Guild of Joiners and Cabinet-Makers), which had regulated not only standards but the organization of the industry, had also been disbanded in 1791. As a consequence, the *Directoire* style is simplified, smaller in scale than Louis XVI, and less costly, with minimal decoration and usually no marquetry or parquetry.

In the *Consulat* style the design became more confident, reflecting France's pride in the new Republic and the slow return to stability and

prosperity. The style was formal and rectilinear, and often included symbols of the Revolution such as the Phrygian or Liberty cap, bound fasces, arrows, spikes, clasped hands, and wreaths.

PATTERN BOOKS

In 1801, the architects Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine published their *Recueil des Décorations Intérieures*. This became the seminal pattern book of the period, and established them as the chief exponents of the nascent Empire style. The *Recueil* established strict and sober Classicism as the official style of the time: plain mahogany furniture



The out-curved backrest has a bolster cushion for extra comfort.

The stuffed seat is covered in contemporary fabric with small, geometric motifs.

The end support is domed to reflect the bolster at the opposite end.

A gilt-metal mount is set within a tablet.

The récamier is decorated throughout with pierced metal mounts.

DIRECTOIRE RÉCAMIER

The shape of this carved, walnut *récamier*, or day bed, is essentially rectilinear. It has a padded, out-curved backrest, which is flanked on either side by leaf-capped, reeded cornucopiae surmounted by finialed paterae. Below, the

cornucopiae terminate in dramatically carved ram's heads. The *récamier* has a panelled footboard surmounted by a barrel vault, while the padded, drop-in seat is raised on panelled rails. On either side, the panelled rail is centred by a tablet. The whole is raised on turned, leaf-capped feet, terminating in brass casters. c.1800. H:97cm (37in); L:208.5cm (82in). SI

DIRECTOIRE COMMODE

This commode is veneered in rosewood, kingwood, and a number of stained tropical woods. The rectangular case has a veined grey-white marble top with rounded corners above three drawers with geometric filets and inlay, and gilt-bronze mounts. It is supported on short, tapering legs. c.1800. W:130cm (52in). GK



DIRECTOIRE CHIFFONIER

This small table-chiffonier is made from walnut and has two drawers, with an additional shelf below. The rectangular case has brass filets and is supported on fluted legs joined by a shelf and terminating in small, *toupie* feet. c.1800. H:74.5cm (29½in). JR



with bold, antique-inspired gilt-bronze mounts became fashionable. Percier and Fontaine owed much to Jean-Demosthène Dugoure, who had designed strict Neoclassical interiors for both royal and private residences during Louis XVI's reign. Percier and Fontaine had both studied architecture in France and Italy and so had first-hand experience of the ruins of ancient Rome. In the very last years of the 18th century, they oversaw the redecoration of the Music Room and Library of the Empress's house at Malmaison, and supervised the design of the furniture, which was made by Napoleon's favourite furniture-makers,

the Jacob brothers. It was this commission that earned them the role of quasi-court designers.

ANTIQUE MOTIFS

The orators and pamphleteers of the Revolution praised the moral values of the ancient world, which found visual expression in the work of the great revolutionary artist, Jacques-Louis David. This filtered into the decorative vocabulary of the *style à l'antique*.

Consulat furniture is full of Greek and Roman devices that became the stock repertoire of Empire designers. The purity of Classical design, epitomized in the work of Jacob-

Desmaller, became a hallmark of the furniture of the period. As in Britain, this was occasionally combined with Egyptian motifs inspired by Napoleon's campaigns and his victory at the Battle of the Pyramids. This was supplemented by Baron Denon's publication, *Voyage dans la Basse et Haute-Égypte*, in 1802. The archaeologist and engraver (who later became director of the Musée

Napoléon at the Louvre) became the leading authority on antiquity, and had a considerable influence both in France and Britain.

This taste for all things Egyptian commonly manifested itself in sphinx heads, which were often used to top pilasters, terminate armrests, or support console tables, as on a fine, mahogany example supplied to the Elysée Palace.



SECRÉTAIRE À ABBATANT

This *Consulat* *secrétaire à abbatant* is made of walnut and is designed in the Egyptian-revival style. The body of the piece is flanked by Egyptian female masks above tapering pilasters in bronze brasses. The upper section has a grey

marble top above a long drawer. The fall front drops down to reveal a leather-lined writing surface. The lower section consists of three long drawers with lion's mask handles. The *secrétaire* still retains its original bronze mounts. The piece terminates in carved claw feet. *c.1800. H:150cm (60in). CSB*



CONSULAT BERGÈRES

Each of this pair of mahogany and mahogany-veneered *bergères* has an upholstered back, side panels, and seat. The chair backs themselves are slightly reclining. The loose cushioned seats are supported on square-

section, tapering legs, which are surmounted by stylized Egyptian female heads and terminate in outplayed, square-section feet. Originally, the chairs would have been covered in silk and would have formed part of a large, similarly styled suite. *Early 19th century. H:93cm (36½in). ANB*



BUREAU PLAT

The surface of this mahogany desk is faced with gilt-tooled black leather. Below is a long kneehole frieze drawer, flanked by two deeper drawers; all are edged with ebony stringing. At each corner of the frieze is a mount in the form

of a satyr. The table is supported on four octagonal, tapering legs with ormolu collars and ball-shaped sabots. *c.1800. H:76cm (30in); W:165cm (65in); D:86.5cm (34in). PAR*

FRENCH EMPIRE

NAPOLEON CROWNED HIMSELF Emperor in 1804. From this date until his abdication in 1814, and final defeat by Wellington at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, he dominated the European scene. Moreover, his taste, and the Empire style that he cultivated, became omnipresent in Europe.

Already emerging before 1804, this austere style sought to associate Napoleon's Empire with the glories of ancient Egypt and ancient Rome. This aim manifested itself in an almost archaeological interest in Classical motifs, promoted by Percier and Fontaine, whose *Recueil* was

republished in 1812. The light style of furniture that prevailed before the turn of the century was now transformed into a truly imperial idiom in keeping with Napoleon's despotic tendencies.

EMPIRE MOUNTS

Neoclassical influences are evident in the ubiquitous bronze *doré* mounts on Empire furniture: griffons, lions, and sphinxes abound. Martial motifs were especially popular, such as trophies or crossed swords. Some of the best-quality mounts were produced in the

workshop of Pierre Thomire. His mounts appear on furniture by Beneman and Weisweiler. Other Beneman pieces are known to have similar, high-quality appliqué details made by Antoine-André Ravario.

EMPIRE MAKERS

The dissolution of the Guild of Joiners and Cabinet-Makers in 1791 meant that craftsmen could now establish workshops comprising several trades in a single location. The workshops of the *ancien régime* were quick to

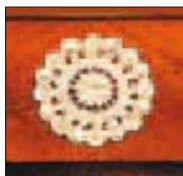
re-open after the Revolution, seeking a wider, often middle-class, clientele, who were sometimes less demanding. Some feared that this might lead to a decline in quality French furniture. However, the finest pieces, made for the Emperor and his circle, reveal the same technical brilliance as items produced in the previous century. Many of the great *ébénistes* had previously worked for Louis XVI, including Bellanger, Beneman, Georges Jacob, Molitor, and Weisweiler. It was also a period of great productivity:

The frieze is decorated with a central gilt-bronze rosette, flanked by palmettes.

The protruding columns have gilt-bronze capitals and bases.



Column base detail



Gilt-bronze rosette

MAHOGANY AND MAHOGANY-VENEERED COMMODE

Beneath the rectangular, grey-fossil marble top is a frieze with one drawer. The commode front is slightly recessed, with three drawers flanked by protruding columns ending in rounded feet.

Early 19th century. H:89.5cm (35½in); W:127cm (50in); D:59cm (23¼in). ANB



The drawers are decorated with carved, gilt-bronze swing handles.

The escutcheons have Neoclassical ormolu mounts.

This box-like, plinth base is typical of Empire commodes.



MAHOGANY SETTEE

This ormolu-mounted settee is made of mahogany and has a rectangular, padded back applied with gilt-bronze mounts of figures, hounds, urns, rosettes, and palmettes, above a padded seat. The scrolled arms have carved, gilt leaf-tips. The settee is raised on short, scroll feet carved with leaves. Early 19th century. W:180cm (72in). S&K



FAUTEUIL DE BUREAU

The mahogany chair has a concave top rail above a pierced, trellis-pattern back. The curved arms are supported on ebonized winged lions. The upholstered seat is supported on a plain seat rail on ring-turned front legs and sabre back legs. c.1800. H:94cm (37in); W:67cm (26½in); D:60cm (23in). PAR

between 1810 and 1811, as much as 17,000 francs was spent on furniture for Imperial residences, and half a million francs went to Georges Jacob-Desmaller alone for furniture made for the Palais des Tuileries. There were 10,000 workers involved with furniture production in Paris during the first decade of the 19th century, making pieces for both the local and export markets. Jacob-Desmaller employed at least 88 workers, some at his Porte Saint-Denis workshop.

Upholstery and drapery sometimes overpowered the Empire room. Ceilings could be tented in strong, usually striped, colours (blues, reds,

greens, and yellows) to echo tented military accommodation. The embroidered patterns on chair upholstery were both large and bold.

NOVEL FORMS

Several novel forms also appeared. The *lit en bateau* was very fashionable, often with scrolled ends, raised on a dais, and draped in fabric. It was similar in form to the *récamier*, or day bed, and the *méridienne*, a type of sofa with scrolled ends, one higher than the other. For middle-class homes, the less expensive *lit droit* was popular; it had a headboard under a triangular pediment. For the first time,

bedrooms were furnished with a Psyche mirror, or Cheval glass. The small, round *guéridon*, or candlestand, served a variety of functions, and sometimes had metal legs, patinated green to simulate ancient metals, possibly set with a porphyry top.

The commode slowly became more functional and occasionally the drawers were set behind doors. Chairs were often supported by Grecian sabre back legs, and had either rectangular or over-scrolled backs. Usually the

arms were supported on human or swan forms. Empress Josephine's dressing room at Fontainebleau probably houses the most famous Empire chairs – those with a curved back *en gondole*.

Finally, there were various furniture forms for writing, from the box-like *secrétaire à abattant* (and its relative the *secrétaire de compiègne*) to the *bureau plat*, which assumed grand and monumental proportions under the Empire.

NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE

FRENCH FURNITURE EXCELLED DURING NAPOLÉON'S ERA DUE TO HIS PATRONAGE AND MILITARY CONQUESTS, WHICH HELPED SPREAD EMPIRE STYLE.

The Empire style was born from a merger of art and political aspirations in a heady, post-Revolution atmosphere of social and economic upheaval. It was largely shaped by Napoleon's powerful personality, and his awareness that formal grandeur had great propaganda value. The new style reflected Napoleon's desire for clean designs that incorporated his preference for masculine and military effects. Popular Empire forms and furnishings include tented beds, camp stools, consoles and the *table de toilette*.

Once Napoleon was crowned Emperor in 1804, he set up a dynamic art and design programme, choosing Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine to be his official architects and decorators. Their famous pattern book, *Recueil de Décorations Intérieures*, gave furniture pride of place and influenced cabinet-making in much of Europe.

Due to Napoleon's patronage, Paris regained its position as the centre for fine cabinet-making, and his military conquests – he installed relatives as rulers in various European countries – helped to spread this art as far as Russia.

Napoleon personally oversaw the establishment of new factories to ensure the highest quality of furniture and bronze production. Through the *Garde-Meuble Impérial*, which was responsible for the furnishings of the Imperial Palaces and oversaw their execution by cabinet-makers and bronze founders, he also refurnished the royal palaces in the



Napoleon Bonaparte

austere, military style that reflected his life in the field. The palaces had been emptied during the Revolution, and some of the contents were auctioned abroad. Bonaparte took over Saint Cloud in 1802, quickly ordering complete suites of furniture. The Palace of Fontainebleau was also redecorated for Pope Pius VII in 1804, and Versailles, St. Germain, and the Elysée Palace, among many others, were all treated to new, Classically-inspired furnishings.

The most famous Napoleonic house was the Château de Malmaison, acquired by his wife, Josephine, in 1799. It was redecorated by Percier and Fontaine, and furnished by the Jacob brothers. The building is covered in the motifs associated with Napoleon: the gilt "N" within laurels, his heraldic device of bees, and the Roman imperial eagle. The Empress Josephine's furniture was often embellished with a swan motif.



ARMCHAIRS "AUX TÊTES DE LION"

These chairs are made of mahogany. Each has a simple, rectilinear back, an upholstered seat and back, and armrests terminating in lion's heads. The padded, upholstered seats are supported on sabre legs, with those at the front

terminating in lion's-paw feet. The chairs are attributed to the maker Jean-Baptiste Demay of Paris. Although lion's masks appear frequently on British furniture of the period, they are a relatively unusual feature on French Empire pieces. 1805–10. H:91cm (35½in); W:58cm (22½in); D:46cm (18½in). GK



TRIC TRAC TABLE

This fine-quality flame-veneered tric trac, or games, table has a removable writing table top with inset brass corners and a baize playing-card surface on the reverse. Each side has one false drawer and one drawer for playing pieces. The table stands on square, tapering legs terminating in brass casters. c.1810. H:71cm (28in); W:112cm (44in); D:56cm (22in). MAL

FRANCE: RESTAURATION

THE *RESTAURATION* STYLE, as its name suggests, refers to the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy from the expulsion and final exile of Napoleon in 1815, until its fall in 1830.

Louis XVIII became King of France in 1815 and was followed by Charles X in 1824, who finally abdicated in 1830 in favour of the exiled Duc d'Orléans, Louis Philippe. It was a period of considerable political unrest, culminating in the revolutions of 1830 and 1848, which forced Louis Philippe to flee to England.

The market for furniture also changed, with growing interest from the middle classes and the increasing

industrialization of furniture-making due to improved tools and the use of steam. Fortuitously, this coincided with the need to furnish apartments, which, for the first time, the middle classes could rent.

CHANGING STYLES

Empire decoration remained the leading style of furniture and many of the cabinet-makers who had worked in the Empire style, such as Jacob-Desmaller, Felix Rémond, and P.A. Bellanger, continued to produce furniture with a great deal of success.

However, Napoleonic motifs and mounts gradually disappeared, and the

Empire style was slowly watered down as severity gave way to comfort. Strict linearity eventually relaxed into the occasional curve in a nostalgia for Rococo style. Overall, forms became heavier and more solid, replacing the Empire love of rectilinear elegance. As elsewhere in Europe, furniture became bulkier. Inlays became more common and mounts gradually became smaller, or disappeared altogether.

STYLE DIFFERENCES

Restauration-style furniture can sometimes be difficult to distinguish from the

simpler, more domestic Empire pieces (see pp.200–01). The surfaces of *Restauration* pieces tend to be even simpler and less decorated than those found on French Empire furniture, which was typically designed to create an opulent effect.



CHARLES X DRESSING TABLE

This dressing table is made of burr elm inlaid with amaranth depicting stylized foliage. The top section has an oval mirror with carved supports in the shape of swans. The table top is made of white marble. The lower section consists of a frieze drawer above two carved consoles. The piece terminates in a shaped platform base and flattened bun feet. 1825–30. H:141cm (30in). BEA



FAUTEUILS AUX DAUPHINS

This set of six mahogany armchairs, made by Pierre-Antoine Bellanger, has straight top rails terminating in carved scrolls. The curved arms are carved with dolphin heads and each chair has a padded, upholstered seat with a plain seat rail and is supported on sabre legs. c.1815. H:91cm (36½in). GK



SECRÉTAIRE À ABATTANT

This flame-veneered mahogany writing cabinet is raised on claw feet and has a moulded cornice above a pair of Gothic-carved, glazed doors, enclosing shelves, above drawers. A frieze drawer fitted for writing is set above cupboard doors flanked by scrolls. c.1820. H:196cm (76¾in); W:107cm (40in); D:60cm (23¾in). PIL



DRESSING TABLE

This is a mahogany dressing table with a swing-frame mirror set above a platform with two small drawers above another drawer. The dressing table stands on C-scroll supports and has a shaped platform base. c.1825. H:178cm (70in); W:68cm (26¾in); D:45cm (17¾in). PIL

BOIS CLAIRS

Restauration furniture was usually made of oak, but it was increasingly veneered in lighter woods, the so-called *bois clairs*. This change in tone began in 1806, when the British blockaded the importation of mahogany to France from its colonies. As a result, local woods became more popular, including walnut, sycamore, ash, elm, yew, plane, beech, and, perhaps most characteristically of all, decorative bird's-eye maple.

Mahogany, being expensive, was reserved for the most lavish interiors, so its use was often an indicator of the high value of a piece of furniture.

Traditionally, the Duchesse de Berry, the daughter-in-law of Charles X, is credited with the introduction of *bois clairs*, but this appears to be an unfounded myth. Mahogany, however, continued to be extensively employed both as a veneer – where the decorative effect of its figure was much exploited – and in the solid.

With the decline in use of mounts, various timbers, particularly ebony, and metals such as brass or pewter, were inlaid instead. However, their treatment was always restrained. Some furniture even included plaques of painted porcelain.

GOTHIC STYLE

Towards the end of the *Restauration* period, the Romantic-revival styles gradually became evident in French furniture design.

These were probably first hinted at in Pierre de La Mésangère's *Collection de meubles et objets de goût*, published between 1802 and 1835 in the *Journal des Dames et des Modes*. Here, La Mésangère adapted the severe, architectural style of Percier and Fontaine to create a simple, domestic style for the middle classes. He also began introducing the motifs that

would dominate the next epoch – Gothic motifs, otherwise known as the Troubadour style.

Unlike the Chinese style, which was completely forgotten in early 19th-century France but played an important role in Britain at the time, the Gothic style did create a small impact. For example, in 1804, the cabinetmaker, Mansion the Younger, suggested a Gothic-style piece for Napoleon.

However, it was not until the late 1820s and 30s, that the pointed arches so typical of the Gothic style started appearing on Empire-style furniture.



The mahogany frieze is unadorned with the mounts typical of the French Empire style.

The scrolled feet show a move away from the strict angular design of the previous epoch.

The scrolled side support is only decorated by mouldings to the edges.



Detail of bolster

The decorative motifs are Neoclassical in style.

MÉRIDIENNE

This mahogany *méridienne* has one end higher than the other, and an elegant, curved, padded back. The frame of the sofa has scrolling sides, a plain frieze, and stands on volute feet. 1820–30. H:88cm (34½in); W:148cm (58½in); D:67cm (26½in). PIL

**CIRCULAR CENTRE TABLE**

This table is made from rosewood inlaid with fruitwood and marquetry. The circular top, and the four frieze drawers below, are raised on a columnar support, which has four splayed legs that terminate in paw feet on brass casters. c.1830. H:77.5cm (30½in); W:121.5cm (47¾in).

**CHARLES X OCCASIONAL TABLE**

The top of this oval rosewood table is inlaid with a panel of Gothic tracery and is bordered with a boxwood rolled moulding. The frieze has a single writing-slide drawer. The table stands on six turned legs joined by a double-baluster stretcher. c.1830. H:71cm (28in); W:84cm (33in); D:48cm (19in). MAL

**MARBLE-TOPPED TABLE**

This table has a black-and-grey-veined Saint Anne marble top set above a plain frieze. The massive columnar support is baluster-shaped although it has been faceted. The three scrolled feet are similarly angular and are square in section. H:71cm (28in); Diam:97cm (38½in). PIL

ITALY

LIKE MANY OTHER European states, the majority of the Italian states and kingdoms followed the lead of Paris. The greatest French-style furniture and interiors were created during the period of Napoleonic patronage, in the first decade of the 19th century. The French Emperor installed his brothers as rulers in Italy: Joseph became King of Naples and Lucian became Prince of Canino. Napoleon's sisters also created significant interiors in the area: Elisa Baciocchi in Lucca and Florence, Pauline Borghese in Rome, and Caroline Murat in Naples. But it was not just aristocratic patrons who commissioned the cabinet-makers: one of the period's characteristics was the emergence of middle-class buyers. This widening of the market coincided with the beginnings of mechanization and the gradual organization of the workshop – a trend that continued throughout the 19th century.

ITALIAN EMPIRE

In some ways, the French Empire style did not suit Italian furniture-makers. Its emphasis on large expanses of high-quality timber was a significant problem in an area where this was difficult to find. Also, its rectilinear forms and strict, sober lines seemed antithetical to a furniture tradition that favoured sculptural qualities. However,

symmetry and balance, with few curves and little ornament apart from Neoclassical gilt-bronze mounts, eventually dominated Italian furniture production. To overcome the problem of poor-quality timber, many pieces were painted – white, pale blue, and eau-de-nil were popular colours. Classical architectural forms were favoured, along with motifs from Imperial Rome, such as trophies of instruments or weapons, fasces (banded rods), laurel wreaths, and antique lamps.

FRENCH IMPORTS

The Grand Duchess of Tuscany (one of Napoleon's sisters) actually brought French *ébénistes* to Florence to establish workshops and impart their skills and techniques to the Italians. Mounts were also imported from France. Consequently, it is almost impossible to differentiate between the French Empire furniture in the Palazzo Pitti in Florence and the Italian variants. The Empire style remained in fashion after 1815, sometimes combined with French *Restauration* styles, but the use of mahogany declined in favour of walnut or lighter-coloured timber.

During this period, Italy was made up of a patchwork of small states and kingdoms, dominated by Austro-Hungary in the north. Regional

diversity was, therefore, far greater than in Britain or France, and much of the furniture produced echoes the traditions for which they are famous: Classical in Rome, Baroque in Florence, and Rococo in Venice. Lombardy produced some of the greatest innovators of the era, particularly Giocondo Albertolli, who trained at the *Accademia di Brera* and who published his influential *Corso elementare d'ornamenti architetttonici* in 1805.

The study of Umberto I This shows a room in the Palazzo Pitti in Florence. Under Elisa Baciocchi, Napoleon's sister and Grand Duchess of Tuscany, several rooms in the palace were redecorated to reflect Paris fashions.



CARVED MIRROR

This carved and gilded mirror frame is decorated with masks of grotesques at the corners. The pediment is richly decorated with baskets overflowing with flowers. c.1800. H:160cm (63in); W:85cm (33½in). BEA



MURANO MIRROR

This mirror has an applied crystal pediment and a frame with C- and S-scrolls at the corners. The oval mirror is surrounded by mirror sections engraved with leaves and divided with moulding. Early 19th century. H:205cm (80¼in).



GILTWOOD SIDE CHAIR

These two Neoclassical giltwood side chairs form part of a set of six Cardinal Fesch chairs; Fesch, a Corsican cardinal, became French ambassador to Rome in 1804. Each chair has a richly carved, domed back depicting a pair of

carved griffins above a stylized serpentine floral carving on a punched ground. The upright back supports are in the form of fluted pilasters with a frieze of running husks. The padded seats have fluted seat rails and are raised on gilded lion's-paw legs. c.1810. H:103cm (44½in); W:56cm (22in); D:46cm (18in). MAL



ARMCHAIR AUX TÊTES DE LION

This mahogany armchair has a gently curved top rail, an X-frame back, and armrests terminating in carved and gilded lions' heads. The X-frame base has gilded paw feet. *c.1810. H:84cm (33in); W:58cm (22½in); D:55cm (21¼in). GK*



The massive table top is veneered with marble.

The frieze is inset with marble panels that match the table top.

Caryatids support the table top.

The table legs are inset with marble panels.



Stop-fluted corner

GILTWOOD AND VERDE ANTICO SIDE TABLE

This rectangular table has a *verde antico* (old green) veneered marble top above a frieze inset with matching marble panels and fluted corners. The square, tapering legs are also inset with marble panels and are surmounted by carved caryatids, whose hands support the table top. *c.1800. H:103cm (40½in); W:192cm (75½in); D:80cm (31¼in).*

MAGGIOLINI

THE MOST FAMOUS NEOCLASSICAL FURNITURE-MAKER OF THE LATE 18TH AND EARLY 19TH CENTURY, MAGGIOLINI'S NAME IS ASSOCIATED WITH A PARTICULAR STYLE OF MARQUETRY.

Giuseppe Maggiolini (1738–1814) made furniture that was austere, boxy, and unpretentious in form, with no carving and few mounts. However, its characteristic pictorial marquetry lent his work a brilliant opulence. Maggiolini used many different types and colours of timber to create his marquetry pictures, shunning stains, artificial colouring, and other tricks to achieve decorative effects. In the tradition of Piranesi and, more recently, the ornamental designer and interior decorator, Giocondo Albertolli, he produced marquetry trophies, still lifes, Chinoiserie and *capricci*. As a result, his name is used to refer to all work of this type, whether produced in his workshop or not.

Maggiolini started his career as a carpenter in a Cistercian monastery, where he established his first workshop in 1771. He later founded a second workshop in Milan, which was inherited by his son, Carlo Francesco, and Cherubino Mezzanzanica. He crafted some of his most brilliant furniture for the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, who was the Governor General of Lombardy, and the King of Poland was also one of his clients.

In keeping with the tastes of his age, Maggiolini's furniture is simple in design and follows late 18th-century French prototypes. Its defining difference is the intricate marquetry; in Italy this had a long tradition stretching back to Renaissance intarsia works.

Louis XVI commode This rectilinear, marble-topped piece, from the studio of Giuseppe Maggiolini in Milan, is made from rosewood and several exotic woods with inlays of Classical figures in medallions and interlacing festoons. The commode has three drawers with bronze mounts and is supported on square, tapering legs. *c.1800. W:122cm (48½in). GK*



Inset of Classical figure

The frieze drawer is inlaid with a row of interlaced festoons.

The top is not made of marble, unlike French commodes.



The complicated marquetry patterns are typical of Maggiolini's work.

The two case drawers are inlaid sans traverse with a symmetrical diagonal pattern centred by a medallion containing Classical figures.

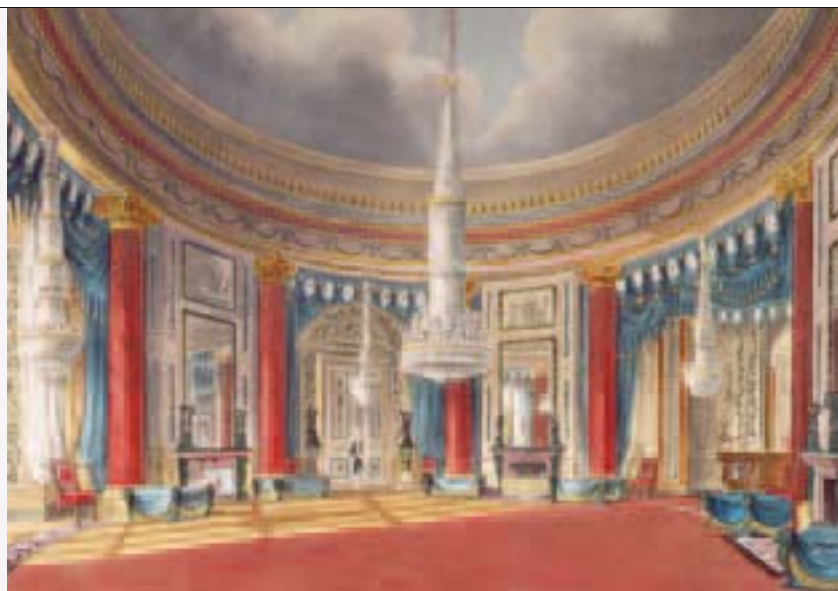
REGENCY BRITAIN

THE REGENCY WAS a clearly defined period in British history. From 1811 to 1820, the Prince of Wales, who later became George IV, ruled instead of his father, who was suffering from porphyria – a form of madness. However, as a furniture style, Regency has come to embrace a wider time frame, from the 1790s to the third decade of the 19th century.

Reflecting the exuberant tastes of the Regent himself, the period begins with his commission of the Neoclassical architect Henry Holland for his London home, Carlton House, in the 1780s, and concludes with the exotic, Oriental confection that is John Nash's

Brighton Pavilion, remodelled for the Prince of Wales between 1815 and 1823. George, the Prince Regent, came to dominate taste in the early 19th century. He and his circle drew on a diverse group of talented architects and artisans, often trained in France, many of whom had worked on Carlton House. These included the architect, Charles Heathcote Tatham, the decorators and cabinet-makers, Morel and Hughes, and the clock-maker, Benjamin Vulliamy.

The Circular Room at Carlton House, London The Prince of Wales's London residence was designed in the finest Regency style. The room is decorated with Neoclassical motifs and furnishings. 1819.

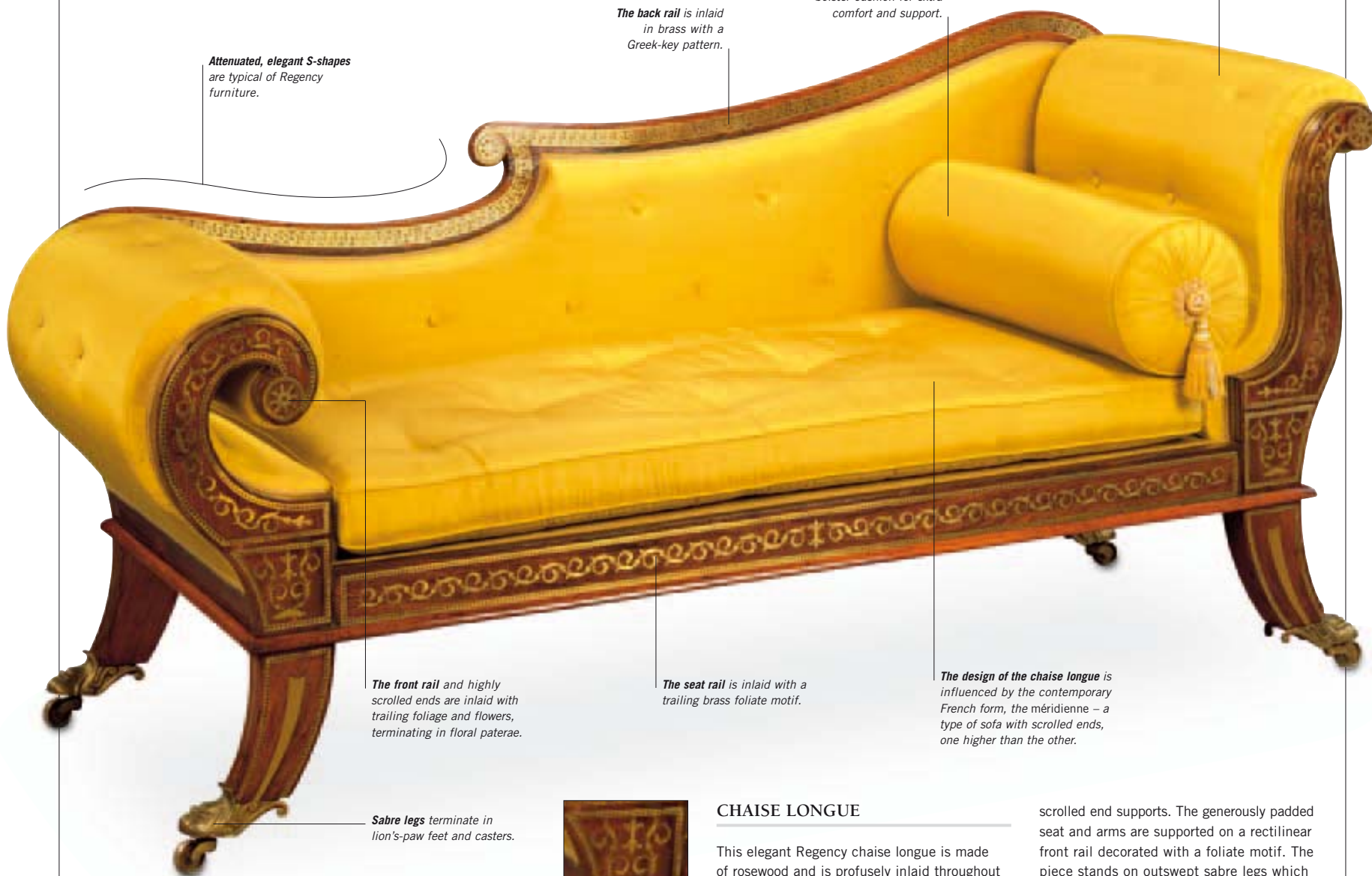


Attenuated, elegant S-shapes are typical of Regency furniture.

The back rail is inlaid in brass with a Greek-key pattern.

The padded seat has an upholstered, tasselled bolster cushion for extra comfort and support.

The upholstery is buttoned, woven silk.



The front rail and highly scrolled ends are inlaid with trailing foliage and flowers, terminating in floral paterae.

The seat rail is inlaid with a trailing brass foliate motif.

The design of the chaise longue is influenced by the contemporary French form, the méridienne – a type of sofa with scrolled ends, one higher than the other.

Sabre legs terminate in lion's-paw feet and casters.



Brass inlay detail

CHAISE LONGUE

This elegant Regency chaise longue is made of rosewood and is profusely inlaid throughout with brass inlay in a foliate design. The frame has a sweeping back rail which is centred with a scrolled hand grip, and has highly decorative

scrolled end supports. The generously padded seat and arms are supported on a rectilinear front rail decorated with a foliate motif. The piece stands on outswept sabre legs which terminate in lion's-paw feet on casters. c.1810. H:86cm (34in); L:183cm (72in); D:71cm (28in). MAL

FURNITURE STYLE

Regency furniture is often symmetrical with clean, rectilinear lines. As such, it was inspired by French Empire furniture and the simple late 18th-century furniture designs of Thomas Sheraton. Large surfaces were often veneered in highly figured rosewood and then decorated with gilt-brass mounts of ancient motifs, such as rosettes, paterae, laurels, and anthemia. The Liverpool cabinet-

maker George Bullock is best known for his use of patterned surfaces; he frequently balanced English timbers, especially oak, with a riot of border patterns featuring stylized flower-heads, lotus leaves, and dot motifs.

The strict Neoclassical taste found its most archaeological expression in the designs of Thomas Hope, which he published in 1807. Not only had he plundered ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome for decorative ideas, but he also attempted to recreate ancient furniture and interiors. Probably the most typical furniture of this type is the rounded klismos chair – first known to have been produced in ancient Greece

– which has back stiles that rise from outswept sabre legs to support an almost semi-circular back.

During this period, a wide variety of side cabinets of diverse outlines came to dominate the wall space in drawing rooms, replacing the use of commodes. In the dining room, a similar role was performed by the popular sideboard and chiffonier.

ECLECTICISM

It would be a mistake, however, to see the Regency as simply a curvaceous and light Neoclassical style. It was characterized by endless variety, a freedom of forms, and an eclectic

ornamental vocabulary. George Smith, who published a pattern book the year after Hope, reinterpreted his cold, academic designs by applying Neoclassical motifs to French Empire models that also included Gothic- and Chinese-inspired furniture. Indeed, exotic forms and materials became the hallmark of Regency taste. Smith popularized Hope's designs in his pattern book, introducing them to a wider public.

Smith inspired impressive-looking furniture, with boldly carved leopard's masks or large lion's-paw feet, which anticipated the slightly heavier furniture of the 1820s and 30s.



SMALL CENTRE TABLE

The surface of this tilt-top table has a painted scene within a laburnum veneer border. It is supported on a rosewood-veneered stem, on a base with scrolled, ribbed feet on brass casters. *Early 19th century. D:86cm (34in). WW*



MAHOGANY STOOL

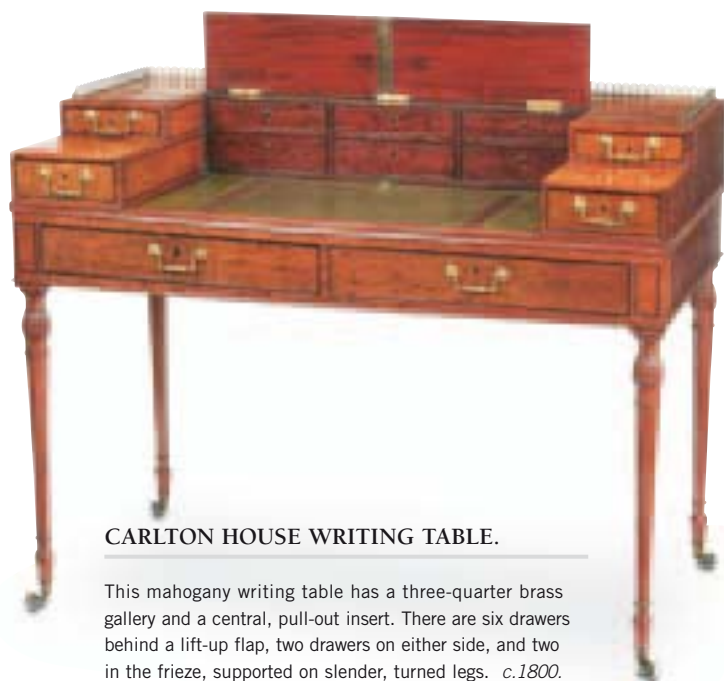
This Regency mahogany stool has a gently shaped rectangular seat with scrolled ends and light carving on the surface. It is supported on an X-frame base with simple, carved decoration and stretchers. *c.1810. W:51cm (20in). DL*



DWARF SIDE CABINET

The rosewood and black-lacquer breakfast cabinet has a mottled grey marble top above a frieze with a central female mask. The central cupboard door is inset with a late 17th-century black-lacquer Japanese panel. The curving

sides have open shelves with mirror backs and pierced brass galleries. The whole stands on bold paw feet. Unlike gilt-bronze mounts in France, those on this cabinet are likely to be gilt-brass. *c.1810. H:84cm (33in); W:202cm (79½in); D:51cm (20in). PAR*



CARLTON HOUSE WRITING TABLE.

This mahogany writing table has a three-quarter brass gallery and a central, pull-out insert. There are six drawers behind a lift-up flap, two drawers on either side, and two in the frieze, supported on slender, turned legs. *c.1800. H:93cm (37in); W:118cm (46½in); D:62cm (24in). NOA*



LIBRARY TABLE

The rectangular top of this rosewood library table is inlaid with a Greek-key border in satinwood and ebony. The frieze has a central pierced ormolu palmette and two drawers. The bowed legs are headed by gilt lion's heads and

terminate in lion's-paw feet, joined by a shaped stretcher. *c.1810. H:74cm (29in); W:113.5cm (44½in); D:71cm (28in). PAR*

BRITISH EXOTICISM

A RICH MIX OF BOTH FOREIGN AND HOME-GROWN INFLUENCES AFFECTED THE DESIGN OF BRITISH FURNITURE DURING THE REGENCY PERIOD.

FROM MOGUL DOMES to Islamic arches, Regency designers drew on a wide variety of exotic sources. When Napoleon invaded Egypt in July 1798, his invasion force included not only soldiers, but artists and poets, botanists, zoologists, and cartographers. The ensuing publication of *Descriptions de l’Egypte* established a vogue in France for all things Egyptian.

ANCIENT EGYPT

The Egyptian craze surfaced in Britain following Nelson’s subsequent defeat of Napoleon in 1798 at the Battle of the Nile. Sphinx heads appeared on the pilasters of bookcases and side cabinets and lotus leaves were carved on chair splats and printed on textiles and wallpaper designs.

Thomas Hope designed furniture based on the engravings of the French Egyptologist, Baron Denon, and Thomas Chippendale the Younger, who had inherited his father’s famous workshop, created a suite of furniture for Stourhead in 1805, resplendent with sphinx masks. These pieces were made in mahogany, but the foreign motifs of the period were often complemented by the use of highly polished, unusual, imported timbers: streaky calamander, dark ebony, or flecked amboyna.

CHINOISERIE REVIVAL

An integral part of the Rococo repertoire in Britain during the mid 18th century, Chinoiserie enjoyed a revival in the early 19th century. The Royal architect,



REGENCY TORCHÈRE STAND
This stand is made of bronzed and gilded wood. Below the top is a guilloche moulded frieze and three gilt supports, with lion masks, joined by cross supports with applied rosettes. The concave base rests on gilt paw feet. H:99cm (39½in). L&T

A CHINESE EXPORT BUREAU
This bureau has a fall front above three drawers, a shaped apron, and is raised on cabriole legs. All the surfaces are black and gilt lacquered with lake scenery and flowers. 19th century. H:93cm (36½in); W:72cm (28½in). DN

A DWARF GOTHIC CABINET
This lacquered cabinet has a crenellated upper section with octagonal corner towers. A deeper base with a pierced quatrefoil gallery sits above a pair of tracery panelled doors flanked by clasping buttresses. The cabinet stands on a plinth base. Early 19th century. H:168cm (67¼in). L&T



THOMAS HOPE

THE MOST CELEBRATED OF ALL THE REGENCY DESIGNERS, THOMAS HOPE ENCAPSULATED THE LOVE OF ANCIENT DECORATIVE MOTIFS THAT INSPIRED THE FURNITURE DESIGN OF THE PERIOD.

Thomas Hope came from a wealthy banking family, but established himself as one of the early 19th century's foremost connoisseurs of furniture and antiquities. He also appears to have designed his own furniture. In 1807, he published a pattern book, *Household Furniture and Interior Decoration*, which showed the interiors, furniture, and individual motifs of his house on Duchess Street in London. The Grecian interiors were archaeological in style and featured both Greco-Roman and Egyptian pieces. Classical X-frame

stools appear in the prints, as do klismos chairs, their large bar-backs decorated with strigules (serpentine flutes) copied from Roman sarcophagi.

Hope is probably best remembered for the masks that appear in his engravings. Inspired by Greek tragic and comic masks, they were repeatedly used on Regency furniture, often as gilt-brass mounts. Some of the furniture from Hope's Surrey mansion, "Deepdene", survives, as does his famous collection of antique marbles in the Lady Lever Art Gallery.

Henry Holland, was profoundly influenced by Sir George Staunton's *An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China in 1797*; and interest in the Far East increased after Napoleon's defeat in 1815, when further British envoys were sent to the new emperor of China, Chia-ch'ing.

Furniture was japanned black with gilt to simulate lacquer – as in the late 17th century – while lacquer cabinets (or lacquer panels reused from early screens) were incorporated into British cabinet work. Oriental bamboo was also echoed in the ring turnings on late Regency chairs. Many pieces of furniture were made out of genuine bamboo, while others were turned and painted to simulate it.

The Prince Regent gave the royal seal of approval to this trend when he furnished several rooms at the Brighton Pavilion with bamboo furniture imported from China. Indeed, this architectural folly became the most famous mixing pot of all the exotic styles of the Regency period.

Western styles of lacquer and bamboo furniture were also imported from Canton. The trade in goods from China to Britain had been established since the early 17th century, but the scale of Chinese imports in the 19th century was unprecedented. As well as imported, Chinoiserie-style furniture, Oriental motifs such as dragons appeared on the crestings of convex mirrors, while latticework and Chinese panelling were applied to chair backs, commode friezes, or brass grills on side cabinets or chiffoniers.

STYLES FROM THE SUBCONTINENT

India, as well as China, influenced the decoration of the Brighton Pavilion. Nash was inspired by William and Thomas Daniell's book, *Oriental Scenery*, and included pierced screens, copied from Indian *jails* (perforated stone screens from Madhya Pradesh), in his designs. The interest in India manifested itself more in the importation of Western-style furniture, than in the application of Indian motifs to British furniture. Exotic ivory-inlaid rosewood furniture and boxes came from Vizagapatam, and ebony chairs of Regency form were shipped from Ceylon.

HISTORICISM

Towards the end of the Regency period, designers and furniture-makers turned away from exoticism and towards their own traditions for inspiration. The Napoleonic wars and their subsequent victories spawned a surge in nationalist feeling. This, along with the historic novels of Walter Scott, inspired designers such as George Bullock and Richard Bridgens to include Elizabethan and Jacobean motifs in furniture for Abbotsford and Aston Hall in the late 1810s and early 1820s. Gothic motifs were always prevalent, particularly as tracery in glazing bars and in panels for cabinet doors. Pointed arches appeared as early as 1807 in the backs of hall chairs published by George Smith. This furniture, often commissioned by a new breed of antiquarian collectors such as William Beckford, was usually made in oak or other native timbers.



Mahogany X-frame chair This has been made according to a Thomas Hope design, which is in the style of the curule chairs of ancient Rome. 1800–10. H:96.5cm (38in); W:59cm (23in); D:49.5cm (19½in). JK



Giltwood and bronzed stool This rectangular stool has ends in the form of griffins with gilt wings and heads. The buttoned cushion is upholstered in green velvet and supported on the griffins' outstretched legs. c.1810. H:71cm (28in); W:106.5cm (42in); D:48cm (19in). PAR



Circular guéridon With its *pietra dura* top, this piece emulates the Empire style of Thomas Hope. It has lion's head motifs and a tripod base with large, gilded, bronze, claw feet. Late 19th century. Diam:109cm (43½in). GK

BRITISH VERNACULAR

THE VERNACULAR FURNITURE of the first 20 years of the 19th century has more in common with the light, elegant furniture of the late 18th century than with high-style furniture in the style of Thomas Hope. It was usually made of mahogany, either solid or used as a veneer, or the newly popular rosewood. Pieces were also constructed of inexpensive timbers, such as beech, and then painted to simulate rosewood or more exotic timbers. Penwork, often the pastime of young ladies, was also used to decorate cheaper woods. Here, once again, the Regency pictorial fascination with surface pattern and large, flat expanses of timber is evident.

It was also during the early 19th century that oak re-emerged as a wood suitable for use in public rooms, and it was popularized by the work of George Bullock. However, oak really came to prominence in the antiquarian interiors of the 1820s and 1830s.

SUBTLE MOTIFS

Although plainer than the classic Regency furniture destined for the Prince Regent's circle, furniture made for middle-class homes or country-house bedrooms still displayed all the inventiveness and exoticism of the period. Subtle lotus-leaf carvings evoked the cultures of the Nile, while Greek-key patterned friezes on tables and bookcases echoed the ancient culture of Athens. Similarly, thin cross-bandings of an exotic timber such as calamander or amboyna were often used on even the humblest furniture. These were contained within boxwood or ebonized stringing, although it was often replaced with ebony on more expensive pieces. Shiny brass was also back in fashion, utilized as inlaid line decoration, cut patterns, or pierced galleries. The cabinet-maker George Oakley is often associated with the use of cut-star motifs in brass.

NEW FORMS

One of the characteristics of the period was the increased variety of furniture types that were made for a range of everyday needs. This is evident in the wide variety of tables designed for specific functions. For example, sofa tables with side flaps, central pedestals, or side standards –

sometimes of Classical lyre form – stood in front of sofas, while library tables, often with leather-inset tops and fixed ends, were designed to be used in libraries. Kidney-shaped, occasional, and worktables (for sewing equipment) were all new types of furniture, as was the nest of tables. Sometimes called *quartetto* tables, these were designed so that three, four, or five tables fitted into one another.

Chiffoniers – a type of side cabinet – were also invented around 1800. Games and dining tables, both Georgian inventions, remained popular and were often designed with central, turned pedestals and reeded, downswept legs.

The so-called Trafalgar chair is probably one of the archetypes of Regency vernacular design (see p.242). Its sinewy line, with sabre legs at the front and back, epitomizes the gracefulness of the era. These chairs usually had a drop-in seat, although some seats were caned.

Caning, with its overtones of the Far East, came back into fashion at this time, and was used both in seats, and the sides and backs of library *bergères*.

The Davenport desk was another new form of this period. It owes its name to a Captain Davenport, who commissioned the design from the firm of Gillows.

GILLOWS STYLE

Vernacular furniture production in England in this period is dominated by Gillows, which started in Lancashire in the 1830s and later opened in London. Famous for high-quality mahogany furniture, often characterized by carefully matched figured veneers, it is also associated with particular motifs. On furniture, it would frequently gadroon the edges or add lobes to the legs. Unlike designers such as Hepplewhite, Gillows never produced a pattern book, but its Estimate Sketch Books provide a valuable index of its evolving style and are preserved in the Westminster City Archives. Unusually for this period, it frequently stamped its furniture (often on the front upper edge of a drawer) with its name. Although this would become more standard practice later in the century, Gillows is known to have left its mark on furniture from the 1790s.



SCOTTISH CHEST OF DRAWERS

This Scottish, bow front chest of drawers is made of mahogany and decorated with boxwood stringing. The piece has a reeded, D-shaped top above a shallow frieze drawer with compartments and a writing slide.

Below the frieze are four long graduated drawers flanked on either side by pollard elm panels. The chest of drawers is raised on tapering, square-section legs with reeded decoration. *Early 19th century. H:111cm (43¾in); W:120cm (47¼in); D:59cm (23¼in). L&T*



GEORGE IV TEA TABLE

This elegant tea table is made of mahogany. The rectangular top has rounded corners and opens out to create a larger surface. The top sits above a flame-veneered frieze with a carved border. The table top is raised

on a baluster column, which is decorated with carved acanthus leaves. The table is supported on four outswept, moulded legs decorated with a carved reeded pattern. The legs terminate in brass, leaf-cased terminals and casters. *Early 19th century. W:92cm (36¼in). DN*



PENWORK SIDE CABINET

This Regency side cabinet has a shaped back panel with a narrow shelf supported on miniature columns, set above the main shelf. A single drawer is raised on turned, column supports and a plinth base. All the surfaces are decorated with penwork. 1810–20. H:125cm (49in); W:81cm (32in); D:45cm (18in). JK



DAVENPORT DESK

The hinged top of this mahogany desk has a gallery to the rear, above a small pen drawer. Below this are four graduated side drawers. The desk front is panelled, with a shaped, crossbanded border. The case stands on carved and moulded bracket feet. c.1810. H:94cm (33in); W:38cm (15in); D:49cm (19in). NOA



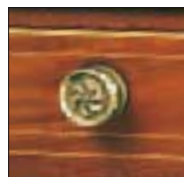
MAHOGANY TALLBOY

This tall chest of drawers, or tallboy, has a domed, panelled cornice above six long drawers. All of the drawers are lined with mahogany and have brass shell ring-handles. The piece stands on sabre legs to the front. Early 19th century. H:224cm (88in); W:126cm (49½in). WW

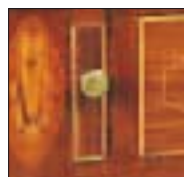


DECORATED BERGÈRE

This armchair has a richly carved and decorated frame, arm supports, and legs. The side, back, and seat panels are caned and have loose cushions. The armrests are padded. The seat is supported on turned and reeded legs with brass casters. c.1810. H:91.5cm (36in). DL



Pressed brass handle



Detail of loper

The shaped gallery is outlined in boxwood stringing.

Quarter-veneered doors are inlaid with an oval panel and foliage in satinwood.

The square, tapering leg is inlaid with boxwood.

BONHEUR-DU-JOUR

This mahogany and marquetry *bonheur-du-jour* has a shaped upper section, two matching veneer cupboard doors, a writing surface, frieze drawer, and tapering legs with spade feet. c.1790. H:103.5cm (41in); W:72cm (28½in); D:47cm (18½in). NOA



The frieze drawer is fitted with small compartments for writing implements.

The loper suggests a baize-lined writing surface.

GEORGE IV AND WILLIAM IV

WHEN GEORGE III died in 1820, his scandalous son, who had been ruling as Regent for nine years, became King George IV. Known for his extravagant tastes, the interiors created during his reign, particularly those at Windsor Castle, are some of the most sumptuous in British history. The reconstruction of the apartments on the east and south sides of the Upper Ward of the Castle between 1824 and

1830 was entrusted to the architect Sir Jeffry Wyattville. The furniture and upholstery was supplied by cabinet-maker Nicholas Morel. These heavily gilded interiors have a French flavour.

On George's death in 1830, his brother became William IV. In contrast to the worldly pursuits of his predecessor, William's reign was dominated by the Reform Act, which brought about parliamentary reform.

However, this period also marked an important period of transition between the Regency and Victorian eras. Much of the furniture was still Neoclassical in style although it was generally heavier than Regency pieces.

TOUS LES LOUIS

The interest in 18th-century French styles dates from the late 1810s, when French furniture became

available after the Revolution.

These pieces, especially those with tortoiseshell and brass brouillework, were collected by, amongst others, the Duke of Wellington and the Prince Regent. Sometimes called the Rococo revival, it was known (incorrectly) at the time as the Louis XIV style. The serpentine lines of Louis XV furniture were re-interpreted on furniture typical of Louis XIV or XVI.

The Elizabeth Saloon at Belvoir Castle, created by Benjamin Dean and Matthew Cotes Wyatt in the 1820s, mixed French Rococo furniture and panelling with modern scrolling and gilded English furniture. This opulent



The back of the sofa is decorated with scrolling acanthus carving.

The arms are decorated with leaf motifs.

Bolster cushions provide additional comfort.

The legs are decorated with foliate carving.



Carved arm detail

WILLIAM IV SOFA

The panelled top rail of this elegant mahogany sofa is flanked by scrolling terminals depicting acanthus leaves. The lower arms of the sofa are upholstered to match the back and seat cushion. Two bolster cushions provide added comfort. The piece has leaf-carved urn terminals and is supported on turned and carved tapering feet with brass caps and casters. *Early 19th century. W:204cm (80¼in). L&T*

LIBRARY TABLE

This burr-oak and ebony-inlaid rectangular George IV library table has a crossbanded top above a frieze with two drawers. The table top is supported on quadruple-baluster end columns linked by a stretcher. Stamped Holden & Co, Liverpool. *Early 19th century. W:122cm (48in); D:61cm (24in). MLL*



WILLIAM IV TRIPOD TABLE

This painted tilt-top table has a rectangular top above a single column, which is supported on a tripod base. There is an armorial design painted on the surface of the table. The piece terminates in bun feet. *c.1835. H:70cm (27½in). DL*

style was particularly appropriate to seat furniture with buttoned, upholstered backs or sides and plump, cabriole legs. Case furniture tended to have rectilinear, classical lines.

The Old French Style was promoted in a series of pattern books from 1825, including publications by John Taylor, Henry Whitaker, and Thomas King. John Weale published reprints of mid 18th-century pattern books by Thomas Chippendale's contemporaries, including Matthias Lock, Thomas Johnson, and Henry Copland, giving rise to the so-called Chippendale revival of the late 1820s and 30s.

LATE REGENCY
 Much of the mahogany furniture of the period was a heavier version of Regency designs, anticipating Victorian solidity. Carving was often Classically inspired and combined with gadrooning and ribbing. Bun feet were used on chests of drawers or plinth supports. Chair and table legs were often turned and ring-turned rather than outsplayed or sabre-form. Bed-posts were similarly designed, sometimes with acanthus carving.



Scallop shell motif



WILLIAM IV MIRROR

This mirror has a rectangular plate within a gilt and silvered wooden frame, surmounted by a laurel wreath and carved with berried laurel. The lower section has a central scallop shell motif with a thistle below, flanked by rocaille, plants and foliage. One of a pair. *c.1830. H:134.5cm (52in); W:80cm (31½in). PAR*



LIBRARY TABLE

This tortoiseshell-veneered library table has a moulded edge above a shaped apron, and is supported on cabriole legs. All of the surfaces are decorated with tortoiseshell and embellished with gilt-metal mounts. *c.1830. H:79cm (31in); W:165cm (64¼in). HL*



WILLIAM IV FOUR-POSTER BED

This elegant mahogany bed has a moulded cornice decorated with a carved frieze and supported on four turned and carved bed posts. At the foot, the posts are reeded and leaf-carved, while at the head of the bed the posts

are plain, enclosing a panelled head board (formerly the foot board). The scalloped pelmet and drapes are made of a floral fabric. *Early 19th century. H:273cm (107½in); L:202cm (79½in). L&T*

GEORGE IV LIBRARY ARMCHAIR

The upholstered tub back of this library armchair has a U-shaped front, which has been faced in mahogany and carved with reeds and roundels. The chair is supported on turned and reeded legs that terminate in brass casters. The chair is one of a pair. *Early 19th century. DN*



GERMANY: EMPIRE

WHEN NAPOLEON BONAPARTE became ruler of Germany in 1806 he brought the Empire style to the region. Germany and Austria retained close stylistic links with France, as many German

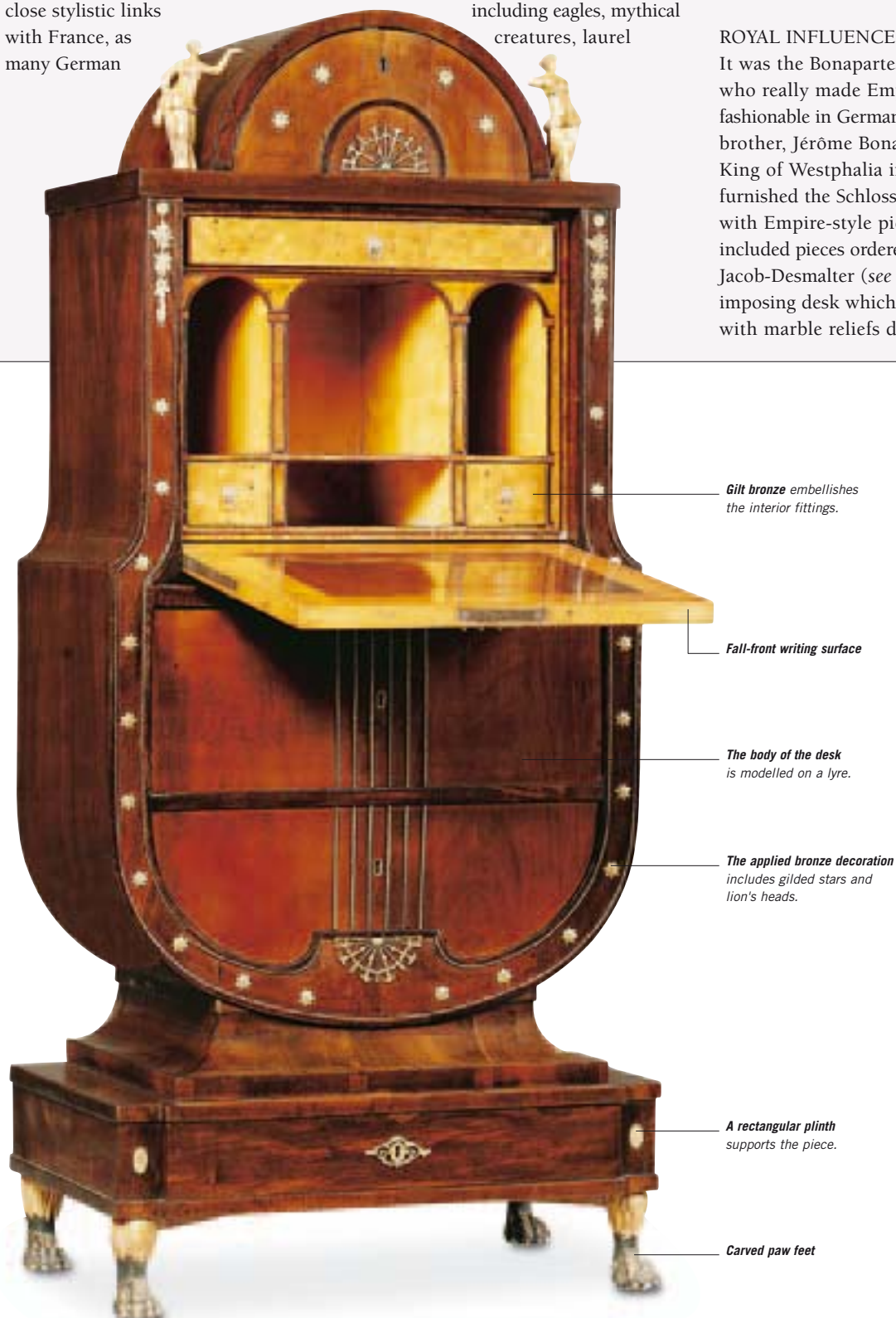
craftsmen trained and worked in Paris, and became familiar with the Empire style. The grand, Classical motifs used in Empire style furniture, including eagles, mythical creatures, laurel

wreaths, and columns, combined with military-style bronze mounts and details, epitomized Napoleon's victories and celebrated his triumphs.

ROYAL INFLUENCES

It was the Bonapartes themselves who really made Empire furniture fashionable in Germany. The Emperor's brother, Jérôme Bonaparte, became King of Westphalia in 1810, and he furnished the Schloss Wilhelmshöhe with Empire-style pieces. These included pieces ordered from Georges Jacob-Desmalter (see p.201), and an imposing desk which was decorated with marble reliefs designed by

Friedrich Wichmann. In 1806, Napoleon had a suite of Empire furniture made for his Residenz at Würzburg, Franconia. These pieces were inspired by the work of French architects Percier and Fontaine, whose work Napoleon favoured. Their 1801 pattern book, *Recueil de décorations intérieurs comprenant tout ce qui a rapport à l'ameublement*, was well received and highly influential in Germany, inspiring local craftsmen to produce their own publications.



Gilt bronze embellishes the interior fittings.

Fall-front writing surface

The body of the desk is modelled on a lyre.

The applied bronze decoration includes gilded stars and lion's heads.

A rectangular plinth supports the piece.

Carved paw feet

VIENNESE SECRÉTAIRE

This exquisite *secrétaire* is made of fruitwood and mahogany. It has a lyre-shaped case which is decorated with partial inlay and gilding. The case has a single arched pediment, flanked on either side by gilded Classical figures. A rectangular, fall-front writing surface opens to reveal a fitted interior with an

arrangement of drawers and arched compartments, luxuriously decorated with gilt bronze. The lower section of the *secrétaire* consists of two graduated drawers which are decorated to give the appearance of the strings of a lyre. The whole piece is raised on a rectangular plinth which is supported on carved paw feet. c.1807. H:139cm (55½in); W:62cm (24¾in); D:41cm (16½in). GK



Gilt bronze lion's head

VIENNESE GUÉRIDON

This mahogany-veneered and partially carved *guéridon* has an overhanging table top with a gilt-edged round frieze below. The three tapering legs are topped by lions' heads and terminate in a tripartite base with paw feet. c.1810. H:102cm (40in); W:44cm (17¼in). BMN



BEECHWOOD CHAIR

This chair has a scrolled back and rose-coloured upholstery on both the back and seat. The chair has tapering front legs and cabriole back legs. The design is attributed to Leo von Klenze and the chair is thought to have come from the Residenz in Munich. c.1818. H:91cm (36½in). NAG



GERMAN INTERPRETATIONS

German furniture was often larger and grander than its French Empire equivalents. Locally-produced pieces tended to have heavy columns and be rigidly symmetrical.

Empire furniture was predominantly a style for the nobility and was soon adopted by the rulers of the monarchies and princedoms that made up the German Confederation after the Vienna Congress in 1815. These rulers showed off their power by building new castles or by lavishly refurbishing existing ones, and the exuberant interiors of the palaces were designed in the Empire style.

Anterooms and throne rooms were furnished with gilded Empire pieces. Gifted court cabinet-makers produced various ensembles with matching sofa tables and console tables based on French designs or adapted from the fashion magazines that were popular at the time. Private rooms were furnished with mahogany pieces ornamented with gilt-bronze mounts. Decorative motifs were influenced by those of ancient Egypt.

Seating furniture was also directly inspired by the designs of the ancient world. The influence of the Greek Klismos chair, for example, can be seen in the chairs designed by Leo von

Klenze, who worked for the Bavarian King Ludwig I in Munich and whose Neoclassical buildings form much of the city of Munich today.

VIENNESE DESIGN

Vienna was a leading centre for the production of furniture. It was here that some of the most inventive designs were developed, including the *lyre-secrétaire*, which often took on unusual shapes. Unlike the designers and craftsmen working in the German

states, Viennese designers favoured the striking contrast of ebonized wood and gilt bronze and created finely cast and chased gilt bronze mounts that equalled the work of French craftsmen.

One of the most gifted Viennese cabinet-makers was Josef Ulrich Danhauser. He ran the first Viennese furniture manufacturers, from 1804 until his death in 1829, and made his name by decorating his furniture with wood paste moulded to look like expensive bronzes.



AUSTRIAN CHERRY WOOD TABLE

This table has a rectangular top with rounded corners, which rests above a single frieze drawer. The piece is raised on sharply tapering, square-section legs. *c.1810. H:77cm (30¼in); W:98.5cm (38¾in); D:65.5cm (25¼in). SLK*



NORTH GERMAN COMMODOE

This rectilinear commode is made from mahogany veneered with maple. It has canted corners and three drawers with ebony stringing. The commode is supported on square, tapering legs. *Early 19th century. H:83cm (32½in); W:112cm (44¼in); D:58cm (22¾in). BMN*

KARL FRIEDRICH SCHINKEL (1781–1841)

THE MOST INFLUENTIAL GERMAN MASTER-BUILDER OF THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY, SCHINKEL WAS ALSO A CITY PLANNER AND ARTIST, AND A FAMOUS FURNITURE DESIGNER.

Karl Friedrich Schinkel was born near Berlin, and originally trained as an architect as one of the first students at the new Berlin *Bauakademie*. He studied under the architect Friedrich Gilly, whose plans for a monument to Frederick the Great of Prussia greatly inspired the young Schinkel.

He travelled to France and Italy, and was influenced by the Classical-style architecture and furnishings he saw. His theory was that new designs should draw on the ancient world for inspiration, rather than slavishly recreate it. On his return to Germany, he worked for the Prussian state, including working as a stage designer for the National Theatre.

One of Schinkel's earliest works was a bed with bedside table, designed for Queen Louise for the Charlottenburg castle in Berlin. His use of light-coloured veneers anticipated the Biedermeier style (see pp.216–17). He was not

afraid to experiment with shape and created pieces designed for specific places within a room. Typical Schinkel designs are for architectural *secrétaires* and comfortable armchairs. His publication *Vorbilder für Fabrikanten und Handwerker* (Role Models for Makers and Craftsmen) in 1835 had a widespread influence. In later years, Schinkel's work drew less on the Neoclassical style, and more on the designs of the Renaissance.

Schinkel armchair This generously upholstered armchair has a curvaceous frame with a high backrest and is decorated with motifs from the ancient world.



Schinkel in Naples This oil painting, by Franz Louis Catel, shows Karl Friedrich Schinkel in Naples in 1824 during his second Italian journey. 1824

GERMANY: BIEDERMEIER

THE TERM “BIEDERMEIER” covers the wide spectrum of simple, Classical, handcrafted, functional furniture made between 1805 and 1850, which was made at the same time as furniture in the Empire style (see p.212). While the nobility furnished their formal rooms with Empire furniture, the more private parts of their houses and mansions were furnished in the Biedermeier style, which was favoured by the wealthy middle classes in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Scandinavia.

Political unrest in the German states in the early 19th century created a general feeling of uncertainty and increasing poverty. As a result, people withdrew into the privacy of their own homes, and the middle classes in particular began to take an increasing interest in furnishings.

MODEST STYLE

Biedermeier furniture typically had straight lines and lacked decorative carvings. Motifs inspired by Classical designs, such as columns, gables, egg and dart, and bead and reel details were all popular.

From about 1830, designs incorporated scrolled forms: chairs often had splayed legs, sofas had arched backs, and moulded cornices were used as ornament for writing cabinets.

POPULAR WOODS

The most fashionable woods for Biedermeier furniture were mahogany, which was imported and, therefore, rather too expensive for this essentially middle-class style, and also less costly local woods such as walnut, cherry,

pear, birch, and ash, combined with dark elm and thuyawood. The grain of the wood was the most important decorative feature. The natural grain of the veneer was emphasized with various pyramidal or fountain-like shapes. Root veneers of acorn, burr-walnut, and elm were also popular because of their varied colour and attractive markings. Darker woods were frequently used as borders around diamond-shaped keyholes, block feet, or cornices.



The cupboard door is decorated with an arched panel.

Pigeonholes provide storage space for letters.

The interior drawers have ivory handles.

The fall front opens to form a writing surface.

The bottom part of the cabinet is made up of three drawers.

WRITING CABINET

Covered entirely in cherry-wood veneer, this impressive writing cabinet has a fall front that opens to reveal a fitted interior. The inner compartment consists of 11 small drawers flanking a central tabernacle. The lower portion

of the cabinet consists of three large drawers set on simple bracket feet. This practical piece embodies the Biedermeier ethos of comfort and convenience and would have been used in the sitting room, which was the focal point of the home. c.1820. H:151cm (60½in); W:104cm (41½in); D:49cm (19½in). KAV



DINING CHAIRS

These chairs are made of solid walnut wood and walnut veneer. The backs are balloon-shaped and have double baluster splats and a shaped top rail. The tapered, upholstered seats are typical of the period and sit above sabre

legs. The chairs are upholstered with a Neoclassical-style striped fabric, probably the original fabric, that is decorated with flowers. 1820–30. H:87.5cm (35in); W:45cm (17¾in); D:46cm (18½in).



SOFA

The frame of this elegant sofa is scroll-shaped with a slightly raised back. The shape takes its inspiration from Classical pieces, and is typical of the simple, geometric design that was favoured by Biedermeier designers. Ornate carvings and

decoration were not part of the Biedermeier style. The sofa is veneered in cherry wood, which has been blackened in places, using a simple inlay of ebony to accent the flat surface of the wood. The upholstered seat is coil-sprung for comfort. c.1825. W:185cm (74in). KAV



RESTRAINED INTERIORS

Biedermeier interiors were modestly furnished, and the emphasis was on practicality and comfort, rather than decoration. The furniture was moderate in size, rounded in shape, comfortable, and homely.

Many pieces had a counterpart – another piece that was similar in size – to balance the furnishing of the room. The *secr taire* with a fall front and the *blender*, which looked like an imitation *secr taire*, but was

A typical Biedermeier living room, c.1820–30

This simple Saxon living room is typical of a modest townhouse of the period. The living room was the social centre of the home, and great care was taken with the arrangement of the furniture.

designed for use as a linen press or wardrobe, were very common styles.

An overall colour scheme was a prominent feature of Biedermeier interiors and frequently light-coloured upholstery, curtains, and woods were chosen to create a homely interior with an integrated sense of design.

The advances in manufacturing that occurred during this period did not have much impact until the second half of the century, so early Biedermeier furniture was visibly hand-made. Upholstery was generally flat and square, made of silk or horsehair, and wooden surfaces were simply planed and polished with oil.

By the mid 19th century, the style was seen as comfortable but rather dowdy, and was given the name *Biedermeier*, a satirical term that meant “the decent common man”. The name was originally used in a German publication for a fictional middle-class character, and was not intended to be particularly flattering.

The style gradually began to decline in popularity and it was only at the beginning of the 20th century that this negative evaluation began to fade, and Biedermeier-style furniture once again became much sought after. This led in turn to the style being widely copied.



WALL MIRROR

This mirror frame is architectural in style and is decorated with cherry veneer. The ebonized columns are edged by gilded bases and capitals, which support a Classical-style cornice and pediment. The central mount shows the goddess Diana. 1820–30. H:170cm (67in); W:71cm (28in). BMN



DINING TABLE

Made in southern Germany, this simple dining table is veneered in cherry wood with a star pattern on the table top. Some of the veneer is blackened to add visual interest. The single pedestal terminates in a tripartite base. c.1830. W:115cm (46in). BMN



WALNUT-VENEERED COMMODE

This commode has a top with an ebonized border above a frieze drawer. A further two recessed drawers are flanked by turned, ebonized columns with gilded Corinthian capitals and feet. The middle drawer is decorated with floral and figural details. 1820–30. H:85cm (33½in). BMN



GLAZED CABINET

This birch-veneered cabinet was made in Berlin and has a stepped pediment with a flat top. The oval glazed door panel is decorated with fine wooden spokes emanating from a central sun motif. At the base of the cabinet there is a single drawer with a lock. c.1820. H:182cm (71½in); W:108cm (42½in); D:54.5cm (21½in). BMN

THE LOW COUNTRIES

THE COUNTRY OF BELGIUM did not formally exist until 1831. Indeed, in October 1797, after the Treaty of Campo Formio, the region was annexed to France. As a result, the furniture produced there in the early 19th century scarcely differs from the French Empire style. Although the province was struggling economically, those with sufficient financial means ordered their furniture directly from Paris. After 1831, as elsewhere, a series of historical revival styles dominated Belgian furniture design.

The situation in the Netherlands was slightly different, partly because of antagonism towards the French occupation. After the Battle of Jena in 1806, Napoleon gave his brother Louis the throne of the Netherlands. As in Italy, the Empire style was introduced directly by the Emperor's family.

INNOVATION

In 1808, the new King ordered that the 17th-century town hall of Amsterdam be refurbished as a Royal residence and had a suite of principal rooms built in the fashionable Empire style. Most of the furniture was supplied to the new French overlords by loyal Dutch craftsmen, including the talented Carel Breytspraak, the son of a German cabinet-maker, who had matriculated to the Amsterdam guild in 1795. His furniture is heavily influenced by the severe Classicism of Percier and Fontaine (see pp.200–01), but demonstrates idiosyncratic touches, such as applied mouldings around drawers or the use of typically

Dutch tapering feet. He also frequently used canted pilasters on case furniture to reduce the sense of bulk. Much of the seating supplied for the new Royal palace was upholstered by Joseph Cuel, including a scrolling day bed commissioned for the bedroom of Queen Hortense.

TRADITION

The Empire style remained popular even after Waterloo, so when King William I re-decorated the State apartments of the palace in The Hague, they were conceived in a Napoleonic style.

One of the most important suppliers to the palace was Nordanus, a local cabinet-maker. In 1818, he provided numerous mahogany pieces, some of which were veneered with floral marquetry. Local motifs, such as the fluted friezes and corner chamfering characteristic of 18th-century Neoclassical Dutch pieces, occur on much Dutch Empire furniture.

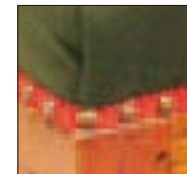
Classical features still persisted in the Low Countries into the second quarter of the 19th century and, as elsewhere in Europe, furniture was frequently made from light woods, particularly maple or burr-walnut, and was often influenced by both British furniture and the German Biedermeier style. Furniture workshops also became increasingly mechanized as the century progressed.

The Salon de Boiserie, Amsterdam Almost all of the painted panelling in this room is decorated with lavishly carved gilding. The room was designed by architects Charles Percier and Pierre Fontaine. SBA



DUTCH DINING CHAIR

This elm dining chair has a panelled top rail of joined construction with tapering sides. The felt upholstered seat has brass studding and is raised on a plain seat rail above turned and tapering legs. Early 19th century. H:85cm (33½in). DN



Brass studs

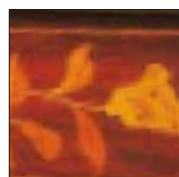


BELGIAN FAUTEUILS

The top rails of these Neoclassical, laminated, black-painted armchairs are decorated in gilt with central twin putti flanking a lyre in husk-decorated borders. The downcurved arms end



in gilt ball finials and are supported by gilt cornucopie headed by leaf tips. The inverted, U-shaped legs of each chair have gilt-metal leaf-tip sabots. Each chair is stamped "Chapuis". Early 19th century. H:89cm (32in). SI



Detail of marquetry

DUTCH CARD TABLE

The folding top of this walnut table has rounded corners and sits above a rectangular panelled frieze. The table top stands on square-section, tapering legs with gilt-metal feet. The table is decorated throughout with floral marquetry typical of the Low Countries. Early 19th century. W:83cm (32¼in). DN





Relief carving

LINEN PRESS

The top section of this mahogany linen press has a pediment crest above a pair of cupboard doors, which open to reveal three shelves and three aligned drawers. The lower section of the press has two short over two long drawers and is raised on rectangular feet. The linen press is relief-carved with Neoclassical motifs. Early 19th century. H:231cm (91in); W:160cm (63in); D:56cm (22in). NA



Escutcheon detail

DUTCH CABINET

This mahogany and rosewood cabinet has two doors crowned by a moulded and shaped cornice with a domed pediment and central cartouche. The lower section has a *bombé* base with three long drawers and claw-and-ball feet. Early 19th century. H:239cm (95½in); W:178cm (71in); D:62cm (24¾in). VH



SCANDINAVIA

THE GREAT BRITISH VICTORIES of Abukir (1798) and Trafalgar (1805), which opened up trade along the North Sea coastline, suggest that sympathy for Britain and British design could be evident in Scandinavian furniture. This was not always the case. Denmark and Sweden's ambivalence to France encouraged the British Prime Minister, Pitt, to destroy the Danish fleet and bombard Copenhagen, creating much animosity towards the British. This affected trade and shipping and left the Danish-Norwegian economy at the point of bankruptcy in 1813.

So, although there are traces of British Neoclassicism in early 19th-century Scandinavian furniture, it was often due either to the residual effect of late 18th-century design, or it had filtered through the influence of north German cabinet-making.

The one positive outcome of these hostilities was that local craftsmen were protected from British competition and were encouraged to develop their own workshops and styles. As in the rest of Europe, the Empire style predominated, although it had marked local characteristics.

DANISH EMPIRE

A traditional preference for simplicity, and the need for frugality as a result of war and financial hardship, gave rise to a version of the prevailing French style called Danish Empire, which was taken up by three of the Scandinavian countries. Although mahogany was favoured, and was used in the larger, wealthier cities, it was difficult to obtain due to war. As a result, the Danish Empire style made use of light local woods, such as alder, maple, ash, and birch, which could be polished to look like satinwood. Mahogany furniture did reappear after 1815, and was generally veneered on pine rather than oak pieces.

Danish furniture was often inlaid with contrasting woods, such as citrus, rather than having ormolu mounts. Inlaid lunettes and arched details were popular, as was the occasional pressed brass or giltwood detail.

One of the most distinctive chairs produced in Denmark was the klismo chair, designed by Nicolai Abilgaard in 1800 and now in the Copenhagen Museum of Decorative Arts. Similar

to a chair later designed by the sculptor Hermann Freund (now in the Fredericksborg Castle), it mimics the ancient Greek original.

The Danish custom of using one room as a combined dining room, drawing room, and study at this time resulted in some unique types of furniture. One of these, the *Chatol*, consisted of a cylinder bureau with a retractable writing slide, surmounted by cupboards for storing cutlery and glassware. Another was a divan, which had cupboards in the sides.

HETSCH STYLE

In Denmark, the Neoclassical style lasted into the 1840s, thanks to the late Empire style popularized by Gustav Friedrich Hetsch. Hetsch had studied with Charles Percier in Paris earlier in the century, returning to Copenhagen to direct the porcelain factory. He was also a designer and his works were often scholarly reproductions of antique prototypes. This style, which favoured the use of carved appliques and mouldings over mounts, is sometimes confusingly called Christian VIII after the Danish king who reigned from 1839 to 1848.

SWEDEN

Sweden was slightly more francophile in its tastes than Denmark, particularly in Court circles. The furniture in the Yellow Room at Rosendal Castle in Stockholm, created for the king in the 1820s, is closer to true French Empire style than any furniture produced in Scandinavia during the early 19th century. It was designed by Lorenz Wilhelm Lundelius, the leading craftsman in Stockholm.

A famous *secrétaire*, made by Johan Petter Berg in 1811, demonstrates how Swedish cabinet-makers absorbed German heaviness, combined it with Empire motifs (such as white marble pilasters), and added the occasional British reference, such as the Sheraton-inspired inlaid shell.

The Hetsch style eventually arrived in Sweden, but it did not become dominant because Neo-Gothic had taken hold there quite early. Indeed, by 1828, there was already a room decorated in the Gothic style in the Royal palace in Stockholm.



BIEDERMEIER LOVE SEAT

This mahogany, Biedermeier-style love seat has a solid, rectangular form with outswept arms. The back and sides of the seat have brass-moulded panels and fan spandrels. The arms have rosette terminals and mahogany

facings. The seat rail has brass mounts and is supported on verdigris brackets, carved in the shape of drapery. The piece terminates in massive gilt and verdigris claw-and-ball front feet. The love seat has an upholstered back, sides, and seat. *Early 19th century. W:139cm (54 3/4in). L&T*



SWEDISH SECÉTAIRE

The tall, flame-veneered case of this Swedish Empire *secrétaire* has tapering sides. The upper section of the case has a fall front positioned beneath a shallow drawer. The lower section consists of three graduated drawers; the bottom

drawer has a cut-away arched shape. The piece is raised on rectangular block feet. This *secrétaire* is made in the style of furniture from towards the end of the period and is a move away from the Empire style. It was possibly made by J.C. Reher. *1841. H:145cm (57 1/2in); W:122cm (48in); D:58cm (22 3/4in). Bk*

**DANISH ARMCHAIR**

The substantial hooped-back, upholstered backrest of this mahogany armchair is raised on curved supports. The upholstered seat has square, tapered legs at the front and sabre legs at the rear. *Early 19th century. H:76cm (30in); W:68.5cm (27in); D:58.5cm (23in). EVE*

**LATE GUSTAVIAN ARMCHAIR**

This Swedish gilt-and-painted armchair has an upholstered seat and back, a curved top rail with lion's head terminals, and carved, down-sweeping arms. The padded seat is supported on a carved seat rail and is raised on turned and fluted legs at the front and sabre legs at the rear. *Early 19th century. Bk*

**LADY'S WORKTABLE**

This late Gustavian Swedish worktable has an oval, galleried top above a single frieze drawer. The table top is supported on tapering legs terminating in brass caps and casters and joined by a shaped cross-stretcher. *Early 19th century. H:77cm (30½in); W:56cm (22in); D:47cm (18½in). Bk*

The table top is made of marble.

The frieze is carved as a concave moulding with foliate paterae carved in high relief.

The winged sphinxes are surmounted by stylized basketwork columns.

The faux marble plinths are decorated with gilt laurel leaves.

The central column is carved with fluting and supported on a circular plinth carved with acanthus leaves.

The faux marble plinth has concave sides.

SWEDISH CENTRE TABLE

This outstanding parcel-gilt centre table has a marble top supported on a carved frieze above a central column carved with spiral fluting. The table corners are mounted on faux-marble plinths surmounted by sphinxes. The whole stands on a concave-sided plinth. *c.1820. H:86.5cm (34in); W:147.5cm (58in); D:71cm (28in). MAL*



RUSSIA

FROM THE 18TH CENTURY, Russia had been turning her attention to the West for cultural inspiration, and this continued in the opening decades of the 19th century. However, unlike elsewhere in Europe, the Empire style did not make inroads through the imposition of a member of Bonaparte's family or through French control.

Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812 had devastated the land, yet the period is marked by a flowering of the arts and economic recovery. Indeed, the Mikhailovsky, Winter, and Yelagin palaces were supplied with important Empire-style suites during the reign of Tsar Alexander I (1801–25).

FOREIGN INFLUENCE

Since the time of Catherine II (r.1762–96), furniture had been imported from Western Europe, particularly France, but also Britain and Germany. Architects, too, were brought over. By the time of Alexander I (r.1801–25), architects such as the Swiss, Thomas de Thomon, and the Italians, Carlo Rossi and Giacomo Antonio Domenico Quarenghi, were introducing the strict Neoclassical style prevalent elsewhere in Europe. They continued the work of Rastrelli, Rinaldi, and the Scot, Charles Cameron, in the urban development of St Petersburg and its outlying palaces.

They provided designs for local craftsmen, which were also taken up by local architects, such as Zacharov.

The furniture for the White Hall of the Mikhailovsky Palace was designed by Rossi and supplied by the Russian Bobkov brothers. Architectural in detail and conception, the pieces epitomized French style and were covered in wreaths, rosettes, and other Empire motifs.

Pavlovsk Palace was rebuilt by the Russian architect, Andrei Voronikhin, after extensive damage during the Napoleonic wars. He was also a consummate designer

of furniture. One particular chair – made for the Tsar's summer residence, Tsarkoye Selo, in 1804 – is often associated with his name. It has sphinx monopodiae legs that rise, uninterrupted, into the winged arm supports. Not only does this chair demonstrate the vogue for Empire furniture and ancient Egyptian motifs, but it anticipates Biedermeier chairs, which conceal the link between the arm and the leg. However, the French style was not the only influence on

The table top is made of veined, white marble.

The plinth frieze is set with a series of ogee arches with quatrefoils within them.

Each arch of the frieze is mounted with acanthus leaf and trefoil details.

The quatrefoil columns have leafy capitals.

The base plinth is decorated with a lattice of quatrefoils.

Lacquered brass borders the base plinth.

GOTHIC SIDE TABLE

This Gothic-style side table is made of silver alloy and has a veined white marble top. The frieze is designed to look like a series of Gothic ogee arches: these are decorated with acanthus leaves and have a trefoil set

within each lunette. The corners of the frieze are embellished with foliate capitals set on slender quatrefoil column stems. The table stands on a rectangular base plinth decorated with an elaborate lattice of quatrefoils. Lacquered brass decoration adds colour to an otherwise austere-looking piece. c.1820. MAL



CENTRE TABLE

This centre table is made of birch. The circular marble top has a raised rim and reeded edge above a chamfered frieze. The table top is raised on a leaf-clasped column with three anthropomorphic legs and paw feet with sunken casters. Early 19th century. D:97cm (38¼in). L&T



NEOCLASSICAL CONSOLE TABLE

This Empire console table has a rectangular marble top above a richly carved frieze with a stylized rosette at each corner. Each of the four legs is a carved monopodia surmounted by a female head. Early 19th century. H:80cm (31½in); W:112cm (44in); D:75cm (29½in). Bk

Russian furniture; England, especially the designs of Thomas Sheraton, also played an important part.

NATIVE TIMBERS

Much fine Russian furniture of this period, with its simplicity, symmetry, and love of *bois clairs*, is difficult to distinguish from Central European pieces. Mahogany was probably imported, but birch came from the forests near Karelia in Finland. Poplar, olive wood, and sandalwood were also fashionable, as were inlays in contrasting stones. The marble was often Russian, such as that from Siberia

or the famous green malachite, which could be cut into such thin veneers that it was used on curved surfaces.

METAL FURNITURE

Timber was frequently gilded and patinated to simulate metal, particularly bronze, but some furniture was also made in metal. A rich tradition of steel furniture was produced by the Arsenal at Tula, and some pieces were made entirely of gilt-bronze. *Guéridons* might be entirely metal, sometimes

with malachite tops and in-curved supports with eagles' heads. One of the most lavish gilt-bronze items was the dressing table supplied to the Mikhailovsky Palace. With a blue smalt (silica glass) table top, the piece is a riot of antique motifs, from sphinxes to cornucopiae.

STYLISTIC DIVERSITY

After the mid 1820s, the Neo-Gothic style became fashionable, along with a plethora of other revivalist styles,

including Rococo. Later, in the second quarter of the 19th century, furniture designers began to look back to Russia's own traditions and folklore for inspiration, designing pieces *à la russe*. These modes were popularized by architects such as A. Staken-Schneider, and the Tour furniture shop. Typical chairs with pierced, rounded backs survive in the dining room at the Arkangelskoe, near Moscow. The design is thought to reflect traditional 17th-century Russian architecture.



MAHOGANY-FRAMED SOFA

This sofa has an ornately scrolled top rail carved with anthemion motifs and downsweped solid arms with scroll-carved terminals. The seat and back are upholstered and are raised on sabre front and rear legs. *Early 19th century. W:212cm (83½in). L&T*



Scroll-carved terminal



CONSOLE DESSERT

This gilt-bronze and brass-mounted mahogany *demi-lune* console dessert has an upper section with three tiers, each with pierced galleries, and a frieze with brass fluted stiles. The columnar supports are joined by a tiered platform stretcher on block feet. *Early 19th century. H:146cm (57½in); 148cm (58½in).*



MAHOGANY ARMCHAIRS

These mahogany chairs have carved top rails and leather-upholstered seats and backs. The armrests and arm supports are formed from one sweeping curve. The tapering seat is supported on a straight seat rail. The chairs are decorated with brass inlay throughout and supported on sabre legs. *c.1815. H:96cm (37½in); W:60cm (23½in); D:53cm (20½in). GK*

EMPIRE ARMCHAIR

This mahogany and ormolu-mounted armchair has a rectangular panelled top rail above a pierced back splat with military motifs. The chair has distinctive sphinx-head monopodia legs, and the wings of the sphinxes form the arm supports. *Early 19th century. Bk*



SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

THE FURNITURE OF THE IBERIAN peninsula during the early 19th century was strongly influenced by prevailing styles in other European countries, mixed with the various tastes, techniques, and regional differences that reflect both Spain and Portugal's cultural backgrounds.

The greatest foreign influence was the French Empire style. Spain was dominated by France for a period following the abdication of Charles IV and Ferdinand VII in 1808, when Napoleon's brother, Joseph Bonaparte, introduced a taste for Empire furniture. A similar Francophile furniture style also developed in Portugal, which had come under French rule the previous year.

FERDINANDINO

However, the true flowering of the Empire style in Spain only occurred after Napoleon's fall. It consequently bears the name Ferdinandino after Ferdinand VII, who reigned from 1814 to 1833. Less sophisticated and clumsier than French pieces, the Spanish variants are usually made of mahogany, with carved gilt decoration instead of gilt-bronze mounts. Classical motifs were preferred, especially figurative devices such as putti or swans. These are epitomized on the typical Gondola chairs, which had legs featuring swans or dolphins. Similarly, the king's desk in the Royal Palace, Madrid, is made of mahogany supported on carved gilt swans.

The Spanish love of walnut, pine, cedar, and olive wood is also evident in pieces with relatively little decoration and few appliques. Overall, like contemporary Portuguese work, the pieces are heavier than true Empire furniture and often of slightly exaggerated proportions. Spanish pieces from the south also feature an occasional motif echoing Spain's exotic Moorish past.

Although France was the predominant cultural dynamo, British, German, and Italian influences are all discernable in Spanish furniture of this period. The presence of British cabinet-makers on the island of Minorca helped to diffuse the principles of British Neoclassical design, while 18th-century ties with Naples generated Italianate forms.

With the accession of Isabella (1833–70), and the development of the so-called Isabellino style, a more romantic trend emerged in Spain, which revived many of its historical furniture types, particularly Baroque. As such, it corresponded to the style of the Second Empire in France.

PORTUGAL

In the opening years of the 19th century, British Neoclassical style reigned supreme in Portugal. The French occupation introduced a ponderous version of the Empire style, but when power returned to General Beresford in 1811, so too did a preference for Regency design. Trafalgar chairs were most popular, while the engravings of Sheraton continued to be influential.

Portuguese furniture production experienced a downturn from this time onwards: with the return of Dom João VI from Brazil, political and social instability was accompanied by general economic decline. This reached its peak with the civil strife under Maria II de Gloria (1826–53).

Portuguese furniture is characterized by the use of South American timbers, particularly those from the Brazilian forests, such as jacaranda and pausanto. These woods are easy to carve and allow sharp details, so carving is more common on Portuguese furniture than its French or British prototypes. However, the furniture produced in Lisbon tends to be far heavier and altogether simpler than the examples that inspired them. Generally, some fine-quality furniture was produced, such as the mahogany and gilt-brass mounted suite supplied for one of the bedrooms at the Royal Palace of Queluz.

From the 1830s, when Maria II's consort, Ferdinand of Sachsen-Coburg-Saalfeld, began building the Peña Palace, the German Biedermeier style became popular.

Portugal's strong colonial ties with India and the Far East ensured that much colonial furniture was also imported, particularly from Goa and the Malabar Coast. Often simplified versions of European styles carved in Eastern hardwoods, they tend to echo 18th-century styles rather than reflect the latest European trends.



PORTUGUESE COLONIAL CABINET

This cabinet-on-stand is made of white metal-mounted hardwood and ebony. It has a moulded, shaped, and arched cornice above two shaped doors with glazed panels,

and two short drawers. The cabriole legs are joined by a wave-shaped cross-stretcher with a central urn finial in the centre. The cabinet terminates in claw-and-ball feet. *Early 19th century. H:222cm (87½in); W:173cm (68in); D:61cm (24in).*

NEOCLASSICAL SIDE CHAIRS

These side chairs are part of a set of four. They have mahogany frames with parcel gilt decoration. A scrolled top rail sits above a rectangular backrest. The seat rails are plain, but mounted with gilt rosettes. The chairs stand on circular, tapered legs. *Early 19th century.*





DINING CHAIRS

These Spanish chairs are made of walnut and form part of a set of ten dining chairs. Each chair is decorated with mask finials. The seat back comprises two vertical rows of turned spindles – the upper row is of widely spaced,

long spindles, and the lower forms a tightly spaced decorative border. The leather seats are attached to the frames with brass studs, and the seat rails are shaped and decorated. The chairs stand on ring-turned, reeded legs, which are joined by an H-stretcher. *Early 19th century.*



MALLORCAN COMMODE

This marquetry commode, one of a pair, is made from mahogany, fruitwood, and rosewood. The rectangular, white marble top rests above a convex frieze drawer, which is inlaid with scrolling leaves, and three drawers, that are

inlaid *sans traverse*. The drawers are flanked by canted scrolled angles, which are also decorated with leaf inlay. At the base of the commode is an inlaid concave-fronted drawer above a banded rim and acanthus-carved feet. *Early 19th century. H:104cm (41in); W:125cm (49½in); D:61.5cm (24¼in).*



Brass lock plates



Brass drawer pulls

The lock plates are made of pierced brass.

Tapered pilasters flank the case.

The drawers are decorated with panelling.

Sabre legs support the commode.

SPANISH COMMODE

This rare commode is veneered all over with mahogany. The piece has a moulded rectangular top above two narrow drawers, which are flanked by fluted pilasters. The two

panelled drawers are carved with geometric, relief patterns, and are flanked with tapering pilasters. The drawer pulls and lock plates are made of brass. The piece stands on elegant, sabre legs. *c.1800. H:104cm (41½in) W:135cm (54in) D:65cm (26in).*

SOUTH AFRICA



THE DISTINCTIVE FURNITURE of the Cape of Good Hope reflected the styles of the two major colonial powers in the area: Britain and the Netherlands.

The various struggles in Europe had also been played out in the colonies, but by 1806 British dominance was assured. In 1820, more British settlers established themselves further up the East coast. The Cape's position at the mid-point of the trading routes between Europe and the Far East also gave rise to influences from such places as Batavia.

A wide range of furniture was made in the Cape both for the metropolitan homes of Cape Town and the famous white-painted and gabled homesteads of the vineyards. Their forms and motifs were often simplified versions of those in Europe. A slight delay is generally considered when dating colonial furniture. The Empire style, omnipresent in Europe, appears to have had little influence in the Cape, except maybe in an increased linearity of design. Its preference for highly polished timber and expensive gilt-bronze mounts did not suit the local traditions, life styles, or materials.

The most recognizable aspect of South African furniture is the use of local timbers, which unlike mahogany, do not tend to take a glass-like polish to their surfaces. Most characteristic is the combined and contrasting use of stinkwood and yellowwood.

COLONIAL CHAIRS

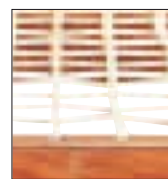
A wide variety of different chairs were made in the early 19th century. Some so-called "Adam" chairs from the early

Painting in oil on wood This shows typical wall decoration, curtains, and furniture styles of the early 19th century. All the furniture, with the exception of the writing bureau, was made according to the prevalent Neoclassical style. 1815. PRA

years of the century survive at Groot Constantia. With their upholstered, oval back-panels, this type is luxurious and rare. Far more common are Sheraton and Neoclassical chairs – the latter with pierced vertical splats, caned or thonged (animal hide strips) seats, and tapering, square-section legs that were sometimes fluted. The Sheraton variety, introduced around 1810, had a wide top rail, generally above a second horizontal bar splat and square seat. Later the front leg was either turned or ring-turned. More provincial chairs, the tulbagh, of simplified box-like form, survived into this period. These shapes are also evident on the rusbank, a Cape type of settee-cum-settle with a chair-back.

TABLES AND CUPBOARDS

D-end dining tables and gateleg tables were also produced during these years. Different timbers were sometimes used for the top, frieze, and legs, which were often tapered and fluted like other chairs of the period. Chests of drawers in the Sheraton style, which were popular in Britain, seem to have been relatively rare in the Cape; South African cabinets tended to favour earlier serpentine lines. However, the monumental armoires, corner-cupboards, and wardrobes, so typical of high-production Cape furniture in the 18th century, seem to have been produced into the early years of the next century.



Thonged seat

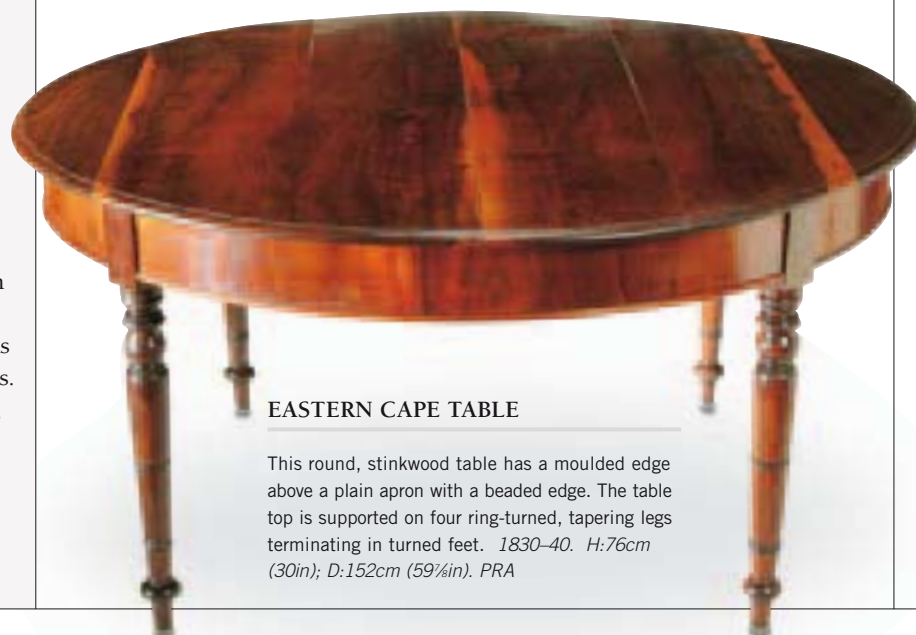
NORTH EASTERN CAPE CHAIR

The top rail of this stinkwood chair is inlaid in yellowwood with simple geometric motifs, which are repeated in the two additional back rails. The chair has simple, carved uprights and similarly carved legs joined by an H-stretcher. One of a pair. 1830–40. H:84cm (33in); W:47cm (18½in); D:40cm (15¾in). PRA

**CAPE OF GOOD HOPE CABINET**

This low cabinet is made from amboyna, stinkwood, and satinwood. It has a rectangular top, shaped at the front above two bowed

doors, divided by a fluted pilaster. The canted corners of the cabinet are also fluted and are raised on claw-and-ball feet. Early 19th century. H:80cm (31½in); W:105cm (41½in); D:62cm (24½in). PRA

**EASTERN CAPE TABLE**

This round, stinkwood table has a moulded edge above a plain apron with a beaded edge. The table top is supported on four ring-turned, tapering legs terminating in turned feet. 1830–40. H:76cm (30in); D:152cm (59½in). PRA



WESTERN CAPE SETTEE

This stinkwood settee has a carved top rail above a seat back comprising a series of evenly spaced pierced panels – ten in total – and gently outswept arms with simple scroll terminals. The settee is supported on tapering, square-section legs joined by H-stretchers. c.1800. H:97cm (38¼in); W:220cm (86½in); D:97cm (38¼in). PRA



SOUTH WESTERN CAPE HALF-MOON TABLES

These two half-moon tables, which can be placed together to make one round table, have table tops and aprons made from yellowwood, and square-section, tapering legs made from the darker stinkwood with yellowwood inlay. The aprons have a simple moulded edge with stinkwood beading. 1810–20. H:74cm (29in). PRA

The rectangular top is simple and moulded.

The two panelled doors have chamfered edges set in a rectangular frame.

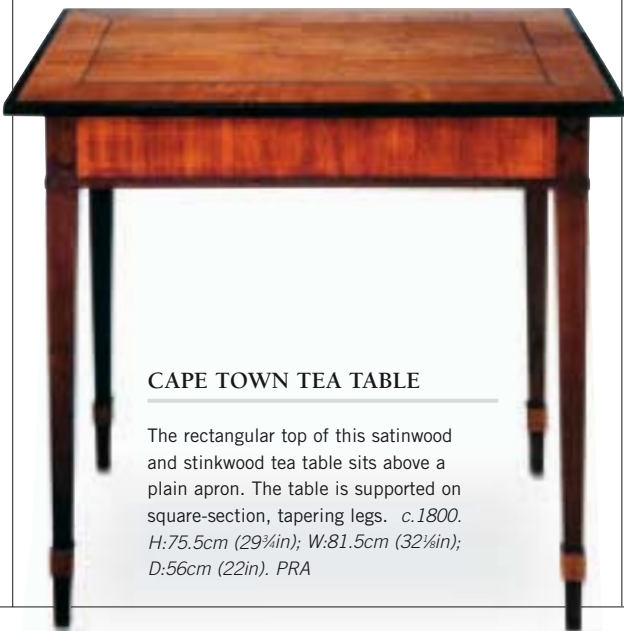
A shaped apron rests above shaped bracket feet.

EASTERN CAPE CUPBOARD

This stinkwood and yellowwood cupboard is of simple rectilinear form and has a moulded rectangular top above two panelled doors. The panels have chamfered edges and are set within an additional, rectangular frame. The case has a shaped apron and stands on shaped, bracket feet. 1820–30. H:169cm (66½in); W:105cm (41½in); D:44cm (17½in). PRA

CAPE TOWN TEA TABLE

The rectangular top of this satinwood and stinkwood tea table sits above a plain apron. The table is supported on square-section, tapering legs. c.1800. H:75.5cm (29¾in); W:81.5cm (32¼in); D:56cm (22in). PRA



UNITED STATES: LATE FEDERAL

FOLLOWING THE WAR of Independence, the victorious Americans embraced the Neoclassical movement and made it their own Federal style. This new style was initially inspired by the work of Robert Adam and the pattern books of Sheraton and Hepplewhite, and slender, delicate furniture was produced.

However, in the later stages of the Federal style, cabinet-makers took fresh influences from the ancient Greek and Roman worlds and used them directly in their work. For example, after 1800, chair designs became heavier and were based closely on the ancient Greek klismos model, with a thick, curved top rail and usually

a carved horizontal slat at the back. Designs also showed the influence of the latest French styles, or English interpretations of them, and the English Regency style.

NEW YORK CRAFTSMEN

At this time, New York became a centre of fine craftsmanship and home to the largest group of cabinet-makers in the country, who started exporting their work to the other states.

One of its best craftsmen was Duncan Phyfe (see p.233), whose name is synonymous with furniture that combines Greek-cross or sabre legs, paw feet, harp and lyre backs,

and caned top rails, with Neoclassical decoration of swags, cornucopia, wheat sheaves, and thunderbolts.

Another of New York's great cabinet-makers was Frenchman Charles-Honoré Lannuier, who worked there from 1803 to 1819. He worked in the French *Directoire* and *Consulat* styles until 1912, when he switched to the new Empire style, often using decorative motifs base on the art and architecture of ancient Greece and Rome. Lannuier's furniture was marked with his stamp and carried a label written in French and English, which promoted his European training and knowledge of Parisian styles. These labels offer a very

useful tool for identifying Lannuier's pieces today, in contrast with Phyfe's furniture, which is very rarely labelled.

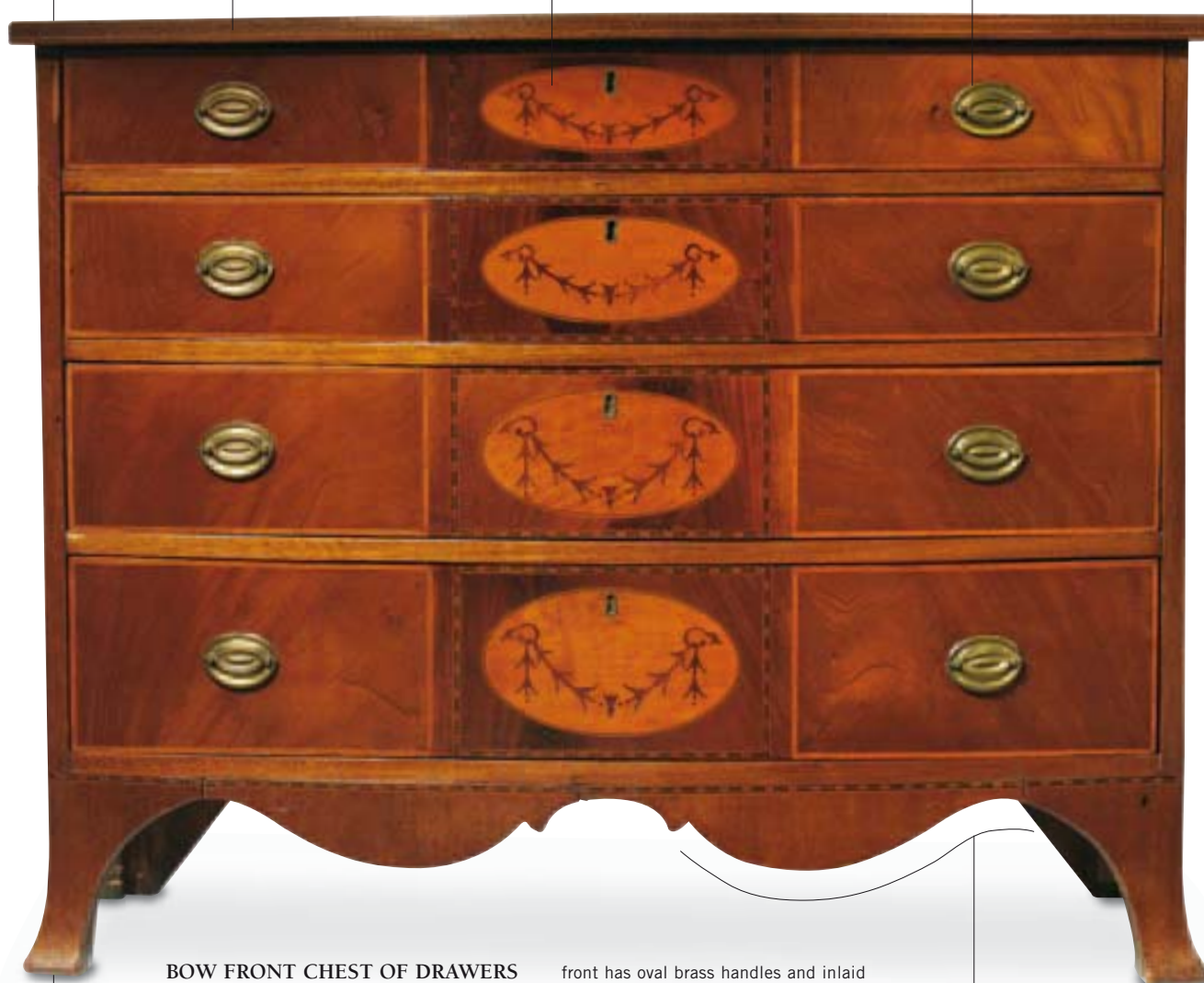
SOFAS AND CHAIRS

Late Federal sofas became more delicate and simple in style than previously, and had straight-topped or curved backs and tapered legs. Greek-style couches were designed to serve as day beds. Painted fancy chairs became highly fashionable and Baltimore was renowned for its

The top of the chest is bow-fronted to match the case.

The oval panels are inlaid with bellflowers.

The handles are oval and made of brass.



BOW FRONT CHEST OF DRAWERS

This chest of drawers is made of mahogany with inlaid decoration, and comes from the southern states of America. It has a bow-shaped top with a line-inlaid edge. The similarly-shaped case consists of four graduated drawers. Each drawer

front has oval brass handles and inlaid decoration giving the impression of three panels. An exotic wood tablet at the centre of each drawer depicts a swag of bellflowers. The base of the case has a shaped apron, which continues into French feet. c.1810. W:105.5cm (41½in). FRE

The shaped apron curves continuously into the splayed French feet.



MAHOGANY PEMBROKE TABLE

This Baltimore "Hepplewhite" inlaid table has an oval top and hinged leaves above plinths with fan-inlaid corners. The square tapering legs have a rare five-petal bellflower pendant. H:73cm (28¾in); W:91cm (35¾in).



"SHERATON" WORK TABLE

This inlaid, figured mahogany and birch veneer table has a swelled, rectangular top with round outset corners above two drawers. The ring-turned, tapering, reeded legs have ring cuffs, on brass casters. c.1807. H:71cm (28in).

very elaborate examples of these. Chairs and sofas were often covered with silk or satin decorated with Neoclassical patterns, such as feathers, baskets of flowers, animals, or Classical figures.

TABLES

Drop-leaf, tilt-top, and Pembroke tables continued to be made, as were consoles, side and tea tables, work, card, and centre tables, and stands of varying sizes.

Early Federal sideboards were too long for most American houses – some were up to 210cm (7ft) long – but by 1820, many smaller, simpler versions had been devised.

DESKS AND DRESSING TABLES

Tambour desks, an early version of the roll-top desk, first appeared in America at the beginning of the 19th century. The tambour was made up of a series of wooden rods glued to a length of fabric and sometimes had an inlaid motif.

As glass became more widely available, some *secrétaires* and small desks were made with an upper section with glazed doors. The panes were separated by thin wooden strips, often arranged in complex patterns.

By the late Federal era, dressing tables had become small and rectangular in shape, often with a knee hole. The plain top could be left flat or mounted with a small case of drawers. Urban examples were often painted and gilded or decorated with fabric swags. Rural tables were simpler in design and made from inexpensive wood, which was painted to imitate woods such as mahogany.

STORAGE FURNITURE

Storage furniture ranged from linen presses – some of the finest of which were made at this time – to chests of drawers, chests-on-chests, and chests-on-frames. These last three tended to be flat-topped with bracket feet or turned Sheraton-style legs. They were often decorated with veneers or inlays. Most chests of drawers were made with straight fronts and the drawers were set with oval or rectangular mounts and bail handles. However, pieces were made also with serpentine fronts and these examples are often said to represent a high point in American furniture-production.



FEDERAL SOFA

This mahogany-framed sofa has a gentle serpentine back and partially upholstered arms. The scrolled wooden armrests continue to vasiform and ring-turned posts, which then become vasiform-shaped, reeded front

legs, terminating in turned feet. Two further front legs are in the same style. The three rear legs are plain and splayed. The sofa is upholstered in yellow scalamandre fabric. *Early 19th century. L:202.5cm (81in). FRE*

HEPPLEWHITE'S PATTERN BOOK

THIS GUIDE WAS ONE OF SEVERAL PATTERN BOOKS WHICH HELPED TO TRANSMIT EUROPEAN STYLES TO THE UNITED STATES.

George Hepplewhite's *Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide* is one of the best known of the 18th-century British furniture pattern books.

Published by his widow in 1788, two years after his death, its Neoclassical furniture designs had a great influence on American Federal furniture.

They appealed to members of the American upper and middle classes who were looking for new forms to reflect the new politics of the young republic.

Hepplewhite's ideas had been influenced by the work of Robert Adam and are noted for their grace and elegance. They can be seen in particular in the designs for Federal chairs, cabinets, sideboards, sofas, and tables.



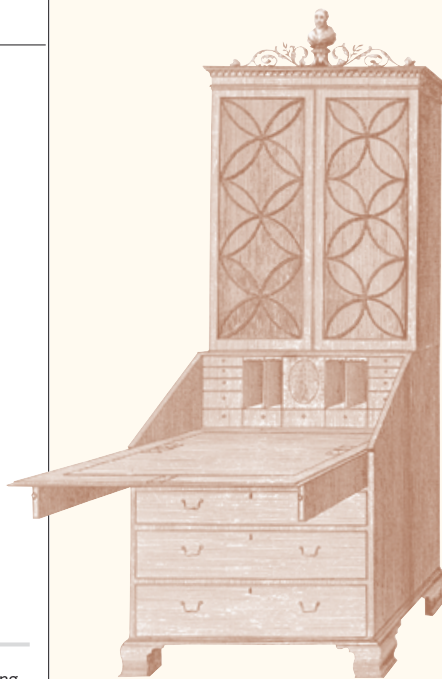
FEDERAL ARMCHAIR

This mahogany armchair has gently curving arms that continue to turned supports. The upholstered seat is held in place with brass studs. The chair has tapered front legs and splayed back legs. *Early 19th century.*



CARVED MAHOGANY CHAIR

The back of this chair has flame-birch veneering on the arched top rail and urn-shaped splat, which is flanked on either side by reeded supports. The front legs are tapered and are joined by box stretchers.



Desk and bookcase Plate 40 from George Hepplewhite's *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide*, 3rd Ed, 1794, Dover Publications, New York.



An inlaid butler's desk and bookcase This has a scalloped cornice beneath urn finials. The trefoil-arch doors and shelves are above a desk with a butler's drawer, a further three drawers, a shaped skirt, and French feet. *H:257.5cm (103in). NA*

FEDERAL INTERIOR

FOLLOWING AMERICA'S DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE IN 1776, THERE WAS A BOOM IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF BOTH GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS AND GRAND PRIVATE HOUSES.



Maple and ebony armchair This chair has a curved, flat top rail above a pierced back rest and scrolled arms. The cane seat is covered with a fixed cushion. The chair rests on ebonized, ring-turned legs. c.1820. H:81cm (32¼in). FRE

THE NEWLY FORGED American state saw itself as the scion of the Classical world, heir to the traditions and prestige of Republican Rome. The Neoclassical interior style of Robert Adam was enthusiastically adopted by American architects and designers, in spite of its English provenance.

Wealthy merchants and planters in Charleston, South Carolina built impressive harbour-front houses. One such figure was Nathaniel Russell, whose residence at 51 Meeting Street, completed in 1808, was one of the most elegant in the town. The decorative scheme included shades of grey and a rich oxblood red, lightened with gilt embellishments. The architraves, mantles, and wainscoting boards were painted in bold monochrome, and the wall hangings included a plain, salmon paper with a lambs-tongue border first used in ancient Greece. The most striking features are the wide, unsupported staircase that sweeps up in a graceful curve to the second and third floors, and the oval drawing room, shown here. This room was the scene of Alicia Russell's grand wedding ball in 1809. Demonstrations of wealth and confidence are as much a hallmark of the Federal style as the American eagle. Homemakers employed a variety of colour schemes, although the walls were generally decorated in light colours, especially pastel shades.

NEOCLASSICAL STYLE

The basic structure of the Federal room closely follows the Neoclassical Georgian model; the overriding impression is one of pleasing symmetry, with the doorways placed centrally and flanked by equal numbers of windows. Public, showcase rooms often occupied unorthodox floor spaces, including hexagonal and circular chambers.

Dentil mouldings or balustrades tempered the sparse Classical lines. Banisters and rails were often constructed from iron, as wood did not perform well when cut to the requisite lean proportions.

Neoclassical swags, urns, and medallions were applied to cornices and friezes on interior walls. Rather than being carved out of stone, these decorative motifs were hewn from wood or, more commonly, were moulded from composition ornament, or "compo". Compo was a mixture of animal glue, resin and chalk that was malleable when warm but hardened to the consistency of plaster when cool. It was most famously used to create the central ceiling rosette in the dining room at Mount Vernon, George Washington's Virginia home.



Lyre-base card table This hinged-top mahogany table is decorated with brass-outlined panels and brass foliage. The pedestal has ormolu details and the legs are faced with ebony. 36in (91.5cm). NA





AMERICAN EMPIRE

THE EMPIRE STYLE, which originated in France around 1800, became popular in the United States about 15 years later. This was the start of the Industrial Revolution. Transport, education, health, and communications were improving rapidly and many people were moving west in search of prosperity and new opportunities.

As industrialization increased, Empire-style furniture was made to suit a variety of budgets – it could be elegant and costly for the wealthy, or plain and affordable for the middle classes. This meant that furniture in one style could be made to suit people of all classes. The style proved to be popular and country pieces were still

being made at the end of the century, when urban cabinet-makers had moved on to newer styles.

CHANGE OF SHAPE

The new style of furniture took the early delicate Federal form and made it huge, bulky, and ornate. Like Federal furniture, Empire pieces were inspired by ancient Greek and Roman forms, but used them more literally while still

making furniture suited to life in the 19th century.

Designs started to emphasize the outline rather than the details of a piece, and decoration such as undulating scrolls carved in high relief was applied to heavy, geometric furniture. Cabinet-makers stopped using inlays and started using stencilling, gilded-brass or bronze mounts, or as little decoration as possible.

The cornice is moulded.

The side columns are reeded and fluted.



The cuffs and feet are made of brass.

The panelled doors enclose shelves.

CLASSICAL ARMOIRE

This impressive, Classical-style armoire is made of mahogany. The piece has a moulded architectural-style cornice, which is set above a rectangular case. Two shaped doors, decorated with geometric panelling, open

to reveal an interior fitted with shelves. The case is flanked by elegant, fluted, engaged columns and is supported on short, turned legs with brass cuffs and feet. The piece was probably made in the New York area. 1800–20. H:228.6cm (90in); W:157.4cm (62in); D:60.9cm (24in).



DUNCAN PHYFE SIDE CHAIR

This mahogany and ebonized Neoclassical chair has a curved and rolled top rail above *demi-lune* splats, flanked by reeded stiles. The upholstered seat is raised on curved legs, the front ones terminating in claw feet. 1820.



MAHOGANY BREAKFAST TABLE

This table has a top with shaped, hinged leaves above a single frieze drawer and is raised on a leaf-carved baluster-shaped base and platform. The downswept legs end in brass paw caps and casters. c.1815. H:70cm (28in). FRE



CHEST OF DRAWERS

This chest of drawers is made of flame-mahogany, and most of the decoration is provided by the colour and patina of the wood. The chest has a rectangular top with a moulded edge set above a blind drawer. Below this are

three long, graduated drawers, each of which has two gilt-brass ring pulls in the shape of lion's heads. The drawers are flanked on either side by tapering columns carved with lotus motifs. The columns rest on a plinth base, giving the piece an architectural, Neoclassical feel. W:120cm (48in). S&K

KEY DESIGNERS AND INFLUENCES

The new style first flourished in New York, inspired by British and French publications, and in particular by the work of the English designer Thomas Hope. By the 1840s, American designers were making their own design statements and John Hall of Baltimore published the country's first design book, *The Cabinet Maker's Assistant*, featuring Empire designs.

The cabinet-maker who was pivotal in establishing the style in the United States was the British-born Duncan Phyfe (*see box*). Another early exponent was Charles Honoré Lannuier (*see pp.228–229*). His

exuberant designs for tables and chairs, often with gilded caryatids, were made at his workshop in New York. However, the more flamboyant Empire furniture was generally made in both Boston and Philadelphia.

SHAPES AND DECORATIONS

Empire furniture usually has sabre or curule – X-shaped – legs with large scroll, ball, or carved animal feet. Chairs often had solid vase-shaped splats. Some table tops were made of marble, while others had heavy pedestal bases.

Typical Empire furniture included klismos chairs, scroll-end sofas and

settees, ornamental centre tables, mirror-backed pier tables, sleigh and canopy beds, and day beds, such as *récamiers* and *méridiennes*. Cabinet-makers also continued to produce sideboards, dressing tables, and pedestal desks. Chests of drawers were now made with splashboards.

Roman symbols were especially important in the decoration of Empire furniture and included cornucopia, anthemion and acanthus leaves, eagles, dolphins, swans, lyres, and harps. Napoleon's campaign in Egypt inspired the use of scarabs, lotus flowers, and hieroglyphs. Doors

and drawers were furnished with lion's head mounts, and brass, pressed glass, or turned wooden knobs.

MATERIALS

Rosewood and richly grained mahogany or walnut were popular woods, but maple and cherry were also used. Vernacular furniture was made from local woods including pine and birch. The woods were also used for veneers.

Chairs and sofas were upholstered in silk damask with bold, large-scale Classical designs or stylized flowers, striped silk, or plain silk or velvet.

DUNCAN PHYFE

DUNCAN PHYFE'S FASHIONABLE AND HIGH-QUALITY FURNITURE HELPED TO ESTABLISH HIM AS ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL AND PROLIFIC CABINET-MAKERS IN THE UNITED STATES.

By the end of his life, Duncan Phyfe (1768–1854) had helped to transform American cabinet-making. His furniture was based on a series of European styles, from Sheraton and Regency through to Empire, and he produced many of these styles simultaneously.

Born near Loch Fannich, Ross and Cromarty, in Scotland, Phyfe emigrated to the United States as a teenager and was apprenticed to a cabinet-maker in Albany, New York. In 1792, he moved to New York City and within three years had opened his own store. By 1845, he was one of the richest men in the city.

Such was the demand for his work that he went on to employ 100 carvers and cabinet-makers, each undertaking a specific task such as turning legs or carving. They produced a wide range of furniture, especially large and ambitious pieces for dining rooms, using the best mahogany and featuring elegant proportions and fine details, particularly in the carving. Phyfe's customers were the wealthy of New York and beyond, including the multi-millionaire fur trader and landowner, John Jacob Astor.

Empire sofa This sofa has a carved top rail and arms, and a caned seat, back, and arms. The reeded, crossed, curved legs end in casters hidden in brass paws. 1815–1825. L:208cm (82in). AME

Phyfe has now given his name to the generic furniture made in the Late Federal and Empire styles, which featured Neoclassical motifs from ancient Greece and Rome. However, as he rarely attached a trade label to his furniture, few Phyfe-style pieces can be conclusively linked to the designer himself.



Phyfe's shop and warehouse This watercolour, black ink, and gouache picture depicts Duncan Phyfe's shop and warehouse in New York City. The artist is unknown. c.1816



MARBLE TOP PIER TABLE

This table is carved and stencil-decorated. The top rests on a cyma-curved apron and frontal columnar supports with gilded Corinthian capitals and ringed bases on ribbed feet. The mirrored back is flanked by flat pilasters. The table has a shaped medial shelf. c.1835. W:102.5cm (41in). NA



“SHERATON” CARD TABLE

This carved mahogany card table has a serpentine hinged top over a similarly shaped apron, which is decorated with a carved basket of fruit. The table is raised on turned and reeded, tapering legs, which are decorated with floral and foliate carving. 1830. L:94cm (37in). NA

EUROPEAN INFLUENCES

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN American, British, and French furniture in the early 19th century is complex and there is often no easy way to distinguish the origins of pieces. Although the United States was stylistically dependent on the Old World, it still produced some highly original makers, who adapted the Regency and Empire styles in much the same way as European countries diluted the French Napoleonic style. However, it is sometimes only possible to confirm that a piece is American by analyzing the construction timbers.

The American interpretation of styles is best seen in the work of Duncan Phyfe and Charles-Honoré Lannuier. Phyfe's Scottish origin probably encouraged him to adopt Thomas Sheraton's style initially.

Phyfe usually worked in Santo Domingo mahogany, palisander, or purpleheart. He went on to produce pieces in the Empire style before developing the Fat Classical style, which favoured sculptural decoration.

Charles-Honoré Lannuier was French and settled in New York in 1803. Having trained in France, he brought with him the Louis XVI style, which evolved into an idiosyncratic form of Empire. His furniture is often difficult to distinguish from the French prototypes, especially as he used costly materials and probably imported gilt-bronze mounts from Paris.

Pattern books produced in Britain and France by Sheraton, Percier, and others disseminated European style to the United States more quickly than in the past, so trends were less delayed.



The arms have small, padded elbow rests.

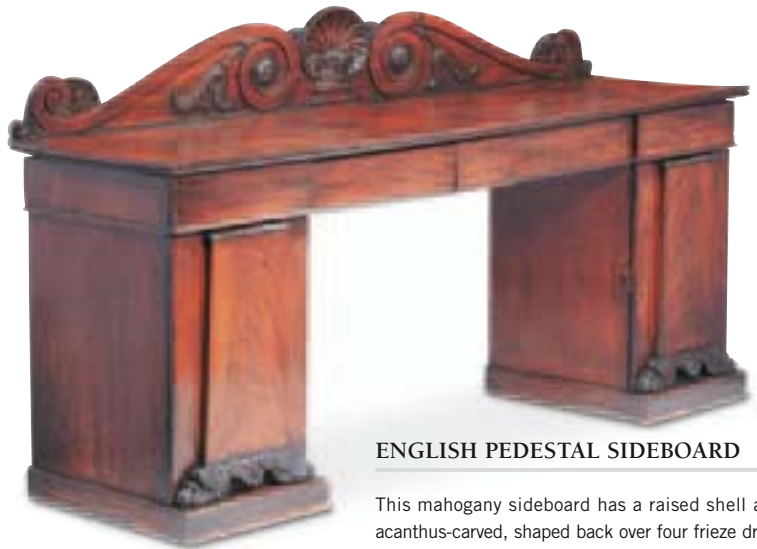
The fluted legs are crowned by carved rosettes.

The upholstery is from a later date, the 20th century.

DIRECTOIRE BERGÈRE

This French armchair exemplifies the *bergère* design. It has a high, curved back with a top rail sweeping forwards to form the armrests, which are padded to provide support for the elbows. The chair has a fully upholstered seat

and back, downswept arm supports, and a gently shaped seat rail. The upholstery fabric is not original. The frame of the *bergère* is carved with leaves throughout and is raised on short, tapering, fluted legs to the front and splayed legs to the rear. The front legs are decorated with carved rosettes. c.1800. Bk 3



ENGLISH PEDESTAL SIDEBOARD

This mahogany sideboard has a raised shell and acanthus-carved, shaped back over four frieze drawers. The breakfront pedestals are carved with lion's-paw feet and open on to shelves. They stand on plinth bases. c.1820. W:221cm (88 1/2 in). FRE 3



AMERICAN PEDESTAL SIDEBOARD

This Classical mahogany sideboard mirrors the English version (above) having a leaf-carved, shaped backboard and pedestals on a plinth base. The rectangular top is stepped and sits above an ogee-moulded frieze fitted with drawers. c.1840. W:183.5cm (72 1/4 in). FRE 4



ENGLISH CURRICULE CHAIR

The rounded back and arms of this rosewood and beech chair flow in a continuous line, echoing the *bergère*. It is one of a pair designed by Gillows. c.1811. H:87cm (34 1/2 in); W:54cm (21 1/2 in); D:53cm (21 in). LOT



AMERICAN TUB CHAIR

Like the curriculaire chair (left), this Federal mahogany armchair shares characteristics with the *bergère*: the upholstered seat, back, and arms, and the continuous line of the rounded back and arms. Early 19th century. NA 4



GEORGE IV CARD TABLE

This mahogany, boxwood, and ebony-strung card table has a rectangular, crossbanded, folding top above a plain frieze and ring-turned, tapering legs with brass casters. *Early 19th century. W:90.5cm (35½in). DN 4*



AMERICAN CARD TABLE

Made of mahogany and bird's-eye maple, this card table has rosewood crossbanding and a hinged top above a serpentine frieze. The ring-turned, fluted legs end in turned feet. *Early 19th century. H:73.5cm (29in). NA 3*



ENGLISH CENTRE TABLE

This rosewood table has a circular tilt-top with a plain, crossbanded frieze. It has an octagonal spreading pedestal and a concave triform base with scrolling paw feet. *Early 19th century. D:135cm (54in). L&T 4*



AMERICAN CENTRE TABLE

This Empire table has a circular rope-carved top with a plain frieze and a floral carved and gilded pedestal. The base and feet are almost identical to the English example, left. *Early 19th century. D:104cm (35½in). L&T 4*



ENGLISH CELLARET

The rectangular hinged top of this mahogany cellaret encloses a divided interior. It is supported on a rope-turned plinth and raised on ring-turned brass caps with casters. *Early 19th century. H:68cm (27¼in). L&T 3*



AMERICAN CELLARET

This inlaid cherry-wood cellaret, on a stand, has a hinged lid and compartmentalized interior. The cellaret stands on square-section, tapering legs. *Early 19th century. H:40.5cm (16in); W:33cm (13in); D:32cm (12½in). BRU 5*



FRENCH SECRÉTAIRE À ABATTANT

This Empire-style, mahogany tall chest has three drawers above a pair of cupboard doors. The case is flanked by tapered pilasters topped by gilt-metal female busts. *Early 19th century. H:164cm (64¼in). FRE 3*



AMERICAN SECRÉTAIRE

This Classical-style *secrétaire à abattant* has a marble top and a frieze drawer flanked by figural mounts. The drop front sits above cupboard doors. *Early 19th century. H:143.5cm (56¼in); W:99cm (39in); D:46cm (18in).*



REGENCY SOFA

This mahogany Regency-style sofa has a framed scrolling back and outscrolled arms with reeded, mahogany fronts. The squab cushion and bolsters are supported on a reeded seat rail with bead-and-reel moulded tablets.

The sofa is supported on splayed, reeded legs with leaf-cast brass caps and casters. The splayed legs are particularly susceptible to damage. *Early 19th century. W:225cm (90in). L&T 3*



AMERICAN SOFA

This elegant American sofa has a similar shaped and carved top rail and outscrolled arms to the Regency sofa (see left). The back, arms, and seat are upholstered and raised on a leaf-carved seat rail. The sofa is supported

on elaborately carved legs that terminate in paw feet. Compared to the Regency example, this sofa is proportionally more bulky. *1825. W:218cm (86in). FRE 1*

THE SHAKERS

THE THRIVING COMMUNAL SOCIETY OF THE SHAKERS PRODUCED FINELY CRAFTED BUT SIMPLE FURNITURE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS DEEP RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES.

The Shakers were a Christian group led by Ann Lee, known as Mother Ann, who emigrated to America from England in 1774. Within 50 years, there were 19 communities, made up of over 5,000 men (Brothers) and women (Sisters). They were celibate and lived separated from the outside world. They shared their resources and were self-sufficient, believing that their work was for the good of their community. Women had the same rights as the men, but they lived apart and only came together for meetings and singing. Since their communities were built on recruits, they often took in orphans.

SIMPLE FORMS

Joseph Meacham, who became their leader in 1784, declared that Shaker buildings, furniture, and clothing should be devoid of decoration and extravagance, so the communities strived for

simplicity in all things. Items had to fit their purpose and making them was another way in which they could praise God. The result was fine craftsmanship devoid of superfluous decoration such as inlays, turning, or carving. Wood was smoothly finished, with no tool marks left on the finished piece.

The Shakers took the simple forms of 18th-century design, such as the ladder-back chair, trestle table, cupboard, and chest of drawers, and adapted them to suit their way of life. All their furniture was made from pine, maple, cherry, walnut, butternut, poplar, and birch woods found on their own property.

Furniture was often painted or stained red, red-brown, yellow, or dark blue. Although decorative painting was forbidden, Brothers and Sisters were allowed to paint their buildings and certain utilitarian items. Boxes were frequently painted red or yellow, for example.

Shaker furniture was based on simple Neoclassical designs. Common items included slat-back chairs, plain and sewing tables, candlestands, benches and stools, and low-post beds. Chests had complex drawer arrangements and were made on simple, geometric lines. All these items were quick and inexpensive to make. The Shakers used traditional construction techniques, such as mortise-and-tenon joints that were often pegged, nailed, or dovetailed. Drawer and cupboard pulls were usually turned wooden knobs. Chair seats might be caned or made from woven tape.

CHEST OF DRAWERS

This piece is made of butternut and poplar, with pine as a secondary wood. It has a finely-bevelled top board above six dovetailed and lipped drawers, with cherry-wood threaded knobs. The case has inset panelled ends and stands on arched feet. W:109cm (43in). WH



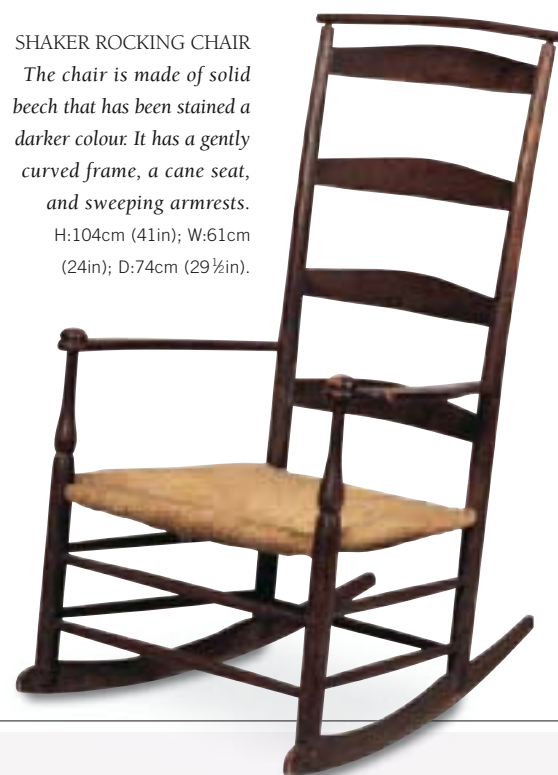
CUPBOARD-OVER-DRAWERS

This case piece has two hinged cupboard drawers set above an arrangement of ten short over two long graduated drawers with turned knobs. It is made from pine and boss wood with its original finish. It is from Mount Lebanon, New York, and is attributed to Brother Amos Stewart. WH

SHAKER ROCKING CHAIR

The chair is made of solid beech that has been stained a darker colour. It has a gently curved frame, a cane seat, and sweeping armrests.

H:104cm (41in); W:61cm (24in); D:74cm (29½in).



SIMPLE HOMES

SHAKER FURNITURE AND INTERIORS REFLECT THE
UTMOST SIMPLICITY FOR WHICH THEY STRIVED.

Shakers lived in dormitories, two to a room, which usually contained two single beds on wheels, with a candlestand and iron candleholder between them, and two ladder-back chairs, fitted with small tilters. These were turned, wooden balls with flat bases that fitted into hollows at the base of the back chair legs. The balls were attached to the legs by leather thongs and helped to keep the chairs in balance.

The roommates usually shared a cupboard-over-drawers. The top cupboard held bonnets or hats and the drawers clothes. Sometimes there would be another small cupboard at the bottom for shoes. Pegs and pegboards surrounded the walls of every Shaker room. These were used for hanging an occasional piece of clothing on a wooden hanger or for hanging up chairs while the room was being cleaned. A small mirror would hang on a holder attached to the peg rail. No decoration was allowed in the room.

Shakers led a very ordered life, and rooms and the pieces of furniture made for them were often numbered so that if a piece was moved it could be returned to its rightful place. These numbers can still be found painted on the undersides of chairs and tables.

Shaker round stand The small, circular top of this table is raised on a turned column and legs in the form of intersecting crescents. The piece is probably made of cherry wood and was used for setting down small objects. 1820-30. H:64cm (25¼in); Diam:40cm (15¼in). AME



Sewing Room This room in the Centre Family Dwelling at Pleasant Hill was built by Shakers in the 19th century. It was sparsely furnished in the simple Shaker style with two ladder-back rocking chairs and a round stand.

Elder's rocking chair This chair is made from tiger maple and has its original finish. It has curvilinear arms, a taped seat, and tall finials and is from Mount Lebanon in New York. c.1840. H:112cm (44in). WH



COMMERCIAL SUCCESS

Due to the Shakers' productivity, they started selling their surplus products to people outside their communities. They made chairs, that were sold in sizes from "0" (the smallest child's chair) to "7" (a large adult rocking chair). Ladder-back rockers could be ordered with a shawl bar across the top of the back, so that people could hang a shawl on them for warmth.

When other manufacturers began copying their products, the Shakers put a trademark decal on the inside of their rockers or on the back of the bottom slat of the ladders, to show that the chair was a genuine Shaker product.

The Shakers reached the height of their success in the mid 1800s. After the Civil War, the United States started to shift to a more industrial and urban society and it became more difficult for the Shakers to find converts. After 1900, communities started to close their doors. A number of them have since been re-opened as museums.

TAILORESS' COUNTER

This chest of drawers was used for storage and as a sewing table. It has a curly maple top set over four short and two long drawers with maple stiles and rails and curly maple drawer fronts. The sides and back of the case are panelled pine and the legs are turned. 1820-30. H:114cm (45in); D:61cm (24in). AME

NORTH AMERICAN VERNACULAR

IN THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY, pioneers were building new towns and settlements across North America. Like many of the families who had been living in the colonies for the past 200 years, these pioneers needed furniture that was practical rather than fashionable. Vernacular pieces dating back to this time are considered some of the most interesting made in the United States and Canada, because rural makers began imitating more sophisticated pieces.

The cabinet-makers and woodworkers in small settlements rarely learnt skills such as veneering, which were being used in the larger towns

and cities. However, as urban cabinet-makers moved to find work, some trends began to have an impact on country furniture, and the traditional styles favoured in rural areas were influenced by newer designs.

STYLE INSPIRATIONS

While the United States tended to be influenced by British styles, parts of Canada, which had originally been French, were influenced by French designs. When Britain took over the French colonies in 1760, the local craftsmen continued to make furniture in the modified French style they had been using for decades. Slowly, the

Neoclassical style that was popular in the United States and Britain started to catch on, although cabinet-makers trained in French techniques still used them to make the new British- and American-style furniture.

The Federal style, which had developed in urban America at the end of the 18th century also appealed to rural craftsmen, and their interpretation of its simple shapes, decorated with brightly coloured paint, was popular for decades.

The quality and design of vernacular furniture across North America were usually determined by the skill of the maker, the materials to hand, and the

taste and budget of the clients. Many pieces seemed to be unaffected by the latest fashions, or were a very simple interpretation of them. However, even inexpensive vernacular pieces made by urban craftsmen often mimicked the fashions of the time. Sometimes elements of different styles were combined. Later in the century, for example, a Victorian chest might have incorporated late Empire features, such as scrolled feet.

VERNACULAR STYLE

Although basic in both design and construction, vernacular furniture was rarely crudely made. Details were often



LOW BUFFET

This carved and painted pine buffet has a rectangular top above fielded panel sides. The case contains a pair of short drawers above lozenge-carved doors, and is raised on stile feet. *W:137cm (54in). WAD*



Escutcheon detail



NEW MEXICAN CHEST

This pine carved chest has seven panels on the front with rosettes and stylized lions of Leon Province in Spain, and pomegranates in low relief. The side panels are decorated with large rosettes. Vernacular styles took longer to

change style, so pieces like this were common in the 1900s. *Late 18th century. H:48.3cm (19in); W:61cm (24in); D:71cm (18in).*



The bedding is made from a simple woven textile.

The mortise-and-tenon joint is exposed.

Each bed end has two rows of turned spindles.

This is a rustic interpretation of the sabre leg.

NEW MEXICAN DAY BED

The design for this pine day bed was influenced by the pieces that came to New Mexico via the Santa Fe trail. This rustic-style piece has exposed joints. The bed would have been used for the sick or dying. *AME*



SINGLE-DRAWER STAND

The top of this Federal stand is inlaid with a geometric design and has rounded corners. The piece has a single drawer set below the top. The stand is raised on square, tapering legs. *c.1810. H:72.5cm (28½in). FRE*

heavier than those found on more refined and expensive pieces, but they were always elegant.

Craftsmen used local timber, such as pine, ash, hickory, birch, oak, maple, and fruitwoods including cherry and apple, and decorated them with stains or paint rather than the veneers favoured by city furniture-makers. Many of these painted pieces have now achieved the status of folk art and are, therefore, highly prized.

Legs and spindles were often turned, and pediments and skirts frequently had cut-out details. Seats were generally carved, or were made from rush, splints, tape, or cane.

Different parts of the furniture were usually joined using a mortise-and-tenon construction, but they were also sometimes pegged, nailed, or dovetailed.

DOMESTIC PIECES

Common types of vernacular furniture of the early 19th century include slat-back chairs. Stools, benches, and settles were also made, as well as low-post beds and cradles.

Dry sinks – which were usually made by simply nailing together boards to make a place for washing dishes – were a necessity before indoor plumbing was available.

Cupboards were often built to fill a particular space and rarely had feet. Sometimes they were made from scrap timber and then decorated with coloured stains, sponging, or graining. The doors were fastened with shaped wooden, brass, or iron latches, and had turned wooden knobs or porcelain pulls. Escutcheons usually took the form of either brass or iron plates, or keyhole surrounds.

Six-board chests were among the earliest American pieces and they were sometimes decorated with moulding, carving, or paint. By the early 19th century, they were made from panelled oak or pine and were gradually superseded by chests of drawers.

Other common pieces of vernacular furniture included drop-leaf, tea, work, sewing, and other small tables, as well as chests, and hanging racks.

HUTCH TABLES

THESE QUAINT CHAIR-TABLES ARE TYPICAL OF THE TYPE OF VERNACULAR AMERICAN FURNITURE MADE DURING THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY.

The hutch table was one of the first pieces of multi-purpose, space-saving furniture in the United States. It was basically a table with a round top that could be swung back to create a chair with a circular back. Some hutch tables also had a drawer or cupboard built into the base, to provide useful storage space.

These chair-tables were first made in the 17th century in rural areas, the East Coast, and the colonies, but their popularity in the countryside continued

until the mid 19th century. They were made from local woods such as pine, maple, oak, birch, and fruitwoods.

Hutch tables were variously decorated according to the styles that were popular when they were made: fashions reached rural communities later than they reached cities, and these were adopted on a more modest scale. A plain hutch table, for example, might indicate that it was influenced by the Federal style popular in the early 19th century.



RUSH-SEAT SIDE CHAIRS

These three Neoclassical side chairs from the Mid-Atlantic States are made from tiger maple and have rush seats. The outswept back of each chair has a shaped centre rail, which is flanked, top and bottom, by rectangular rails.

The turned legs are joined by a number of stretchers, the one at the front being double and more elaborate than those at the sides and back. The rush seats were probably original, although it is likely that the upholstered cushions were added later for increased comfort. c.1825. H:84.5cm (33½in).



This piece is plainly styled and lacks decoration, indicating that it is vernacular.

The shelf doubles as a chair seat when the table top is raised.

The table top lifts up to transform the piece into a chair.

The four turned legs are joined by cross-stretchers.

A hutch table This piece has birch arms, a pine seat, and is painted red. c.1800. W:127cm (50in). PS



NEW MEXICAN CHAIR

This is a simple, low chair made from yellow pine. The only decoration is provided by geometric chip carving on the apron and back slats. The legs are linked by turned stretchers. Early 19th century. H:39cm (15½in). AME



CANADIAN ARMCHAIR

This armchair is made of birch and has three salamander-shaped slats, which are flanked by block-and-urn turned stiles over a rush seat. The chair is raised on similarly turned legs joined by stretchers.

1800-1840

WINDSOR CHAIRS

THE WINDSOR CHAIR is often associated with country timbers and provincial manufacture (particularly around High Wycombe in England). However, its origins were far from provincial. The Duke of Chandos had japanned Windsor chairs in his library at his Middlesex home, Canons, and there were mahogany examples in the library of St. James' Palace in the early 18th century. However, by the early 19th century, they were restricted to humbler homes or taverns.

Windsor chairs were only ever produced in Britain and North America, but British and American Windsor chairs often display different characteristics. While the seat (generally a saddle type) is central to the construction of both, with the

elements of the back, legs, and arms all mortised into it, they were made in different timbers. In Britain, ash, yew, and fruitwoods were used, with elm for the seat and, occasionally, beech for the turnings. In North America, hickory, chestnut, oak, ash, and sometimes maple were favoured, with tulip, poplar, and pine for the seats.

There are also some stylistic differences between the two types. For instance, the use of a splat was more typically British, while the low-back Windsor chair was entirely American until the 1840s. Similarly, the Neoclassical Windsor chair, sometimes called an "arrow-back" on account of the spear or arrow shape that constitutes the back sticks, was never produced in Britain.



The top rail is shaped and scroll-carved.

The spindle rails are turned.

Scroll-carved arms continue from a carved tub-shaped back rail.

The splat is solid and vase-shaped.

The legs are slightly crooked.

CROOKED LEG WINDSOR

This is an early English Windsor chair made of fruitwood, ash, and elm. It has a ram's horn- and shell-carved top rail that terminates in scrolled ears. The central back rail curves forward to provide the scroll-carved arms, while

the solid, vase-shaped, central splat is flanked by elegant, turned spindle rails. There are three main spindles that continue from the top rail to the seat, and extra spindles in the lower section. The shaped seat is supported on four crooked legs. c.1750. H:96.5cm (38in); W:66.5cm (26¼in); D:58.5cm (23in). RY



AMERICAN WRITING-ARM CHAIR

This high-back Windsor chair from Connecticut has an arched top rail, a mid rail with an arm and a writing paddle with drawer, a saddle seat with a drawer beneath, reel-turned legs, and an H-stretcher. 1797. NA 3



AMERICAN COMB-BACK CHAIR

This chair, from Philadelphia, has a serpentine top rail with scrolled ear terminals, a yoked mid rail with scrolled knuckle-arm terminals, a saddle seat, outspayed legs, and an H-stretcher. NA 5

GEORGIAN WINDSORS



Each of these yew armchairs has a hoop back and arms with a Gothic pierced splat and spars. The elm saddle seats are supported on cabriole legs terminating in pad feet and joined by hoop stretchers. 1750-70. L&T 4

FAN-BACK WINDSORS



Each of this pair of English elm, walnut, and fruitwood fan-back Windsor armchairs has a shaped seat supported on turned legs joined by an H-stretcher. The chairs bear traces of their original paint finish. c.1770. H:101.5cm (40in); W:63cm (24¾in); D:46cm (18in). RY



**PHILADELPHIA WINDSOR**

This Windsor armchair has a top rail with a butterfly and seven spindles with bamboo turnings above a shaped seat. The seat is supported on tapering legs joined by stretchers. *c.1800. Seat: H:44.5cm (17½in). AAC 1*

**AMERICAN BOW-BACK WINDSOR**

This mahogany and painted armchair has an arched, moulded top rail, nine flaring spindles, down-curved arms over raked bamboo supports, a squared, shield-form seat, and raked bamboo turned legs with an H-stretcher. *NA 1*

**AMERICAN WINDSOR SIDE CHAIR**

This side chair has a bow-shaped back with nine spindles above a saddle seat. The seat is supported on splayed legs with bamboo turnings and is joined by an H-stretcher. *H:45.75cm (18in). AAC 1*

**GOthic WINDSOR CHAIR**

Made from ash and elm, this chair has a lancet-shaped back with pierced splats. The chair seat is shaped and supported on cabriole legs with a hooped stretcher. One of a set of four. *Early 19th century. L&T 3*

WINDSOR SETTEES

DESIGNED VIRTUALLY AS AN ELONGATED CHAIR, THIS TYPE OF SETTEE WAS ONLY PRODUCED IN BRITAIN AND NORTH AMERICA.

There is little agreement on the differences between a settee and a sofa and indeed the preferred term seems to be largely dictated by current fashion. However, “settee” generally designates a particular type of furniture made in the late 18th and early 19th century that was much more closely related to chair, rather than sofa, design.

Often conceived as a chair extended to seat two or more people, its origins lie in the chair-back settee of the mid 18th century and the settle. Consequently, it might have a caned seat and back, or a

pierced back with splats, just like a chair, rather than the complete upholstery of a sofa. The Cape rusbank was a simplified variation of this type of furniture.

Windsor settees are peculiar to Britain and North America. They are constructed in the same way as Windsor chairs, with a wooden seat into which the back, arms, and legs are mortised. The backs are either of a continuous form, running into the arms with vertical splats, or take the form of a series of chair backs.



An English Regency settee This beech piece was overpainted in verdigris and gilt. The back of the settee has four lattice backs with musical trophy panels below an outscrolled top rail and down-scrolled arms. The caned seat is supported on turned front legs with brass caps and casters. *Early 19th century. W:185cm (73in). L&T*

**A Philadelphia bow-back Windsor settee**

This black- and gold-painted settee has bamboo turnings. There are 29 spindles below the curved top rail and the downswept arms are on modified

S-curved supports. The seat is supported on bamboo turned legs joined by swelling H-stretchers. *W:197.5cm (79in). NA 6*

**An American arrowback, painted Windsor settee**

This has a flat top rail and scrolling arms set above a planked seat. It has turned legs and turned panel stretchers. *Early 19th century. H:194cm (77½in). FRE 1*

CHAIRS

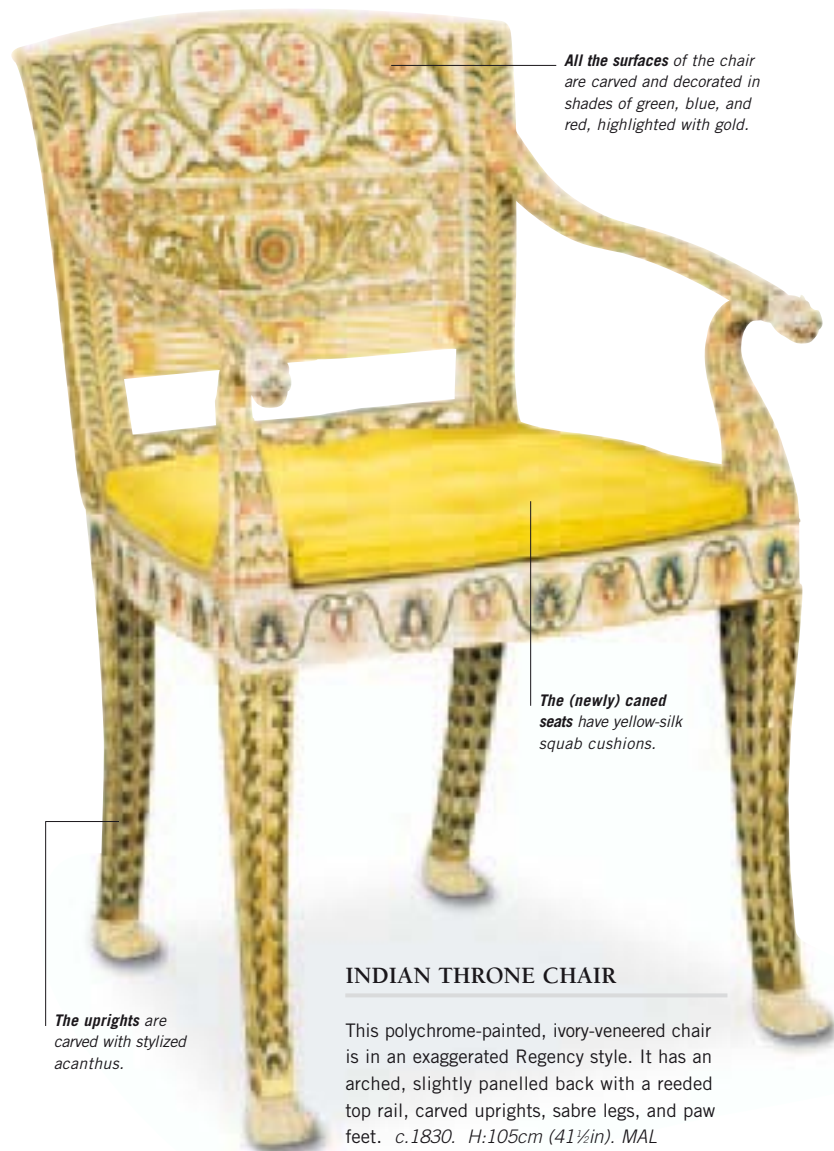
ALL THE CHARACTERISTICS OF Regency and Empire furniture, from the Neoclassical motifs – often on pierced backs – to the choice of timbers, are displayed on early 19th-century chairs.

One of the most typical types of chair of the period is the Trafalgar chair, which was made in Britain and used for dining. The chair had two horizontal splats – one usually of bar form, the lower one sometimes a rope-twist, set above a caned or drop-in seat. Caning, with all its exotic overtones, was revived again during this period, particularly on British or Cape furniture. During the first two decades of the century, the front and back legs were usually of sabre form, but turned or ring-turned legs, which are structurally stronger, were used later.

These chairs, and many that they inspired, were often made of solid mahogany or rosewood, with veneered

panels on the bar back. Beech was used, and was often painted; light-coloured woods were favoured outside Britain. Chairs from this period rarely had stretchers.

One type of armchair, inspired by Georges Jacob, had a rectangular, scrolled, upholstered back and open arms with straight supports, often carved with sphinx heads or female masks. It also had turned and tapered front legs. These more comfortable *fauteuils* might be used in the drawing room, whilst Regency *bergères*, which had caned backs, sides, and seats, were probably made for the library. These chairs had squab cushions, often covered in leather and buttoned. Other pieces might be upholstered in silk or velvet. Needlework was rare, although a suite of furniture from the Winter Palace in Russia, was covered in tapestry, in a mixture of wool and silk.



All the surfaces of the chair are carved and decorated in shades of green, blue, and red, highlighted with gold.

The (newly) caned seats have yellow-silk squab cushions.

The uprights are carved with stylized acanthus.

INDIAN THRONE CHAIR

This polychrome-painted, ivory-veneered chair is in an exaggerated Regency style. It has an arched, slightly panelled back with a reeded top rail, carved uprights, sabre legs, and paw feet. c.1830. H:105cm (41½in). MAL



ENGLISH LIBRARY ARMCHAIR

This mahogany armchair has a reeded frame and arm supports. The sides, back, and seat are caned and have loose cushions. The turned and reeded legs have brass casters. Early 19th century. W:63cm (24¾in). DN 3



FRENCH RESTAURATION BERGÈRE

The crest of this maple *bergère en gondole* is inlaid with a flower-head and stylized leaves, and the arms have carved leaf tips. The leather slip seat is supported by a carved seat rail on cabriole legs. Early 19th century. NA 3



ENGLISH TRAFALGAR CHAIR

This Regency mahogany dining chair has a plain top rail and a rope-twist back rail. The needlework-covered drop-in seat is supported on a plain seat rail and sabre legs. One of a set of four. Early 19th century. DN 3



FRENCH DIRECTOIRE CHAIR

This is one of a pair of *Directoire* side chairs, each with a rectilinear back rail and splat inlaid with brass musical instruments. The upholstered stuffer seat is supported on sabre legs. c.1800. H:81cm (32in). 2



SWEDISH BIEDERMEIER ARMCHAIR

This birch open armchair has a stepped yoke backrest with a decorative oval inlay and scrolled armrests. The drop-in seat has a plain seat rail and is raised on sabre legs. c.1825. W:57cm (22½in). EIL



CHINA TRADE ARMCHAIR

This Asian hardwood armchair, has a Greek-key carved top rail and a shaped, carved back rail. The cane seat rests on a reeded seat rail above slender reeded legs joined by an H-stretcher. Early 19th century. H:84cm (33¼in). MJM



FRENCH RESTAURATION CHAIR

This walnut and fruitwood side chair has a gently reclining back with a rectangular top and back rail. The padded seat is supported on a plain seat rail above stylized cabriole legs. *Early 19th century. H:80cm (31½in). ANB 4*



GERMAN BIEDERMEIER CHAIRS

These Biedermeier mahogany-veneered dining chairs were made in Berlin. Each chair has a bar top rail, a solid, shaped back rail with a central oval, and elegant, slightly sweeping uprights. The shaped caned seats are set

within a curved frame with a rounded seat rail and are supported on four outswept sabre legs. *1820–30. H:84.5cm (33¼in); W:46cm (18¼in); D:42.5cm (16¾in). BMN 10*



AMERICAN FEDERAL SIDE CHAIR

This mahogany side chair has a moulded and rope-carved shield back around an urn, Prince-of-Wales feathers, draped swags, and leaves. The serpentine seat rests on reeded, tapering legs. *Early 19th century. H:98cm (38½in). FRE 1*



AMERICAN GONDOLA CHAIR

This is one of a pair of Neoclassical figured mahogany gondola chairs, each with a curved back and vasiform, solid splat, a padded slip seat, and downswept stiles continuing into shaped sabre front legs. *c.1830. S&K*



ITALIAN GONDOLA CHAIRS

These six dining chairs are made of walnut and are designed in the Neoclassical style. Each chair has an unusual fluted, rectangular backrest positioned above a pierced, stylized leaf border. The cane seats have an applied

roundel at each side and are supported on plain seat rails. The chairs are raised on sabre legs. The elegant sweeping uprights give the chairs their characteristic shape, which is reminiscent of the style of the gondola boats found in Venice. *Early 19th century. NA*



GEORGE III SHIELD-BACK CHAIR

This mahogany armchair has a shield-shaped, curved back, outlined with guilloche moulding, with five reeded splats, curved downswept arms, a bowed seat rail, and reeded, tapering front legs. *c.1800. H:95cm (37½in). PAR*



RUSSIAN OPEN ARMCHAIR

This birch open armchair has a stepped yoke backrest, with carved fan detail, and slender, scrolled armrests. The upholstered seat is raised on sabre legs. It is one of a pair. *Early 19th century. H:91.5cm (36in). EVE 4*



AMERICAN DINING CHAIRS

These eight Neoclassical-style dining chairs are made of mahogany. Each chair has a flat curved top rail carved with a foliate pattern and a slender horizontal splat, also decorated with leaf carving, plus a rosette. The seats

are upholstered with black Naugahyde and are showing considerable signs of wear. The seats are supported on plain seat rails and raised on sabre legs. The armchairs have gently curving supports. The set comprises two armchairs and six side chairs, and is attributed to Anthony Quervelle. *c.1820. FRE 3*



SWEDISH GUSTAVIAN SIDE CHAIR

This white-painted side chair has a shield-shaped back with a solid, carved splat. The padded seat is supported on a moulded seat rail and is raised on stop-fluted legs joined by an H-stretcher. *Early 19th century. BK 2*

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

IN THE EARLY 19TH century, many different forms of furniture were developed for specific purposes. Previously, furniture was placed against the wall and had to serve multiple functions, but this had gradually changed through the 18th century and, by the early years of the next century, more specialized pieces were made. The same period saw the rise of novel patent furniture. Thomas Morgan and Joseph Sanders of London specialized in the "Patent Sofa-Bed & Chair-Bed". They also made a celebrated type of armchair that hinged over to form library steps.

Not only were new forms of furniture developed, but old types were revitalized after taking forms derived from ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome. For example, a cellaret, or wine cooler – an 18th-century invention – might be reconfigured in the form of an ancient sarcophagus.

New types of furniture were made for the dining room. The sideboard was still a relatively new invention. Often of rectangular form with a bowed front, it usually had two compartments separated by a drawer.

These might contain shelves or even a cellaret drawer. They frequently had a brass railing at the back, although they are now usually missing. British sideboards are generally made of mahogany with brass or ebonized stringing. Side cabinets and chiffoniers, both developments of the commode, were also new. They often had a pair of doors with brass grilles backed with pleated silk.

The cheval mirror, or Psyche glass, was a new piece of bedroom furniture. It consisted of a large single mirror held within a plain frame on a pivot, through which it was attached to the uprights of its stand. This was generally set on splayed legs with casters, so that it could be moved around easily.

Other new types of furniture, such as campaign furniture, reflected the military turbulence of the period. Campaign furniture was specially designed to be portable and easy to dismantle (see pp.280-81).

In similar vein, the *chaise à l'officier* (officer's chair) was made in France. It had arm supports, but lacked elbow rests, to enable a man wearing a sword to sit down with relative ease.

AMERICAN D-SHAPED SIDEBOARD

The rectangular top of this satinwood and figured maple sideboard has a bowed front above a conforming case with an arrangement of drawers and cupboard doors. The reeded legs have ringed cuffs. 1800-05. W:188cm (74in). NA 6

Each of the drawers and cupboard doors has banded and satinwood-inlaid borders.



The central cupboard doors are flanked by bottle drawers and additional cupboard doors.

The stiles each have an inlaid diamond motif set over a diagonally segmented column with a Gothic arch crest.

ENGLISH REGENCY SIDE CABINET

The shaped top of this parcel-gilt rosewood side cabinet is outlined with satinwood stringing. The frieze beneath contains five drawers, each

with lion's-mask ring handles. The cupboards below have front grilles, and there is a centre shelf. The cabinet has gilt-wood lion's-paw feet. c.1805. H:95cm (37½in); W:175cm (69in); D:66cm (26in). PAR



ENGLISH CELLARET

This Sheraton mahogany, arched-top cellaret has a domed lid above a rectilinear case with central oval panels and geometric inlay, set on rope-twist legs. c.1800. H:68.5cm (27in); W:45cm (17½in); D:45cm (17½in). NOA



AMERICAN TAMBOUR SECRETARY

This desk has a rectangular upper section with tambour doors that open to reveal a fitted interior. The lower section has two long drawers raised on square-section legs with tapering feet. c.1795. H:103cm (40½in). NA 6



AMERICAN KLISMOS CHAIR

This mahogany chair has a curved, rectangular top rail with scroll carving, and a shaped, carved back rail. The seat is supported on sabre legs. c.1815. H:86cm (33¾in); W:44.5cm (17½in); D:46cm (18in). BDL



REGENCY WATERFALL BOOKCASES

Each mahogany bookcase has a three-quarter gallery above four graduated shelves and a single drawer with ivory handles. The cases have brass carrying handles at the sides. *Early 19th century. W:53cm (21in). L&T 5*



AMERICAN WORKTABLE

This Classical mahogany astragal-end worktable has various compartments. It sits on a reeded urn pedestal on four splayed, carved legs, which end in brass feet and casters. *Early 19th century. H:73cm (29¼in). NA 6*



ENGLISH DAVENPORT DESK

The hinged top of this pollard oak desk has a three-quarter spindle gallery enclosing two real and false drawers, flanked by a pen drawer and slides above four side drawers. *Early 19th century. W:51cm (20in). Bons 4*



ENGLISH CHEVAL MIRROR

This Regency mahogany cheval mirror has a crossbanded rectangular frame supported on a ring-turned frame. It has outswept legs with brass paw terminals and casters. *Early 19th century. H:170cm (67in). DN 2*

NEW MATERIALS

A RANGE OF EXOTIC MATERIALS FROM INDIA OR OTHER COLONIES WAS OFTEN USED TO ADD DECORATION TO SMALLER ITEMS OF FURNITURE.

Many previously rare materials became more widely available early in the century. Brass inlays were used in British furniture, although they had been used from around 1740 to 1760. Similarly, mother-of-pearl was increasingly used throughout the 19th century, particularly on small objects such as tea caddies. Exotic timbers and materials, such as amboyna or ivory, were imported from the colonies, and lacquer cut from Chinese

screens was still used as a veneer. On the Continent, the embargo on mahogany led to an increased use of light-coloured local timbers, the so-called *bois clairs*. In Britain, pieces were often completely japanned in a technique called penwork. Other popular decorative techniques in Britain were Tumbrieware (wooden inlay in small geometric designs) or straw-work (pieces of straw arranged in patterns to look like marquetry).



The tilt-top has a lacquered surface.

Ebonized parcel-gilt table The papier-mâché top has painted Oriental figures and rests on a turned leaf-carved support, triform base, and paw feet. *Early 19th century. H:72cm (28¼in). DN 3*



A mirror is revealed when the table top is opened.

The rosewood veneer is inlaid with mother-of-pearl.

Biedermeier sewing table

This sewing table is veneered in rosewood and inlaid throughout with mother-of-pearl. The top opens to reveal a fitted interior and mirror. *c.1830. H:76.5cm (30in); W:48cm (19in); D:40.5cm (16in). BMN*



Penwork decorates the surfaces of this occasional table.

A turned baluster column supports the oval table top.

English penwork oval-top occasional table

This piece has a turned baluster column support, a triform base, and is decorated with penwork. *c.1825. CATO 6*



SOUTHERN GERMAN VITRINE

Veneered with part-ebonized cherry wood, this vitrine has three glazed sides flanked by protruding column stiles with gilt-metal capitals. A front-opening door reveals two glass shelves. *c.1825. H:91cm (35¼in). BMN 3*

MIRRORS

MIRRORS, LIKE PICTURE FRAMES, are decorative so are rarely subjected to much wear. As a result, they are often gessoed and gilded. Painted examples from this period also exist, as well as Empire pier glasses, which often have mahogany frames and ormolu mounts.

From the late 18th century, larger plates became available, so early 19th-century mirrors with a divided plate became less common. Although not new, convex plates became especially fashionable in Britain and the United States, and were used in dining rooms to give servants an all-round view of the table. The convex mirror plate was usually framed by an ebonized and reeded slip with a gilt frame echoing the shape of the mirror. The frame

was often surmounted with an eagle or similar motif and frequently had candle arms attached to it.

Also fashionable was the use of *verre églomisé* in which glass was back-painted in black and then engraved with a design before gilding. *Verre églomisé* plates were frequently inserted above normal plates. Mirrors with a more rectilinear design were also popular, particularly those intended to stand above pier tables between windows. From the late 1820s, revival styles led to the reintroduction of Chippendale-style mirrors in Britain; these are often difficult to distinguish from the 18th-century originals. In Florence, boldly carved foliate frames were introduced in imitation of the Baroque originals.

The acanthus leaves are pierced and scroll-carved.

The guilloche motif is stylized.



ITALIAN WALL MIRROR

This rectangular giltwood wall mirror has a carved softwood frame featuring guilloche and stylized, scrolling acanthus leaves. The whole frame has been covered in white gesso and then given an undercoat of red paint, before

being gilded. The ornate, sculptural form of the mirror frame is reminiscent of the Baroque style of the 17th century, and harks back to the designs of Andrea Brustolon and the work of the Genoese carver, Filippo Parodi (see p.40). *Early 19th century. H:67cm (26½in); W:59cm (23½in). Cato 3*



SCOTTISH OVERMANTEL MIRROR

This Regency giltwood and gesso overmantel mirror has a moulded cornice with ball decoration above a deep frieze depicting a scene with angels playing trumpets flying over a chariot being drawn by lions. The mirror has

bevelled glass and is flanked on either side by slender, reeded, Corinthian columns. The wide landscape format of the mirror means that it was probably an overmantel mirror and would have been intended to hang over a fireplace. *Early 19th century. H:91cm (35¾in); W:162cm (63¾in). L&T 3*



AMERICAN LOOKING GLASS

This simple, late Neoclassical maple looking glass has a rectangular mirror plate set within a relatively unadorned rectangular frame. The top and sides of the mirror frame have corner blocks joined by half-section balusters with

gilded and moulded ends. Like the mirror above, this type of overmantel mirror is sometimes erroneously referred to as "Adam", perhaps because of its rectilinear Neoclassical styling, or perhaps because such mirrors frequently featured in Robert Adam interiors. *c.1835. H:51cm (20in); W:85.5cm (83¼in). SL*



REGENCY MIRROR

This giltwood mirror has a moulded cornice with ball decoration above a panel with a shell cresting flanked by latticework. Columns flank both sides of the mirror. *Early 19th century. H:109cm (43¼in). L&T 3*



ENGLISH PIER GLASS

With a concave cornice above a ring-and-leaf frieze, this giltwood and gesso pier glass has 11 plates of varying sizes divided by astragals and flanked by half columns. *Early 19th century. W:117cm (46¼in). L&T 4*



AMERICAN GIRANDOLE

This giltwood and ebonized *girandole* has a convex mirror plate with a reeded slip. The frame is decorated with carved leaves, has four candle arms, and is surmounted by the Federal eagle. *c.1825. H:132cm (52in). FRE 5*



ENGLISH WALL MIRROR

The circular, mirrored plate sits within a reeded ebonized slip and a ball-moulded frame. The frame is surmounted by a dragon flanked by two sea serpents. Below is a leaf-carved apron. *c.1815. H:115cm (46in). FRE 4*



OVAL MIRROR

This mirror is set within a moulded gadrooned frame, surmounted by a painted figure of Neptune. At the base is a giltwood figure of Triton, and foliate arms that end in candle nozzles. *W:112cm (44in).*



ENGLISH GILTWOOD MIRROR

This simple Regency giltwood mirror has a convex mirror plate within a circular leaf-moulded and reeded border. It might originally have had candle arms or cresting. *Early 19th century. Diam:58cm (22½in). DN 1*



AMERICAN LOOKING GLASS

This Classical mahogany and carved giltwood looking glass has an architectural pediment above a carved eagle tablet and a mirror plate flanked by colonettes. *Early 19th century. H:190.5cm (47in); W:61.5cm (24¼in). SL 2*



REGENCY LOOKING GLASS

This carved and gilded looking glass has a moulded, projecting cornice above a carved frieze, with a *verre églomisé* tablet, and reeded pilasters. *Early 19th century. H:109cm (43in); W:62cm (24¼in). FRE 2*



AMERICAN GILTWOOD MIRROR

This Federal mirror has a broken pediment with ball decoration above a *verre églomisé* panel depicting Hope with an anchor, flanked with festoons. The columns have spiral beading. *Early 19th century. H:80cm (32in). NA 3*



BIEDERMEIER PIER GLASS

The rosewood-veneered frame of this southern German pier glass has an architectural pediment above an ebonized panel depicting the Goddess Diana in gilded brass. *c.1820. H:112cm (44½in); W:33cm (13in). BMN 3*



AMERICAN LOOKING GLASS

This tall, narrow, carved mahogany looking glass frame has a moulded cornice above a veneered frieze. The mirror plate is flanked by projecting blocks linked by carved urns and slender pilasters. *c.1825. FRE 1*



AMERICAN LOOKING GLASS

The moulded cornice of this giltwood mirror is hung with ball decoration above a wreath-and-acanthus moulded frieze. Below this is a tablet. The colonettes are rope-turned. *c.1800. W:77cm (30¼in). SI*



IRISH OVAL MIRROR

This oval mirror, one of a pair, has its original plate set within a copper frame, which is decorated with applied, alternating blue and clear crystal facets. *Late 18th–early 19th century. H:105cm (41¼in). L&T 5*

CHESTS OF DRAWERS

THE CHEST OF DRAWERS is limited in scope by the rectangular shape of its drawers. Whilst its more elaborate cousin, the commode, might contrive to contain them within serpentine or *bombé* shapes, the chest of drawers shows little stylistic development.

With the exception of plain British pieces, which often bowed at the front, chests of drawers tended to be box-like in the early 19th century. Meanwhile, the status of the commode as the seminal item of drawing-room furniture was on the decline. Also on the wane were chest-on-chests and tallboys, although the occasional bowed example does survive.

A smaller version was developed resembling a miniature tallboy and similar to the French *semainier*. Called the Wellington chest after the famous commander, its drawers were locked by a hinged pilaster to one side.

A particular type of French Empire chest of drawers was popular throughout Europe. It was rectangular,

usually with a marble top, below which was a projecting frieze drawer supported on either side by a pair of architectural columns. Set back were two or three drawers above a plinth base. The piece in flamed, or plum pudding, mahogany was decorated with Neoclassical ormolu mounts, particularly on the frieze drawer and around the capital and column bases.

Another type of chest, which had its origins in the Louis XVI style, also featured a marble top but, instead of the projecting upper drawer, all the drawers were flush. The piece had a more delicate look, possibly because it was raised on square-section, tapering legs. It was especially popular in Italy, and was known to be produced by Maggiolini, sometimes in walnut.

Due to their widespread use and relatively simple carcass construction, chests of drawers had a huge range of surface decoration from veneering in exotic timber to painting, which was useful for disguising cheaper woods.



Escutcheon and geometric inlay detail

Inlays of walnut and other stained woods create a strong, geometric design.

A straight frieze emphasizes the rectilinear shape of the case.



Short, tapering legs support the case.

The side cabinet has two large front cupboard doors.

NORTH ITALIAN SIDE CABINET

This side cabinet, or commode, has a slightly overhanging top above a straight frieze, and a rectilinear case with two large cupboard doors at the front. The front and sides of the cabinet

are richly decorated with inlays of figured walnut and other contrasting, stained woods, forming a strong, colourful geometric design. The cabinet is supported on short, tapering legs. *c.1800. H:102.5cm (40½in); W:135cm (53½in); D:63cm (24½in). GK 5*



AMERICAN CHEST OF DRAWERS

This Federal inlaid chest of drawers is made of mahogany. The piece has a rectangular top with an applied, inlaid edge which rests above four long, graduated drawers, each one with

crossbanding, stringing, and a beaded edge, and brass, oval drawer-pulls. The case is supported on a moulded base with straight bracket feet. Although American, the design closely follows British prototypes. *Early 19th century. W:101cm (39½in). NA 3*



AMERICAN EMPIRE CHEST OF DRAWERS

This Empire carved mahogany and mahogany veneer chest of drawers is stamped "Wm Palmer/Cabinet Maker/Catherine St./New York". The moulded top is set over three outset short drawers, with carved attached columns flanking four drawers. The case sits on leaf-capped hairy-paw feet. *Early 19th century. W:123.2cm (45½in). SI 2*



FRENCH COMMODE

This case of this provincial commode is made of walnut and the piece is designed in the Empire style. It has a rectangular, dark-grey marble top which is set above a deep,

rectangular frieze. The three drawers have glass handles and matching escutcheons and are flanked by ogee scrolls. The piece is supported on block feet. *Early 19th century. H:90cm (35½in); W:110cm (43½in); D:52cm (20½in) MAR 3*



ITALIAN COMMOME

This Neoclassical walnut and marquetry commode has a marble top above a frieze drawer inlaid with foliate swags and flaring urns. Below are two further drawers, similarly

inlaid *sans traverse* and centred by a panel inlaid with two maidens and a cupid. The sides are decorated to mirror the front, and the case is raised on square, tapered legs. *c.1800 (the marble top is later)*. *W:132.5cm (53in)*. FRE 4



SWEDISH COMMOME

This rectangular top of this late Gustavian commode has canted forecorners above three long drawers. The drawers are flanked by fluted and canted sides, and the commode is raised

on short, tapering, fluted legs. The whole commode is painted in a typical Gustavian pale grey. *c.1820*. *H:85cm (33½in)*; *W:140cm (45in)*; *D:46cm (18in)*. EVE 4

ITALIAN PARQUETRY COMMOME

This walnut and marquetry inlaid commode has a top with a projecting concave front set above four corresponding long, graduated drawers. It stands on bun feet and the case and drawer fronts are inlaid throughout with geometric walnut, mahogany, and boxwood panels. *Early 19th century*. *H:92cm (36½in)*; *W:125cm (49½in)*; *D:65cm (25½in)*. L&T 3



DANISH MAHOGANY COMMOME

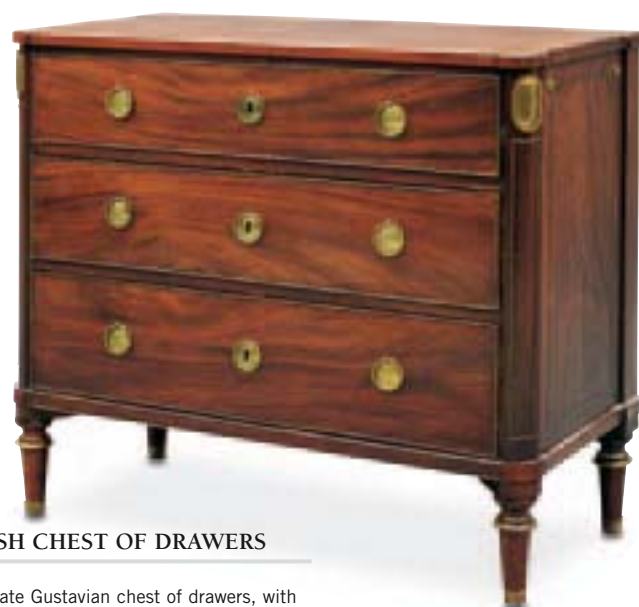
This Danish Louis XVI commode has a rectangular top above a fluted frieze drawer and return with roundel corners. The three lower drawers are flanked by fluted quarter pilasters. The commode is raised on bracket feet. *Late 18th century*. *H:78.5cm (31in)*; *W:77.5cm (30½in)*; *D:45.5cm (18in)*. EVE 4



BIEDERMEIER COMMOME

This southern German commode is veneered in cherry wood and partly ebonized. The rectangular top overhangs the case and has an ebonized edge. There are three drawers: the top has a

bowed decoration, and the bottom two are flanked by ebonized columns. The case has sabre feet. *1820–30*. *H:93cm (36½in)*; *W:130cm (51½in)*; *D:65cm (25½in)*. BMN 3



SWEDISH CHEST OF DRAWERS

This is a late Gustavian chest of drawers, with a shaped top and curved corners. There are three graduated drawers with brass roundels and the case stands on turned, tapering feet. It is

probably veneered in matching mahogany. *Early 19th century*. *H:84cm (33in)*; *W:95cm (37½in)*; *D:47cm (18½in)*. Bk 5

SOFAS

SOFAS IN THE EARLY 19th century reached new levels of comfort. Except for the rusbank in the Cape, they were nearly always entirely upholstered, often in silk damask. As a result, the antique motifs that were frequently used on the open backs of chairs of this period were confined to the uprights and top rails of sofas.

Similarly, because of their weight, the use of splayed legs was less common on sofas than on chairs. At the beginning of the period, the sofa sides tended to be straight or were carved with Neoclassical motifs such as sphinxes. Later, they began to scroll outwards; the sides of a William IV sofa, for example, were often S-shaped.

During the early 19th century there was a revived interest in the day bed and chaise longue. These elegant pieces had a scrolling form and were specifically designed for reclining. They were intended for use in a

drawing room or lady's bedroom and often had outplayed legs with brass cappings and casters.

Typically of French *Restauration* design, the *méridienne* is a type of canapé with two scroll arms, one higher than the other. In Denmark, where people still dined on sofas, *méridiennes* usually had cupboards on the sides where utensils and glasses could be stored. Because of the nature of their use and the ease with which they could be chipped, sofas were more often made from plain wood rather than completely created in gilt.

As the upholstered surfaces of sofas are particularly susceptible to wear and tear, it is unusual to find pieces from this time with their original fabrics. Authentic textiles included velvets, silks, damasks, and chintzes. Sprung seats were introduced in this period, bringing a new level of comfort to seating furniture.

The sphinxes have female heads and wings, which form the armrests of the canapé.

The moulded top rail has carved lions' heads at the corners.



The canapé has four straight legs at the front and four sabre legs at the back.

The squab cushion provides extra comfort.



Carved sphinx detail

FRENCH EMPIRE CANAPÉ

The padded back of this three-seater *canapé* has a straight, moulded top rail, which continues down to form two of the back legs. The front legs and arms are carved in the form of Egyptian sphinxes and terminate in lion's-paw feet. The

canapé seat and back are upholstered in tan suede with black and tan piping and braid. Attributed to the Jacob brothers, this is part of a large suite comprising two *canapés*, six armchairs, and a pair of stools. *c.1800.* H:94cm (37in); W:157cm (62in); D:57cm (22½in). PAR



MÉRIDIENNE

This *méridienne* sofa is typical of its kind, in having one end slightly higher than the other, and is probably French. It is veneered with rosewood and the plinth, supports, and feet are decoratively inlaid with stylized arabesques and

scrolling foliate motifs in a lighter wood. The seat, back, and sides of the piece are generously padded and upholstered in a Neoclassical striped fabric in light green, cream, and gold. The scrolling supports and plinth are supported on volute feet. *c.1830.* H:88cm (34½in); W:148cm (58½in). BEA



SWEDISH SOFA

This large, wide, solid sofa has a gently shaped top rail with simple moulding and applied, gilded rosettes at the centre. The form of the sofa is almost entirely rectilinear, with rectangular padded armrests and eight wide,

square-section legs standing on block feet. The seat is upholstered in a striped fabric and is supported on a deep, plain seat rail decorated at intervals with applied rosettes. The sofa is based on a design by Carl Fredrik Sundvall for Skottorp, a manor house in Blekinge, Sweden. *c.1820.* W:284cm (113¾in). BK 4



ENGLISH REGENCY CHAISE LONGUE

This simulated rosewood and gilt-metal mounted chaise longue has a scrolled three-quarter back and ends and sabre legs. *Early 19th century.* W:200cm (80in). L&T 3



SWEDISH PAINTED SETTEE

This late Gustavian painted and upholstered settee has a rectangular back with three loose cushions. The side panels have circular turned supports, flanking central cross-form supports above a frieze with Neoclassical decoration.

The upholstered cushion seat is supported on a carved laurel-leaf frieze and raised on 16 slender, circular, turned legs with long leaf banding. 1800–10. H:89cm (35in); W:195.5cm (75in); D:71cm (28in). EVE 5



AMERICAN SHERATON SOFA

This small, inlaid mahogany and flame birch sofa has a sloping top rail with a central raised tablet. The tablet has a contrasting ellipse within an inlaid outline. The edge of the top rail is capped with reeding, which continues

on the downsloping arms. Each arm rests on a reeded baluster support and is supported on tapering, reeded legs. The legs are headed by inlaid panels and terminate in spade feet. Early 19th century. H:94cm (37in). NA 5



AMERICAN NEOCLASSICAL SOFA

This carved mahogany sofa, from the Mid-Atlantic States, has a shaped top rail with S-shaped corners, and back-scrolled arms. The upholstered back, sides, and seat are raised on a bolection seat rail, which is supported

on lion's-paw feet, richly carved with foliage at the knees. The upholstery is not original. Early 19th century. W:212.5cm (85in). FRE 1



AUSTRIAN BIEDERMEIER SOFA

This Viennese sofa has a walnut-veneered, partially ebonized frame, and an upholstered seat, arms, and back. It has a high, straight back and outswep, scrolling arms, and is raised on four splayed legs. The upholstery

has a striped, floral design. It has a notably lighter effect than the Anglo-French examples. 1820–30. H:95cm (37½in); W:192cm (75½in); D:67.5cm (26½in). BMN 2



ENGLISH REGENCY SOFA

The rectangular back of this rosewood-framed Regency sofa has a leaf-carved cresting above square, upholstered arms with moulded terminals. The sofa has a squab seat and is raised on a channel-moulded seat rail. The

whole stands on turned, reeded, tapering feet with brass caps and casters. 1820–30. W:213cm (85½in). L&T 3



DANISH DAY BED

This Danish Louis XVI elmwood day bed has a rectangular, upholstered seat between outscrolled, vertical, slat armrests. With a bolster cushion at either end, the day bed is raised on six square, tapered, and fluted

legs. Unlike a chaise longue, a day bed does not have a back. c.1800. H:75cm (29½in); W:198cm (78in); D:66cm (26in). EVE 4

1800-1840

DESKS

DESKS GENERALLY TENDED TO BE of two forms: flat- or slant-topped. Neither of these types were new in the early 19th century. Of the former, which were generally intended for a library, several outstanding examples survive. The Jacob brothers of France provided Napoleon with a flat-topped desk for his study at the Tuileries, which is now at Malmaison. A type of mechanical bureau plat, the box-like top slides back to expose the working surface. It is supported on side pylons formed from paired lion monopodia painted and gilded to simulate bronze.

A late Empire "Ferdinandino" style desk in mahogany survives in the Spanish Royal Palace in Madrid. With a leather top, which is typical of flat-topped desks of the period, it is supported on gilt swans linked by a platform stretcher. Chippendale the Younger's desk for Sir Richard Colt Hoare at Stourhead demonstrates a British variation of this type. Unusually,

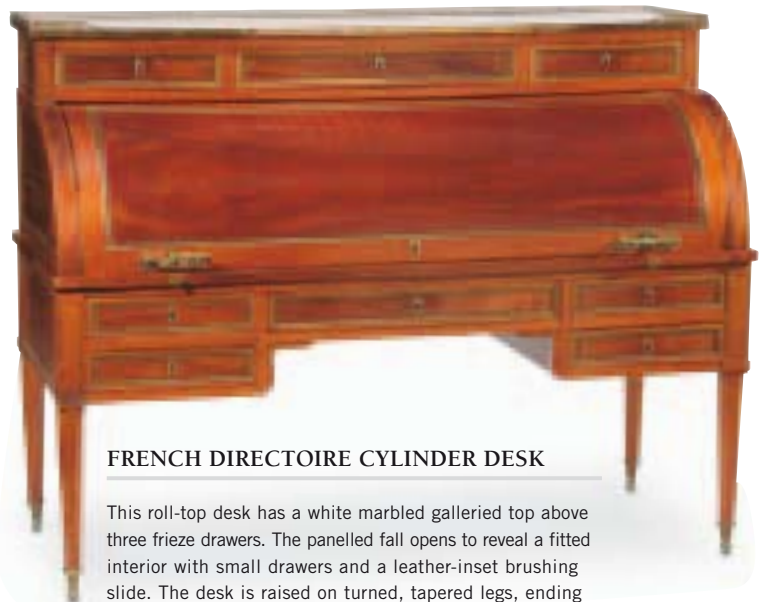
the top of the desk is rounded and has Egyptian mask pilasters running around all sides.

Slant-fronted bureaux were still produced, particularly in provincial centres in Britain and the United States. The cylinder bureau, which had a rounded fall that pushed upwards into the carcass of the piece remained popular on the Continent, particularly in the north. The *chatol* in Denmark was a variation with a cabinet above it. Similar bureau-cabinets were produced in Britain, as was a much smaller desk called the Davenport. In some instances the slant provided the actual writing surface rather than covering it, while others were made with a piano-top style. They are thought to be named after a version made by Gillows for a Captain Davenport. Other small desks, such as the *bonheur-du-jour*, were in vogue on both sides of the channel. The *secrétaire à abattant* continued to be popular, especially in France.



AMERICAN SLANT-FRONT DESK

This Federal maple and tiger-maple slant-front desk from New England has a moulded slope front with a fitted interior and four long graduated drawers. There is a moulded base and the case sits on French feet. The secondary wood is white pine. c.1800. H:112cm (44in); W:104cm (41in); D:49cm (19¼in). SI 3



FRENCH DIRECTOIRE CYLINDER DESK

This roll-top desk has a white marbled galleried top above three frieze drawers. The panelled fall opens to reveal a fitted interior with small drawers and a leather-inset brushing slide. The desk is raised on turned, tapered legs, ending in *toupie* feet. c.1800. W:163cm (64in). FRE 4



Each side panel has a lion's head brass ring pull.

The frieze has three drawers.

The ebony inlay takes the form of leaf sprays and geometric motifs.

Arched bracket lion's paw foot.



Detail of inlay

ENGLISH REGENCY DESK

This shaped rectangular pedestal desk has a black gilt-tooled leather writing surface and is decorated around the edges with ebony inlay depicting sprays of leaves and geometric motifs. The frieze has three drawers to the front above

a kneehole, flanked on either side by a door enclosing three drawers. The reverse of the desk has three conforming frieze drawers and cupboard doors enclosing a shelf. The case stands on eight arched bracket lion's-paw feet. c.1820. H:80cm (31½in); W:152.5cm (60in); D:106.5cm (42in). PAR

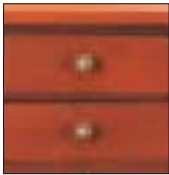


ITALIAN LIFT-TOP DESK

This desk has a lift-top with iron strap hinges and lock that folds back to reveal a fitted interior. The desk is supported on canted, scrolled ends with carved supports. Early 19th century. H:89cm (35in); W:109cm (43in). BRU 3



Carved shell motif



Interior drawer detail



AMERICAN FEDERAL DESK

The slant front of this Federal cherry-wood clerk's desk encloses a fitted interior of four drawers and valanced compartments on both sides of a central, shell-carved, prospect door flanked by two document drawers. Below is a single long drawer. *Early 19th century. H:103cm (41½in). S&K 2*



Reeded drawer detail



SWEDISH PAINTED DESK

This is a late Gustavian painted desk, with a wide overhanging rectangular writing surface above three reeded frieze drawers. Each pedestal has three graduated short drawers, again reeded, and is raised on a narrow

plinth with block feet. *1800-20. H:78cm (30¾in); W:131cm (51½in); D:51.5cm (20¼in). EVE 4*



Gilt-metal mounts



FRENCH CLERK'S DESK

This mahogany desk has a three-quarter gilt-metal gallery and a leather inset slope. There is a gilt-metal mounted frieze with a drawer above a grille door and sides with folio divisions, flanked by turned columns. The desk is raised above a platform with square supports on bun feet. *H:122cm (48in); W:93cm (36¾in). DN 4*

BIEDERMEIER CYLINDER BUREAU

This German walnut-veneered cylinder desk has a frieze drawer above the roll-top and two long drawers below. The front opens to reveal a fitted interior with six small drawers and compartments. The case is supported on square-section tapering legs. *c.1820. H:126cm (49½in); W:121cm (47¾in); D:63cm (24¾in). WKA 4*



GERMAN PEDESTAL DESK

This pedestal writing table is covered with cherry wood veneer. The rectangular top has a higher, moulded edge to the back and sits above one long and two short frieze drawers with locks. Either side of the knee-hole, the

deep, rectilinear pedestals have unusual tapered doors with applied moulding above, which give the piece an architectural feel. The interiors of the pedestals are fitted with shelving. The whole piece is supported on a plinth base. *c.1825. H:82.5cm (32½in); W:185.5cm (72¾in); D:72cm (28½in). SLK 6*



CANADIAN DROP-FRONT DESK

This rare Quebec pine desk has a fall front, which opens to reveal a fitted interior. On either side of a central cubbyhole are three wide, graduated drawers, and above it is a series of pigeonholes. The case has three long

drawers and is supported on a moulded plinth. The exterior of the desk has been stripped, but still bears traces of its original paint finish. *c.1820. W:123cm (48½in). PER 4*

TABLES

THE EARLY PART OF THE 19TH century is characterized by the development of many different types of furniture that were designed for specific tasks. The sofa table, which was developed around 1800, is one example. Intended to stand directly in front of a sofa, it provided a support for reading, writing, sketching, and similar tasks. Although the sofa table was an English invention, it was widely copied on the Continent.

Sofa tables were usually veneered in mahogany or rosewood and were often banded in exotic timbers or outlined in brass stringing. Closely related to the Pembroke table, the sofa table has a flap at either end – unlike the centre, writing, or library table – although they all share the same basic function.

The sofa table also usually has two frieze drawers, which are sometimes set opposite dummy drawers. It is supported on end standards linked by a stretcher. Alternatively it may be supported on a central pedestal, often with splayed legs on later examples,

with brass cappings and casters.

Console tables traditionally stand against a window pier beneath a high mirror that reflects light around the room. Consequently, the back of the table is usually unfinished as no one ever sees it. Consoles are often screwed directly onto the wall so they do not have back legs. If they do, the legs are purely functional and do not match the more elaborate, decorative forms of the front legs.

Serving tables and hall tables are often similar in shape to console tables, but they are usually longer and were often intended to stand against a windowless wall.

Although smaller, card and tea tables (the former does not have a baize lining) are often similar in style to sofa tables, and have identical decoration, veneers, and construction timbers. Their fold-over tops are usually supported on a swing leg, or they are supported on a central pedestal so that they can pivot.

The sofa table is decorated throughout with brass inlay.



The lyre-shaped supports are a recurrent motif of late Neoclassical design.

The "strings" of the lyre are made from brass.

REGENCY LIBRARY TABLE

This fine rosewood writing or library table has a rectangular top with gently rounded corners, the whole of which is surrounded by a pierced gallery. There are two short drawers set into the frieze, both of which have round brass handles.

The table top is raised on elegant twin lyre-shaped supports with brass "strings" in the centre. The supports terminate in brass-capped paw feet, and are joined by a central, turned stretcher. This typical form of Regency table was also produced with two flaps, to be used as a sofa table. c.1820. H:76cm (30in). FRE. 5



AMERICAN LIBRARY TABLE

This Neoclassical mahogany table has a hinged rectangular top with drop leaves, a drawer and an opposing dummy drawer, a pedestal base, and outplayed legs on casters. Early 19th century. W:87.5cm (35in). NA 3



AMERICAN PIER TABLE

The rectangular marble top of this American Empire-style table rests above a moulded frieze with carved scrolls supported on turned columns. Below the tabletop is a framed mirror. c.1815. W:100cm (39in). FRE 5



FRENCH WORKTABLE

This rosewood worktable has a crossbanded rectangular top above two drawers and opposing dummy drawers. It has lyre-shaped treble supports joined by a turned stretcher and sabre legs. W:57cm (22in). L&T 4



AMERICAN CLASSICAL TABLE

This table has a rectangular top with canted corners above a conforming frieze. It is supported on fluted cylindrical columns on an incurved rectangular plinth joined to shaped, downswept legs. W:90cm (36in). NA 3



EMPIRE CONSOLE TABLE

This table has a rectangular marble top above a frieze drawer. There are front consoles with paw feet and two rear pilasters on a plinth base. Early 19th century. H:86cm (33½in); W:79cm (31in); D:47.5cm (18¾in). L&T 3



FEDERAL TABLE

This mahogany table has a rectangular top above two graduated frieze drawers, and turned legs, joined by a stretcher and terminating in outswept feet. c.1810. H:81cm (32in); W:84cm (33in); D:51cm (20in). BDL

**DANISH EMPIRE SOFA TABLE**

This fruitwood-inlaid, ebonized, and parcel-gilt mahogany sofa table has a rectangular top and D-shaped drop leaves above a frieze with a fruitwood drawer. The end supports are flanked by giltwood and ebonized bird-head supports. 1810–20. *H:77.5cm (30½in); W:84cm (33in); D:143.5cm (59½in).* EVE 5

**AUSTRIAN TABLE**

Veneered in cherry wood, this table has a rectangular top above a frieze with a single drawer. The table top is supported on two elaborately-carved lyre supports with upturned ends, joined to each other by a turned stretcher. c.1830. *H:77cm (30½in); W:99cm (39in); D:73cm (28½in).* SLK 4

**CHINESE EXPORT CENTRE TABLE**

This highly decorative, Regency-style, black lacquer table has a rectangular top with rounded corners. The frieze has two front drawers and two dummies at the back. The splayed end-supports rest on a plinth with bun feet. c.1830. *H:75cm (29½in); W:122cm (48in); D:61cm (24in).* PAR

**SCOTTISH REGENCY CONSOLE TABLE**

The rectangular top of this mahogany console table sits above an ogee frieze. The table top is supported on palmette-carved, scrolling front console legs, which terminate in bun feet. The square-section back legs are panelled and have square, block feet. c.1820. *W:148cm (58in).* L&T

**GERMAN CARD TABLE**

This mahogany table has a rectangular top with moulded sides and rests above a frieze flanked by carved scrolls. It is supported on a column with a carved base, four splayed legs carved with stylized swans, and scroll feet. c.1820. *H:77cm (30½in); W:110cm (43½in); D:55cm (21½in).* SLK 4

**BRITISH CONSOLE TABLE**

This William IV mahogany console table has a rectangular slate top raised on a base with a frieze. The table top is supported on a pair of elaborately scrolled and leaf-carved console legs with paw feet at the front. The back legs take the form of rectangular-section, panelled pilasters. c.1830. *W:183cm (72in).* L&T 4

**GEORGE IV CARD TABLE**

The rectangular top of this pedestal card table has a narrow brass inlay and rounded corners. It is supported on a sturdy octagonal, tapering column with a nulled collar, a round platform, and four outswept legs which end in brass terminals and casters. Early 19th century. *W: 91cm (36in).* DN 3

**AMERICAN NEOCLASSICAL CARD TABLE**

The rectangular, hinged top of this mahogany table has a bowed centre section above a conforming apron with a brass-outlined panel and central applied brass foliage. It sits on a lyre-form pedestal with brass strings, on outsplayed legs with brass paw toes and casters. Early 19th century. *W:91.5cm (36in).* NA 4

**REGENCY SOFA TABLE**

This rosewood sofa table has satinwood crossbanding. Below the rectangular top there is a frieze with two drawers and rounded drop leaves. The table sits on rectangular-section supports on inlaid sabre legs terminating in anthemion-cast brass caps and casters. Early 19th century. *W:146cm (57½in).* L&T 4

OCCASIONAL TABLES

THE SMALL-SCALE OCCASIONAL table truly stands out. Many examples were also portable and could be moved around a room to serve a variety of functions, although often they had a specific use. In this case, a table could be brought out when required and then moved back to the walls or out of the room. Because occasional tables might be seen from all sides, they were usually veneered on the back, unlike side tables.

Occasional tables are often associated with leisure or with ladies' activities. Worktables, for example, were given considerable attention by Sheraton and were largely an invention of this period.

Intended to hold sewing apparatus, worktables often have a silk work bag which slides out from beneath the upper surface. Others have a rising lid

with compartments. Some are even fitted with a rising screen for use in front of the fire. Small and fragile, worktables are often made in exotic wood, either with marquetry or painted details.

Other types include those for gaming (often with a marquetry chess and backgammon board) and reading stands. These were known from the mid 18th century and had a ratcheted slope, sometimes inset with leather if the table was also to be used for drawing. Small, circular *guéridons* in France were often used to hold candelabra or perfume burners. *Quartetto*, or nests-of-tables, were also an invention of the period. Elaborate examples with cut-brass decoration and exotic wood were made by George Oakley, and others with ring-turned supports and veneers by Gillows.

The inset table top is made of white marble.



Verre églomisé vignettes in black and gold depict repeating motifs of flaming torches and crossed quivers.

The turned tapering legs are carved with spiral flutes.

SWEDISH SIDE TABLE

This fine-quality, giltwood side table has an inset table top made of white marble, which is set above a giltwood frieze carved with laurel leaves and with recessed panels incorporating black and gold *verre églomisé* vignettes. There

are additional panels above the legs and at the centre of the frieze. The turned, tapering legs are carved with low-relief laurel above a band of Greek key pattern, and then carved with spiral flutes below. The legs terminate in baluster feet. c.1810. H:81.5cm (32in); W:81.5cm (32in); D:51cm (20in). MAL



REGENCY WRITING BOX

This bird's-eye maple and ebony string writing box has a hinged slope with a leather inset, a drawer, and dummy drawer. The ring-turned, ebonized legs are joined by a C-scroll stretcher. c.1810. H:86cm (33½in). DN 3



BIEDERMEIER SIDE TABLE

This solid beech and beech-veneered side table has a round frieze with an overhanging circular top. It is raised on three sabre legs, joined lower down by an additional, circular shelf. 1820. H:78cm (30½in). BMN 2



Brass ring pull

INLAID STAND

This stand is from the southern states of America and has a rectangular top with rounded corners and a band of double string inlay. It is raised on inlaid, tapered legs below bird's-eye maple panels. The single drawer has three interior compartments. H:72.5cm (28½in); W:66.5cm (26¼in); D:46.5cm (18¼in). BRU 7



CONSOLE TABLE

Made in Franken, Germany, this console table is veneered in mahogany. It has a rectangular marble table top above a frieze drawer and stands on square, tapering legs. H:84cm (33in); W:84cm (33in); D:50cm (19¾in). SLK 5



SHERATON GAMES TABLE

This mahogany games and worktable has a rectangular top with chamfered corners and a chessboard inlaid in its surface. It stands on square, tapering legs. c.1790. H:73.5cm (29in). DL 4



SWEDISH SIDE TABLE

This gilt-metal, mounted, mahogany side table by Karl Johan has a circular top above a frieze. The circular stem ends in a tripartite base with scrolled feet. *H:79cm (31in); Diam:44.5cm (17½in).* EVE



OCCASIONAL TABLE

Inlaid with brass, this French Empire mahogany table has a circular top featuring an inset marble and pierced-brass gallery. It has a fluted column support ending on a tripod base. *Early 19th century. H:79cm (31¼in).* SI 1

PATTERN BOOKS

THE VOGUE FOR SMALL, OCCASIONAL TABLES WAS ENCOURAGED BY VARIOUS PATTERN BOOKS PUBLISHED IN THE LATE 18TH AND EARLY 19TH CENTURIES.

The use of pattern books by furniture makers was well-established by the end of the 18th century, when Thomas Sheraton published *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Drawing Book*. Hugely significant in disseminating the Neoclassical Regency style in England and America, this book included many designs for occasional tables, from pot cupboards to urn stands. Although this was not particularly new – Chippendale and Ince and Mayhew had included such objects in their pattern books of the 1750s and 60s – the lightness and variety of Sheraton's examples was innovative.

Sheraton's next book was his *Cabinet Dictionary*, published 1803, which, possibly influenced by Thomas Hope, included some Egyptian designs. The influence of French furniture is also evident in the inclusion of the small writing desk known as a *bonheur-du-jour*. Sheraton never completed his final massive volume, *The Cabinet-Maker, Upholsterer, and General Artist's Encyclopaedia*, although it was published, incomplete, in 1805. In this late title, contemporary developments in France, notably the post-revolutionary styles, were particularly evident.



Sheraton prototypes These designs are for an urn stand (*left*) and pot cupboards (*centre and right*), taken from *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Drawing Book* (3rd edition). 1794.



SOUTH AFRICAN TEA TABLE

This stinkwood tea table has a rectangular top with rounded corners, a plain frieze, decorative, contrasting inlays, and slightly tapering legs. *1790–1810. H:71cm (28in); W:85cm (33¼in); D:50cm (19½in).* PRA



ITALIAN BEDSIDE COMMODE

Made of olive wood and tulipwood, this crossbanded, bedside commode has a lift-up lid above a fall front and fitted interior. It has square, tapering legs. *H:79cm (31in); W:52cm (20½in); D:35.5cm (14in).* Cato 3



BIEDERMEIER SEWING TABLE

This sewing table from Weimar is veneered in cherry wood with ebony stringing. The overhanging table top has rounded corners. The rounded case has two drawers and sabre legs. *c.1830. H:77cm (30½in).* BMN 3



FEDERAL WORKSTAND

This figured mahogany workstand has a rectangular-shaped top supported by half-round colonettes and two drawers. It stands on rounded, tapering, ring-turned legs ending in ball feet. *c.1820. H:71cm (28in).* FRE 1



ITALIAN TABLE

This Neoclassical inlaid fruitwood table *en chiffonière* has a three-quarter gallery, two drawers with chevron banding, and square-section, tapering legs. *Early 19th century. H:65.5cm (27in).* SLK 1



WORKSTAND

This Massachusetts Sheraton mahogany workstand has a rectangular top with cut corners and two compartmented drawers. The ringed pilasters lead into tapering, reeded legs with ringed cuffs. *H:73cm (28¼in).* NA 4

1800-1840

PAINTED FURNITURE

TWO TYPES OF PAINTED furniture were evident in the early 19th century. One could be characterized as high style: that is furniture produced in the fashionable Empire or Regency manner which, instead of being veneered in mahogany, rosewood, or *bois clairs*, was painted. This was particularly common on seating furniture, which might have been made out of cheaper materials and then painted to simulate rosewood or calamander. Similarly, pieces might be painted to look like marble, while boxes, music stands or small pieces

were decorated with penwork. The second category comprises more provincial pieces, particularly the rustic furniture produced in Russia, Scandinavia, the Tyrol (Austria), or southern Germany, around Bavaria. These naïve case pieces (often wardrobes or chests) are frequently entirely covered in bright patterns, relieved only by the occasional painting of flowers or landscapes. A good collection is preserved in the Skansen, Stockholm. Many of these items of furniture are signed and dated.



The later date at the top suggests this cupboard was given as a wedding gift to a child of the original recipients.

Most of the decorative panels are filled with painted floral displays, while the one in the centre of the door portrays a young couple.



Detail of floral pattern

The raised plinth base is fitted with a drawer.

MARRIAGE CUPBOARD

The arched, moulded cornice of this pine cupboard sits above a case with canted corners and a single door with three shaped, decorative panels flanked by additional painted panels. The base of the cupboard has a single drawer

and stands on bun feet. All of the surfaces of the cupboard are painted. In some rural communities, it was traditional to make a wedding gift of this type of cupboard. It could then be re-dated and given as a gift to the next generation. *c.1830. H:197cm (77½in); W:117cm (46in); D:52cm (20¼in). RY*



ITALIAN CORNER CABINET

This corner cabinet has two quarter-circle shelves above two cupboard doors and stands on shaped bracket feet. The whole cabinet is painted with floral motifs on a yellow ground. *1810. H:76cm (30in). SS 3*



GUSTAVIAN CHAIR

This white-painted side chair, one of a pair by Melkior Lundberg, has a simple oval back with a solid, vase-shaped splat. The tapering seat has a carved seat rail and is raised on stop-fluted legs. *Early 19th century. Bk 3*



Painted detail



PAINTED PINE CHEST

This central-European painted chest is decorated throughout with flowers in scroll-edged panels with a cream ground on a pale blue border. The piece has a rectangular top above four scrolling front drawers with red-

painted stiles and turned corner pilasters. The chest has a panelled back and stands on red-painted, turned feet. The drawers are graduated in size. *Early 19th century. W:103.5cm (40¾in). WW 3*



MARBLE-EFFECT STOOL

This beech stool with a mahogany seat has been painted all over with purple and grey mottling to simulate yellow Siena marble. The seat is carved to simulate fringed drapery falling over the sides in folds. The massive

rectangular legs have been designed as tapering, fluted columns, headed by detached roundels enclosing florets. After a design by C.H.Tatham. *c.1800. H:46cm (18in); W:62cm (24½in); D:47cm (18½in). TNH*

**AMERICAN STAND**

This elegant painted stand is made of rosewood. It has a rectangular top which sits above an ornately decorated frieze with a single drawer. The case is raised on turned and tapering legs which terminate in turned feet. *Early 19th century. H:77.5cm (31in). NA 4*

**AMERICAN CUPBOARD**

This green-painted walnut cupboard has a dovetailed splash panel with scrolled cut-outs set above two dovetailed drawers and two framed, panelled doors. The case stands on shaped bracket feet. *Early 19th century. H:137cm (54in); W:112cm (44in); D:43cm (17in). BRU 2*

**CANADIAN CHINA CABINET**

This china cabinet has a yellow-painted scrolling crest flanked by finials set above a pair of glass doors, which open onto a blue, shelved interior. The lower section of the cabinet has three short drawers above a pair of cupboard doors, and stands on bracket feet. *Early 19th century. H:226cm (89in). WAD*

FANCY FURNITURE

PARTICULAR TO THE UNITED STATES, ELABORATELY PAINTED FANCY FURNITURE WAS WIDELY PRODUCED DURING THE LATE 18TH CENTURY AND FIRST HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY.

Fancy Furniture, a particular type of painted furniture, was produced in the United States on the eastern seaboard from the late 18th century to the second half of the 19th century. Although other pieces were made, it was primarily chairs that were decorated in this way.

Sometimes called Hitchcock chairs, after Lambert Hitchcock, their most famous producer, the shapes of these pieces were often inspired by the designs of Thomas Sheraton (see p.138). With turned legs joined by spindle stretchers and bar backs, they were essentially provincial pieces, similar in style to Windsor chairs (see p.240). Light, portable, and frequently with rush or caned seats, fancy chairs are characterized by their elaborate painted surfaces, which were often black with gilt highlights. The backs were hand-painted and decorated with stencilling. The style of the



The scrolled backboard and frieze drawer have a similar painted floral decoration.

Dressing table and chair
This is a New England yellow-painted and decorated dressing table with putty-grained top and barber-pole turned legs, together with a companion chair. *Early 19th century. H:95cm (38in). NA 3*

decoration varied from Neoclassical to more naturalistic designs, including floral motifs and even landscapes.

From his factory in Connecticut, Hitchcock produced his furniture on an assembly line, and it was often stencilled with the name of the factory. The Irish brothers, John and Hugh Findlay, produced similar painted furniture in Baltimore, including some furniture that they made for the White House in 1809, although these pieces were destroyed by a fire during the War of 1812.

Sheraton-style chairs These two fancy-painted and decorated chairs comprise an armchair with faux graining and a fiddle-back side chair with landscape decoration and cane seat. *Early 19th century. NA 1*

**DIRECTOIRE SEMAINIER**

An elegant piece with its original painted finish, this French *semainier* is made from cherry wood and oak with a marble top. The chest has a simple, moulded frieze set above six drawers and stands on square-section tapering legs. *c.1810. H:151cm (59½in); W:104cm (41in); D:44.5cm (17½in). RY*





MID 19TH CENTURY

1840-1900

TURMOIL AND PROGRESS

UNREST AND REVOLUTION BETWEEN 1840 AND 1865 GAVE WAY TO STABILITY, EXPANSION, AND INDUSTRIAL PROGRESS, WHICH BENEFITED AN EMERGING MIDDLE CLASS KEEN ON FASHIONABLE FURNITURE.

IN 1837, QUEEN VICTORIA ASCENDED the British throne, just as the Chartist movement was gaining momentum. Increasingly vehement demands for suffrage were met with similar cries from the disaffected working classes across Europe and even greater tumult further afield in the Americas and East and South Asia. In 1848, revolution erupted across Europe: from Paris to Vienna huge swathes of the angry populace vented their dissatisfaction, sending tremors of panic through the political elite.

The Opium War was fought and won in China in 1840, and further unrest was to follow in East Asia. The Indian Mutiny in 1857 brought about the final collapse of the East

India Company, forcing the British Crown to formally take charge of the administration of the subcontinent. The American Civil War raged from 1861 to 1865, disrupting the economy and pitting state against state.

REBUILDING FROM THE ASHES

The turmoil of these chaotic years eventually gave way to a period of relative stability. The two great European unification movements of the 19th century finally succeeded: the Kingdom of Italy was created in 1861 and Germany, under the Machiavellian direction of Otto von Bismarck, took shape in 1871. In 1869, two Herculean engineering projects were completed – the Suez Canal and the Union Pacific railway.

The preservation of the Union in the United States of America paved the way for a period of unprecedented expansion. In the East, Japan was finally encouraged to open her ports to the West for a limited time at the end of the Edo period and, under the leadership of Emperor Meiji from 1868, she slowly emerged from years of isolation and ploughed huge investment into her infrastructure and businesses.

DOMESTIC CONSEQUENCES

Until around 1860, the majority of European furniture-designers were content to rehash historical styles, and relied excessively on surface decoration in lieu of innovative design. The florid, feminine Rococo revival, which emanated from France, and the heavy, masculine Gothic revival, which became the British national style,

Gothic chair The Gothic revival was evident in all styles of furniture. The arched back of this hall chair, with rosette roundels, and the arched seat rail are typical features of the style. L&T



were adopted almost universally. Neoclassical revivals flourished at various points in many countries. Colonial traders brought fine hardwoods, including excellent mahoganies, to Europe, and the Industrial Revolution introduced new materials, such as cast iron, to the manufacturing base.

Industrialization also brought better-equipped factories and, as the production of household goods became more mechanized, they became more homogenous. A redistribution of wealth in favour of the middle classes created huge demand for fashionable furnishings. From 1860, a new confidence breathed life into the furniture industry, assisted by exhibitions that became showcases of 19th-century European aspiration. Nations began to assert their individuality, looking to their own past for inspiration.



West facade of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam Designed by Pierre Cuyper to house the national art collection, the building opened to the public on 13 July 1885. It is a combination of Romanesque, Gothic, and Dutch Renaissance styles.

TIMELINE 1840–1900

1840 In Britain, Victoria marries Albert of Saxe-Coburg. The British practice of deporting its convicts to Australia ends.

1841 China cedes Hong Kong to the British. David Livingstone begins his explorations of Africa.

1842 The Austrian designer, Michael Thonet, receives a patent for his steam-bending process. His bentwood furniture proves a phenomenal success in the ensuing years.



Bentwood chair This classic piece was designed by Michael Thonet in 1859.

1848 Revolution in France sparks similar scenes in cities across Europe, marking the beginning of the end of European absolutism.

1851 The Great Exhibition of the Industries of all Nations is held in Hyde Park in London.



1852 Queen Victoria officially opens the new Palace of Westminster (also known as the Houses of Parliament). It was designed by Sir Charles Barry and his assistant A.W.N. Pugin, although work continues until 1868.

1853 Japan is compelled to open her ports to foreign trade for the first time in generations by Commodore Perry.

The Palace of Westminster Sir Charles Barry designed the building along Classical lines and it was built between 1836 and 1868. The Gothic details were designed by A.W.N. Pugin.



Drawing Room of Osborne House, Isle of Wight With its mixture of Neoclassical, Rococo, and Empire elements, this drawing room is typical of the Victorian era. Bought in 1845 by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, the original house was demolished and by 1848 a new three-storey pavilion with flagtower and wings was built in its place.

1861 Abraham Lincoln becomes president of the United States. The secession from the Union of 11 southern states sparks the American Civil War, which leaves 300,000 dead.



Bismarck statue This monument to the first German chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, stands in Berlin. It was designed in 1896 by Reinhold Begas.

1861 Italy is unified and the former King of Sardinia becomes King of Italy. Venice and Rome become part of the new kingdom in 1866 and 1871.

1871 Bismarck steers the German states to a union dominated by Prussia, following successful wars with both France and Austria.

1874 The Paris Opera House, designed by Charles Garnier, is completed, representing one of the centrepieces of Hausmann's newly reconstructed Paris.

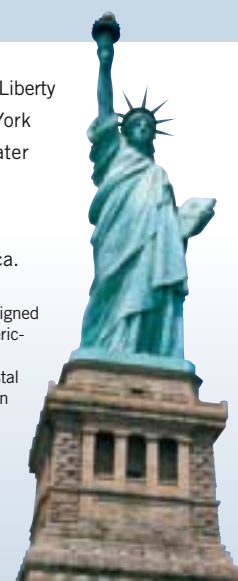


The Palais Garnier Located at the *Place de l'Opéra* in Paris, the *Palais Garnier* was designed in traditional Italian style, inspired by Italian and French villas of the 17th and 18th centuries.

1886 The Statue of Liberty is unveiled in New York harbour, ten years later than planned.

1899 The Boer War begins in South Africa.

The Statue of Liberty Designed by French sculptor Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi, the statue stands on a pedestal designed by the American architect Richard Morris Hunt, and funded by the United States.



REVIVAL STYLES

THE AGE OF INDUSTRIALIZATION wrought a great deal of change on the furniture industry. Factories and division of labour made furniture more accessible than ever before, while aggressive colonization and feverish trade with Asia introduced new materials to the West and changed the attitude of countries such as India and Japan to cabinet-making.

AN ECLECTIC AGE

Despite these powerful influences, the mid-19th century failed to produce a distinctive and recognizable idiom of its own. Instead, the period was dominated by the revival of styles that had previously been fashionable. Foremost among these were the Gothic



Oak chair Designed by A.W.N. Pugin, this is a version of the Glastonbury chair, a medieval folding chair owned by the Bishop of Wells. It retains the Gothic shape and construction of the original chair, but does not fold. 1839–41. H:85cm (33½in); W:53.5cm (21in); D:62cm (24½in).

style, rooted in the spectacular church architecture of the Middle Ages, and the aspirational Rococo, which had developed in 18th-century France. Despite being polar opposites in terms of the philosophies that lay behind them, these two styles would frequently feature in the same room – even, sometimes, in the same piece of furniture.

This plethora of styles was augmented by the addition of various Classical trophies to the decorative canon. The grand Neoclassical designs of the previous century enjoyed periodic revivals, and Grecian, Roman, and Egyptian themes were never far from the public consciousness, thanks to frequent and well-publicized archaeological discoveries. Even the most visionary designers of the period – men such as A.W.N. Pugin and Michael Thonet – worked within these derivative constraints.

International exhibitions, beginning with the Great Exhibition of 1851 held in the Crystal Palace, London, did much to promote this wide range of styles to the world during the second half of the 19th century. Not only did they attract thousands of visitors, but their lavishly illustrated catalogues reached many more potential patrons and furniture-makers, ready and able to copy them.

MATERIALS AND FORMS

Revival styles took different manifestations from country to country, but certain staple forms were common to all. The balloon-back chair was a standard design between 1830 and 1860, when the cheaper bentwood chair finally forced it out of favour. Display cabinets grew in popularity, as many people cultivated arcane and extensive collections of trinkets. Plush, velour tapestry and braid seat covers added a feminine touch and fulfilled the general desire for comfort within the home.

Mahogany and walnut were the most prevalent timbers used in furniture-making, although the revival styles often made use of oak and ebony. Mahogany, rosewood, and teak were imported by powerful Western nations from their colonial interests around the world, creating plentiful supplies of exotic timbers for craftsmen to work with. Novel materials replaced wood altogether in some furniture – papier-mâché,



Louis XVI-style mirror In this carved and gessoed giltwood mirror, the oval bevelled mirror plate sits within a mirror surround, separated by a beaded frame. The outer frame has egg-and-dart moulding, foliage, and a pierced crest. c.1880. S&K

originally used to make tables, trays, and small boxes, became a fashionable material for chairs and even beds, and cast-iron was manipulated to produce pieces of interior and garden furniture.

COST OF INDUSTRIALIZATION

Fine furniture had never before been available to so many people. Machines cut veneers far thinner than were ever achieved by hand and made short work of intricate dovetails and dowels. Even the carving process was automated, and many craftsmen found themselves downgraded to simple finishers. As costs dropped and productivity soared, the middle classes were able to fill their homes with fashionable furnishings that would have been prohibitively expensive to the previous generation.

Unfortunately, the quality of the furniture suffered. With the exception of the finest craftsmen, there was a noticeable degeneration of artistry. In Victorian Britain, a liking for pattern and ornament resulted in cluttered rooms, which, together with the decline in quality, led to a backlash at the end of the century with the Arts and Crafts Movement (see pp.320–45).



chandeliers. Antler furniture is a rare example of a rustic, vernacular form of furniture becoming widespread and popular at a time when the industry was dominated by historical revival styles. It is also typical of the kitsch furniture of the period, in which making a decorative statement sometimes seemed to override considerations of comfort, harmony, or good taste.

Dining chairs Each of this set of four oak and antler-horn chairs has an oval upholstered back, supported by an antler frame. The stuffer seat of each chair is raised on antler supports. L&T

ANTLER FURNITURE

An interest in the woody outdoors combined with a love of excess conspired to create a demand for antler furniture in 19th-century America. Members of the deer family, such as moose and elk – all abundant in the northern states – naturally shed their antlers every year, and these became prized as table legs, chair backs, lamp stands, and all manner of decorative objects. Antler lamp stands were invariably combined with shades fashioned from deer hide.

This type of furniture was also popular in Austrian and German hunting lodges for its obvious associations. Tables with antler legs were favoured as were antler

WALNUT AND MARQUETRY

Walnut had fallen out of favour as a material for cabinet-making after about 1740, owing to a walnut shortage in Europe following the frost of 1709. Mahogany became more widespread, but walnut enjoyed a renewed surge of popularity in the Victorian period. A light brown colour, walnut can have a very dark grain and has long been prized for its handsome figuring. It is also easy to carve. These qualities made walnut an ideal ground on which to practise the Dutch art of marquetry – a very popular surface decoration in the mid 19th century.

Colonial interests in the tropics, especially in the Caribbean and Asia-Pacific regions, provided European countries with numerous exotic and attractive specimen woods. Talented craftsmen were quick to exploit the decorative potential of these woods and incorporated them into complex intarsia designs, such as those incorporated in this walnut side cabinet (right). Boxwood and ebony were combined with less well-known timbers, such as snakewood, jelutong, and Burmese teak, lending those pieces a sumptuous decadence that set such furniture apart from the rest.

Each cantered corner has a scrolled, shell-cast mount.

The curved frieze is centred by a mount cast with putti.

The pierced, chamfered, tapering corner buttress mount has shell-, flower-, and leaf-cast decoration.

The oval marquetry medallion depicts birds perched on flowering sprigs on an ebony ground.

The spandrels contain foliate, scrolled marquetry.

Side cabinet This walnut, marquetry, and gilt-brass mounted cabinet is serpentine in outline. The glazed upper part has foliate-, scrolled-, shell-, and flower-cast mounts with glazed, arched, panelled side doors enclosing a mirrored back and shelf. The projecting lower part has a frieze centred by a mount with putti and flanked by floral marquetry. Below this is a pair of cupboard doors centred by oval marquetry medallions within foliate-cast border mounts. The sides have conforming decoration, flanked by pierced, chamfered, tapering corner buttresses with gilt-brass cast mounts. c.1870. H:155cm (61in); W:100cm (39¼in); D:52cm (20½in).

The shaped apron is centred by a pierced and scroll-cast foliate mount.

A ribbon-cast and reeded cartouche mount surrounds each bordered medallion.



ELEMENTS OF STYLE

Decorative features in the 19th century were drawn from the same historical sources that pervaded architecture and the fine arts – Gothic, Rococo, and Neoclassical styles all enjoyed a global revival at this time. Increased mechanization meant that furniture could be produced from previously unused materials, such as coal and glass. It also allowed elaborately inlaid or carved furniture to be made more easily and cheaply. Improved transport and communication enabled many more people to adopt new ideas, production methods, and materials.



Inlaid table top with kingwood veneer

Eclecticism

This Fortner table features brass, mother-of-pearl, and rosewood inlaid into a kingwood veneer. The German-made table carries influences from a variety of historical periods: the central medallion is inspired by Gothic motifs; the scrolling designs are pure Rococo; and the symmetry of the overall design of the table top is more Neoclassical in style.



Corner of Louis XV-style writing table

Louis XV style

The delicate colours of the marquetry work and the restrained gilt metal mounts on this table hark back to the French Louis XV style. The mid 19th-century interpretation was softer and more delicate than the original opulent Louis XV style. The mounts on the corners of this Louis XV-style writing table are machine-made, helping to reduce the cost of the piece.



Mahogany and marquetry centre table

Dutch marquetry

The Dutch were among the first to develop the technique of marquetry in Europe during the 18th century. During the 19th century, Dutch craftsmen continued to produce some of the best examples of wooden intarsia design, typically with floral themes and using different coloured woods. Sometimes bone or shell were used, stained bright colours to contrast with the wood.



Decorative inlay from a bedside cabinet

Neoclassical urns

An archetypal Classical motif, the urn was a consistent decorative feature used during the Neoclassical revivals that punctuated the 19th century. This example is inlaid into the body of the furniture, although carved urns were just as prevalent, especially in chair backs. The lightweight proportions of the handles are typical of 19th-century design style.



Decorative ivory inlay work on rosewood

Engraved ivory inlays

The profusely engraved ivory inlay that covers this Collinson and Lock centre table is similar to the work of Italian craftsmen of the same period, and is essentially Renaissance revival in style. The putti, figures, urns, and formal leaf border are Classical decorative forms. The use of rosewood as a foil for the ivory detail is also typical of the Renaissance revival style.



Painted lyre back of Regency-style chair

Painted chair backs

The practice of painting furniture had dwindled by around 1825 but was resurrected, along with the lyre back, as part of a Regency revival in about 1850. During the late Victorian period, some considered Regency furniture superior to contemporary styles, and cabinet-makers such as Gillows catered to this taste, producing furniture that equalled the original pieces in quality.



Ceramic plaque on a jasper ware panel

Wedgwood plaques

The Bacchanal figure on this Wedgwood jasper ware panel on a cabinet by Lamb of Manchester is taken directly from the ancient Greek tradition, although her long flowing robes are probably a Victorian addition. The architectural Greek revival style was spurred by the archaeological discoveries of Mycenae and Troy by Heinrich Schliemann.



Fine engraved mounts on red tortoiseshell

Boullework

This Napoleon III serpentine, marble-top cabinet features *première-partie* boullework on a red tortoiseshell ground. These intricate patterns and the fine engraved mounts stem directly from the work of André-Charles Boulle, cabinet-maker and sculptor to Louis XIV, whose work was much imitated by furniture-makers during the 19th century in France.



Needlepoint garden scene

Needlepoint upholstery

The Medieval tradition of covering chairs with needlepoint upholstery was revived by the Victorians. Such tapestries were generally rich in detail, like this formal scene depicting lovers in a garden. The red, gold, and blue palette used in the design is inspired by Italian Renaissance decoration. Upholstery was worked in *gros* and *petit point* needlework.



Panel of screen decorated with scraps

Scrapwork

The Victorians used scraps – embossed and printed paper images – in the creation of Christmas and Valentine's Day cards. Once used, it was the custom to collate these pieces of printed ephemera in scrapbooks. Sometimes the scraps were used to decorate folding screens as shown here. This was a leisure activity primarily for middle-class ladies.



Glazed bookcase doors divided by astragals

Astragal moulding

The panes of glass in these bookcase doors are divided by graceful, interlacing, semi-circular, convex moulding, known as astragal moulding. Their curving lines represent a more rounded version of the Neoclassical style, providing an illustration of how contemporary fashions influenced the revival styles that were popular during this period.

Italian black slate table top with *pietra dura*

Pietra dura

Pietra dura is an Italian mosaic technique that uses semi-precious stones and marbles to create multi-coloured inlaid designs, most frequently depicting flowers, birds, and fruit. Originating in 16th-century Florence, it was a popular, if expensive, embellishment to 19th-century furniture. Here, the mosaic is thrown into relief by the black slate ground.



Louis XVI-style romantic ormolu mount

Ormolu mounts

Ormolu mounts were cast in bronze, then gilded with mercury to make them resemble gold. This mount is set on ebonized wood, providing a decorative contrast. The romantic theme recalls the Rococo and Neoclassical styles prevalent during the reign of Louis XVI. Faces were a popular motif on mounts, and this girl's hairstyle is typical of the 19th century.

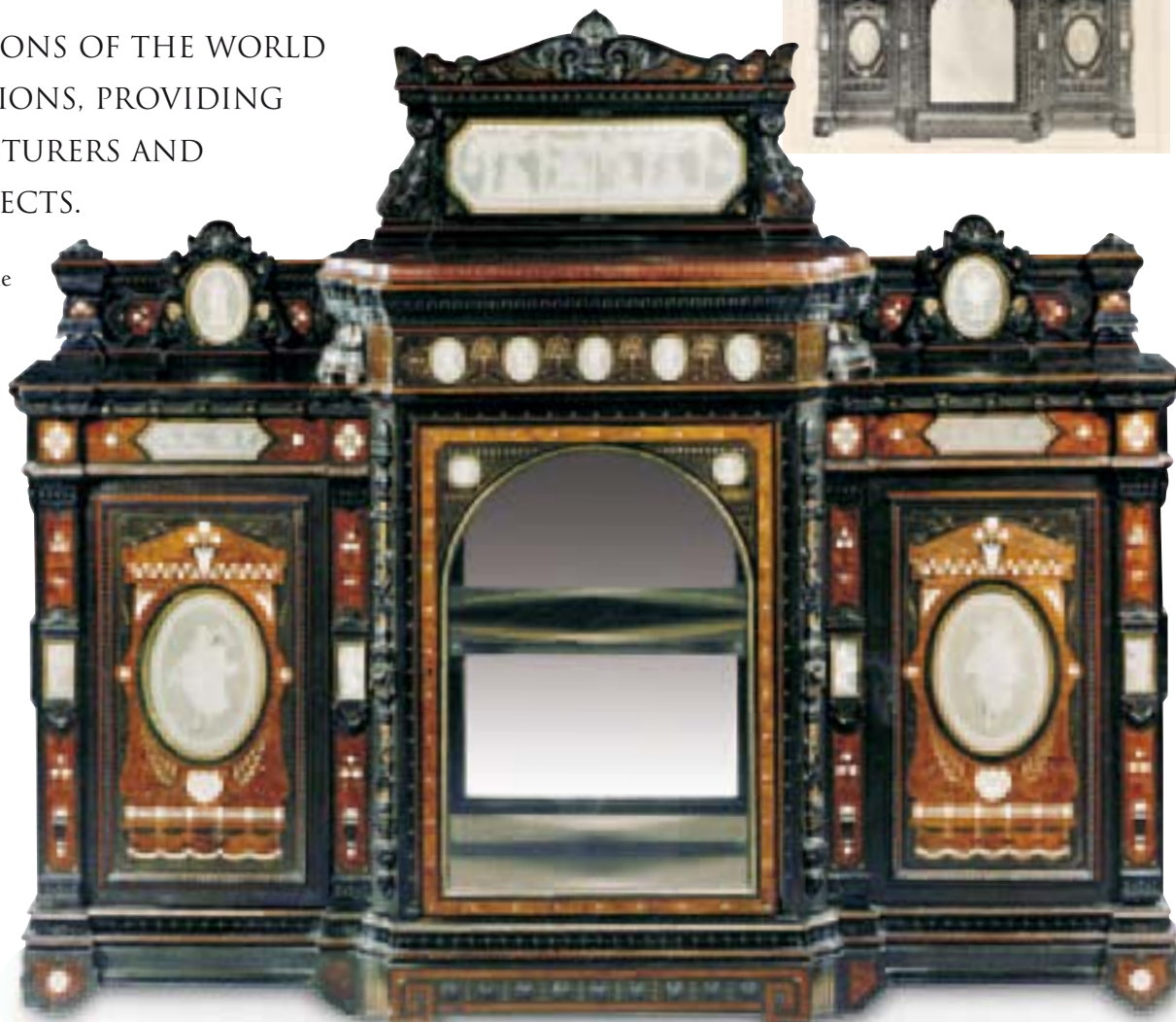
GRAND EXHIBITIONS

THE GREAT INDUSTRIAL NATIONS OF THE WORLD HOSTED IMPRESSIVE EXHIBITIONS, PROVIDING IMPETUS TO THEIR MANUFACTURERS AND EXCITEMENT FOR THEIR SUBJECTS.

EUROPEAN CRAFTSMEN had appreciated the value of trade exhibitions for many years. The medieval *Büchermess*, held in Frankfurt to celebrate and stimulate the embryonic book trade, and the Imperial Trade Fairs held in 16th-century Leipzig are two early examples. The RSA (The Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures & Commerce) was established in Britain in 1754 and provided platforms for the exhibition of industrial and artistic artefacts. However, the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, held in London's Hyde Park in 1851, was a far more ambitious project.

A NEW KIND OF FESTIVAL

The brainchild of Albert, the Prince Consort, the Great Exhibition was the first truly international exhibition and a grandiose expression of the confidence of Victorian Britain. Prince Albert's plan was for a great collection of works in art and industry, "for the purposes of exhibition, of competition, and of encouragement". The imposing Crystal Palace housed the event, which featured in excess of 13,000 articles,



ETRUSCAN-STYLE SIDE CABINET

This amboyna, ebony, Wedgwood, and ivory side cabinet, designed by Lamb of Manchester, has a carved, shaped pediment, above a red marble slab. The lower part has a glazed door enclosing shelves, with a further door on either side. The cabinet stands on a plinth base. Below the carved pediment is a jasperware panel with a bacchanal in relief. The central, glazed door is flanked by fluted rods intertwined with ivy leaves. The jasperware plaque on each of the lower cabinet doors is centred by a naked nymph with a shaped border. 1867. H:184cm (72½in); W:208cm (82in); D:51cm (20in).



BARBER OF SEVILLE PIANO

This French gilt-bronze and tulipwood bombe piano is in the Louis XV style. The sides and top of the piano are quarter-veneered and crossbanded, and divided by finely inlaid, foliate marquetry. The lid is outlined with a gilt-bronze moulded border. The piano stands on cabriole legs, richly ornamented with asymmetric acanthus and caryatid mounts. c.1890. H:103cm (40½in); W:140cm (55in); D:200cm (78¾in).

NEW YORK'S CRYSTAL PALACE

New Yorkers crowd the street outside the New York Crystal Palace during the 1853 World's Fair. The building was modelled on the original Crystal Palace in London. It burned down just five years later.



THE CRYSTAL PALACE

DUBBED “THE CRYSTAL PALACE” BY *PUNCH* MAGAZINE, THE VENUE FOR THE GREAT EXHIBITION OF 1851 WAS ESSENTIALLY A COLOSSAL GREENHOUSE BUILT OUT OF GLASS, WOOD, AND IRON.

The panoply of fantastic wares on display at the Great Exhibition demanded an equally spectacular setting. The Commissioners for the Exhibition raised a total fund of £230,000 of which £120,000 was to cover the cost of the building. Joseph Paxton (1801–65), head gardener to the Duke of Devonshire, won the commission to design the venue with his plans for an audacious glasshouse. The Crystal Palace represented a pinnacle of Victorian engineering expertise – from conception to completion the entire project took only nine months. Tests were carried out while it was being built to prove to doubters that the structure was stable enough to

withstand the vibrations of a large crowd walking inside it. The finished structure occupied a site covering almost 8 hectares (20 acres) and towered to more than 30 metres (100 feet) at its transepts, which were extended to accommodate a cluster of Hyde Park’s elm trees.

After the Great Exhibition had run its course, the structure was dismantled and rebuilt on Sydenham Hill in south London, where it housed a large number of successful exhibitions. In 1911, the site played host to the Festival of Empire, and John Logie Baird established his television studios there in 1933. The Crystal Palace was lost forever when it was destroyed by fire in 1936.

Sideboard This totara knot and boxwood sideboard is by Johann Martin Levien. The crest is flanked by dragons. It has a boxwood panel which is carved with foliage, nymphs, and satyrs and flanked by medallion portraits of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, one signed by Lovati. The lower section consists of a drawer and pedestals resting on a plinth base. 1851.



French centre table This kingwood table was made by François Linke with bronzes by Leon Messagé. The Louis XV-style table has a parquetry top above a serpentine frieze with female masks. The stretcher is decorated with two putti sitting by a water vessel. H:79cm (31½in); W:175cm (70in); D:95cm (38in).



Fire at the Crystal Palace Fire broke out on the evening of 30 November 1936. Although the structure was mostly glass and iron, the dry floorboards and flammable exhibits meant that 500 firemen could not contain the fire. By the morning, all that remained of Paxton’s amazing glass construction was a mass of twisted steelwork and smouldering ruins. Sir Winston Churchill commented: “This is the end of an age.”



made by 14,000 companies from nations across the world. The exhibits included every kind of art, as well as those from industry and the natural world. Each of the participating countries mounted their own series of courts, exhibiting their best pieces.

The Great Exhibition was an enormous popular success. More than 6,000,000 people visited the Crystal Palace in the six months from May 1851 during which its doors were open. The prestige it lent to Britain’s designers and manufacturers inspired a rash of similar fairs across the world, beginning in Dublin the very next year. However, with the exception of Pugin’s display in the Medieval Court, the British furniture on display at the Crystal Palace in 1851 won but scant critical praise. It was the French entries that received most of the prizes.

Many of the entries at the Great Exhibition of 1851 went on to form the basis of the collections at the South Kensington Museum. A.W.N. Pugin’s Gothic cabinet and Angiolo Barbetti’s Renaissance cabinet were both bought by the museum, which itself was financed by the profits made from the Great Exhibition. Later renamed the Victoria and Albert Museum, these pieces can still be seen today alongside pieces from subsequent world’s fairs.

THE INTERNATIONAL WORLD STAGE

Two years later, in 1853, New York hosted an international exhibition based on the British model, even down to the construction of a “New York Crystal Palace” off Fifth Avenue. Despite serious problems – a leaking roof damaged the attractions and doused visitors with rainwater – the event was a boon for the American manufacturing base.

In France, 1855 brought the *Exposition Universelle*.

Queen Victoria and Prince Albert bought an ebony display cabinet by Grohé Frères, and a table and cabinet by Edouard Kreisser in Louis XVI style.

There were three more exhibitions in Paris, and three more in London before the end of the century. In the 1867 Paris Exhibition, the Thonet Brothers won a gold medal for their Number 14 bentwood chair (see p.277). The most memorable part of the 1889 Paris Exhibition was the Eiffel Tower, which was built as the fair’s grand entrance. Large-scale trade fairs were also organized in Vienna, Sydney, Kyoto, Philadelphia, Cape Town, and Melbourne.

As an indication of what the general public were buying at any one time, these grand exhibitions are not particularly useful tools. Many of the companies that submitted pieces for display seized the opportunity to showcase their most flamboyant and technically complicated achievements, rather than items that were in general production. These events were, after all, competitive, with esteemed judges awarding prizes for the best entries in various classes. However, the exhibitions did help to communicate ideas and styles to the world. Many of the designs exhibited spawned cheaper imitations, and some, such as Thonet’s bentwood furniture, was, in fact, mass produced and transported all over the world.

FRANCE: LOUIS-PHILIPPE

LOUIS-PHILIPPE WAS THE LAST monarch to be recognized by the people of France. Descended from the House of Orléans, he faced opposition from the Legitimists who wished to see a Bourbon regain the French throne, as well as from Republicans and those in the Napoleonist camp. Aware of the

deep divisions that troubled his nation, Louis-Philippe strove to restore unity during his 18-year reign (1830–48). He adopted the populist title “King of the French” and founded the Museum of French History, which he dedicated to “All of France’s glories”. The king was also a significant patron of the arts

and his love of architecture can be seen today in the buildings he commissioned at Versailles.

A HAPPY DISARRAY OF STYLES Furniture of the period reflected Louis-Philippe’s reconciliatory agenda. Revivals of various historical styles remained popular, despite often having close associations with the Bourbon monarchy. Fashionable citizens and those wishing to show off their new-found wealth would furnish their dining rooms in the Renaissance

style and their living rooms with pieces imitating Louis-XIV taste. An altogether different tenor was struck by exponents of the Cathedral style, or *gothique troubadour*, which harked back to the Gothic era. Characterized by deep carving and moulding, frequently incorporating devotional motifs, the Cathedral style was architectural, and its heavy aspect suited to darker woods such as oak. There was a move away from the lighter woods that were popular during Charles X’s reign (1824–30),



Swan-carved uprights, each incorporating a scroll, support a rectangular mirror.

Only two of the five small platform drawers are real.

The frieze drawer is inlaid with stylized Neoclassical anthemia.

Stylized anthemion inlays flank the mirror back and echo the inlaywork of the frieze drawer above.

The mirror back reflects two of the pilasters.

Each pilaster is carved with lotus leaves.



Carved lotus leaves

DRESSING TABLE

This elegant ebony-inlaid dressing table is made of satinwood and decorated with foliate scrolls. The upper section has a rectangular mirror flanked by carved upright supports in the form of swans. Below the mirror are two real and three dummy drawers. The lower section of the dressing table has a dish top

above a frieze drawer, which is raised on lotus leaf-carved pilasters supported on a shaped platform base and raised on turned feet. The back of this section is covered with mirror glass. This piece is more reminiscent of the style of furniture prevalent during the reign of the last Bourbon king, Charles X (reigned 1824–30), with its light wood veneers. *c.1840. H:147cm (58in). SI*



WALNUT TABLE

This walnut drop-leaf dining table features additional leaves (totalling five when fully extended). The table top is supported on six turned legs, which terminate in casters. *c.1840. W:300cm (118in) (max). DC*



GUÉRIDON

This *guéridon* (French candlestand) has a marble top with a recessed centre. This top is supported on a baluster-shaped column, which terminates in a tripod base. The lion’s paw feet at the ends of the base rest on casters. *c.1840. H:78cm (30¾in); D:80cm (31½in). BEA*



and manufacturers favoured walnut and more exotic hardwoods such as mahogany and rosewood, which were imported from France's colonies.

REFRESHING AND MODEST

Simple and sturdy, the Louis-Philippe style displayed a confidence that did not require excessive surface decoration. Instead, cabinet-makers asserted their assurance through large,

The Apartment of the Count de Mornay Painted by Eugène Delacroix, this scene depicts a room decorated and furnished in typical Louis-Philippe style. Furniture became slightly heavier and plainer in form during this period of France's history. Central to the Count de Mornay's room is a sofa, which later became known as the *canapé borne*.

bold forms with simple lines. Where materials other than wood were incorporated into the body of a piece, they were designed to blend into and complement the whole. Gilt-metal mounts depicting mythological or grotesque figures and marble table tops were employed to bring out the colours and textures of the woods, sometimes accentuated with flame veneer. Industrial cutting techniques

reduced the amount of labour required in the manufacture of furniture. This resulted in a greater availability of pieces. New forms included the *canapé borne*, or "sociable sofa", which consisted of an upholstered seat with central cushions, allowing users to sit facing opposite directions, and a whole range of pieces made from wood and wrought and cast iron for furnishing the *jardins d'hiver*, or conservatories.



MAHOGANY COMMODE

This Louis-Philippe mahogany commode has a rectangular, grey, fossilized marble top with rounded corners, which rests on top of a concave frieze drawer. Below this drawer are

three long drawers all featuring matching flame mahogany veneers. The case stands on a plinth supported on four square, bun feet. *c.1840. W:132cm (52¼in). L&T*



BREAKFRONT BOOKCASE

The upper section of this walnut breakfront bookcase has a raised central door with applied cusped mouldings, flanked by corresponding doors with lower panels. The three doors of the upper section are divided by ring-turned columns

with octagonal turrets and finials. The lower section of the bookcase follows the style of the upper section: the central door has an applied circular cusp panel and is flanked on either side by a door with arched panelling. The whole stands on a plinth base. *c.1840. H:277cm (109in); W:206cm (81in); D:64cm (25¼in). L&T*



Cast ram's head bracket



Tablet frieze

LOUIS-PHILIPPE VITRINE

This walnut and gilt-brass vitrine has mahogany banding, and boxwood and ebony stringing. It is raised on a plinth with flattened, bun feet. The rectangular top has canted angles. The single glazed door has a frame inlaid with specimen woods and applied rosettes. *c.1840. W:94cm (37in). L&T*



FRANCE: 1848–1900



IN CONTRAST TO THE reconciliatory stance adopted by Louis-Philippe, Napoleon III sought to align himself firmly with the Classical past as part of his consolidation of power. Designs from the reign of Louis XIV, the Sun King, were appropriated along with forms and decorative motifs from the reigns of Louis XV and Louis XVI. Napoleon III had promised France glory, and he hoped to provide this at least in part by reminding it of a golden age. There was also a pan-European revival of interest in the Classical and Renaissance periods.

LUXURY AND COMFORT

Dark woods, especially mahogany and ebony, were used in abundance by the cabinet-makers of the time. Newer materials such as cast iron, turned out by foundries all over newly industrialized France, and papier-mâché, provided a contemporary twist. Precious materials such as gilt bronze heralded the wealth and status of the owner and loaned visual interest to a piece, as did inlays of ivory and mother-of-pearl, which provided a dramatic contrast to the dark wood. A revival of the intricate veneering and marquetry work as practised by André-Charles Boulle in the time of Louis XIV further added to the sumptuous decadence that is a hallmark of Second Empire furniture.

Comfort was a high priority. Upholstery became far more prevalent due to the widespread availability of the

The Salon de Musique This music room at the Chateau de Compiègne has an eclectic mix of 17th-, 18th-, and 19th-century furniture that is typical of interiors of the Second Empire.

coiled spring. Tapissier chairs, named for the richly embroidered upholsteries with which they were covered, became staples of fashionable salons. The 1850s saw the introduction of new forms to the canon of French cabinet-making, including the round, upholstered ottoman known as the pouffe, which is still in use today. The *dos-à-dos* and the *boudeuse*, or courting chair, also date from this period. In such seating, the occupants sat beside each other but facing away from each other, divided by an “S”-shaped seat rail.

ANTIQUARIAN NATIONAL STYLE

Architectural elements, such as columns and pediments drawn from Greco-Roman buildings, provided the Classical and Renaissance look that pandered to the Emperor's desire to root his regime firmly in the glorious past. Egyptian motifs provided a similar link but were the consequence of French archaeologist Marcel Dieulafoy's keen interest in architecture. Many 19th-century designers were heavily influenced by his studies of excavated Egyptian and Middle-Eastern buildings. All these ingredients combined to produce a national style that became more extreme towards the end of the century, as shown by the kingwood vitrine opposite.



“BOULLE” CABINET

This Louis XIV-inspired cabinet is decorated with *première-partie* boulléwork on a red tortoiseshell ground. The black, shaped, rectangular marble top has moulded serpentine edges. The conforming front has a frieze above a door, centred with an oval panel and flanked by outset rounded stiles with figural chutes. The shaped skirt is centred with an espadonette and raised on disc feet. c.1850. H:108cm (42½in); W:108.5cm (42½in); D:108.5cm (17½in). SI



LOUIS XVI TABLE

Almost an exact copy of an 18th-century piece, this rosewood, marquetry-inlaid, gilt-metal mounted side table has a fitted frieze drawer. The table top is raised on gilt-metal caryatid legs. The legs are joined by a pierced platform stretcher with a bowl at its centre, and stand on spiral, tapered feet. 1880. W:86.5cm (34in). GorB



TRANSITIONAL-STYLE COMMODO

This kingwood, satinwood, and gilt-metal mounted serpentine commode has a marble top with outset corners. The three long drawers have inlaid panels, each centred by a grotesque mask motif. The capped, splayed legs are joined by a shaped apron and have hoof feet. c.1900. W:113cm (44½in). SI

CONVERSATION SEAT

This Louis XV-style giltwood and upholstered conversation seat is covered in a red and gold striped fabric. The piece has a serpentine back with a shell surmount and stands on moulded, cabriole legs. *c.1890.*
W:317.5cm (125in). SI



Serpentine crest rail

There are upholstered armrests at each seat division.

The centre section of the conversation seat is for three people.

The serpentine seat rail mirrors the design of the top rail.

Each end section seats an additional person.

GABRIEL VIARDOT

THE FRENCH TASTE FOR *JAPONISME* WAS ALREADY ENTRENCHED WHEN DESIGNER GABRIEL VIARDOT BEGAN WORKING IN THE ORIENTAL STYLE.

Gabriel Viardot was an expert wood-carver and was already operating his own business when he took over the reins of the family furniture business in 1861. Records show that in 1885 Viardot employed around 100 men at his premises on Rue Amelot in Paris. His renown was such that he was invited to adjudicate at the *Expositions Universelles* held in Paris. He also submitted his own pieces for exhibition and was the recipient of a series of awards, including a gold medal in 1889. The Viardot name is most closely associated with furniture in the Japanese style, but he also produced Vietnamese-style work – Vietnam was one of Napoleon III's most prized colonies.

The furniture created by Viardot was solidly constructed, typically from beech or walnut, with decorative motifs drawn from the East. Grotesque masks, very much a feature of mainstream French furniture, were adapted so that they took on an Eastern countenance. Carvings depicting dragons and demons were inspired by Oriental mythology and tradition, and the frequent use of lacquer coating was a direct influence of Chinese style. Viardot's juxtaposition of European and Eastern forms resulted in the creation of very distinctive pieces that bridged the gap between exotic imports and more prosaic homespun furniture.

Dressing table This piece is made of stained beechwood with mother-of-pearl inlays. It has an asymmetrical appearance that is Asian-inspired, but it is of European construction. *c.1890.*



KINGWOOD VITRINE

The tapering ogee top of this serpentine vitrine has a central cartouche above a pair of glazed doors and sides, enclosing a mirrored interior. Below is a single central door inspired by Louis XV style with a *vernis martin bombé* panel of lovers.
H:203cm (80in); W:135cm (53in); D:52cm (20½in). L&T



The carved dragon motif is inspired by Oriental mythology.

The fret decoration is in the Chinese style.

The surface is inset with velvet.

The drawers are inlaid with mother-of-pearl.

ITALY

DESPITE A NEW NATIONALISTIC fervour that eventually resulted in the creation of the modern Italian state in 1861, furniture production in mid-19th-century Italy was a fragmented affair, concentrated around the cities of Rome, Milan, Venice, and Florence, in the north. The poorer states and kingdoms of the south of Italy, with the exception of Naples, seemed

content to continue using simpler, vernacular forms of furniture.

PERSISTENT FRENCH INFLUENCE

Until the Risorgimento movement gathered pace, climaxing in the revolutions of 1848, Italy lived in the cultural shadow of France, her more powerful neighbour to the north. The

prominence of the Rococo and Empire styles in Italy is a direct consequence of this relationship and, despite a wave of anti-French feeling following Napoleonic occupation during the early 19th century, this influence persisted. The growing importance of Piedmont as the cultural and political apex around which the emerging Italian state revolved, only served to protract this lingering Francophilia. The Rococo- revival style was,

therefore, one of the most prominent in mid-19th-century Italy. Fussy forms, such as the *canapé en cabriolet*, a padded sofa, were richly carved and enveloped in gilt. Side tables with pierced and scrolled detail were covered with marble tops in a typically Italian twist. The grotto or fantasy style, originating in medieval France, was one that Italian craftsmen had adopted with relish. Meticulously detailed representations of timber and



CANAPÉ EN CABRIOLET

Executed in the Rococo style, the frame of this elaborate sofa is made of gilded wood. The backrest is composed of three cartouche-form padded backs set in conforming frames with pierced C-scroll crests, giving the appearance of three *fauteuils* joined together. The out-curved arms at each

end have padded elbow rests to provide additional comfort. The serpentine-fronted stuffover seat with similarly pierced rails continues into cabriole legs with scroll toes. The whole piece is decorated with carved flower-heads and foliage. The *canapé* would have been part of a salon suite with chairs, armchairs, and stools all designed to match one another. c.1860. W:196cm (77in). S&K



CONSOLE TABLE

This Rococo-style console table has a serpentine marble top, raised on a fluted, carved scrolling frame made of gilded wood. The frame is decorated with foliate designs, and the heavy cabriole legs are joined by a pierced strapwork stretcher. Mid 19th century. H:89cm (35in); W:122cm (48in); D:60cm (24in). L&T

MICROMOSAIC

BEAUTIFUL “ETERNAL PAINTINGS” OF INTRICATE ENAMEL MOSAIC WERE MADE BY ITALIAN CRAFTSMEN TO DECORATE TABLE TOPS AND TRINKET BOXES.

Micromosaic was developed within the Vatican in the 17th century as an alternative means of decorating altars with devotional tableaux. The paintings in the vast basilica of St Peter's had been damaged by damp, and the enamel tesserae used in micromosaic overcame this problem. They became known in Rome as *la vera pittura per eternita*, meaning “eternal paintings”.

The technique is an evolution of the ancient architectural mosaics developed in the Greco-Roman period. An image is built up using tiny components, or *tesserae*, of different-coloured enamel or glass. Each *tessera* is a thread about 3mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ in) long with a diameter slightly wider than a hair. The thread is pushed into the putty of the mosaic base, leaving the end visible. The attention to detail and level of expertise

involved in their creation are remarkable – the finest examples include 775 tesserae per cm² (5,000 per in²).

European gentlemen on the Grand Tour would purchase trinkets, such as boxes and jewellery, decorated with micromosaic as mementoes of their time in Rome. The wealthiest tourists brought home table tops made by craftsmen operating in work-shops in the Vatican. Typically, these table tops depicted scenes from antiquity or famous Roman vistas. They were highly prized throughout Western Europe as fine-art objects. Other tables might have plain marble tops with panels of micromosaic incorporated within them.

There is a collection of micromosaic artefacts in the Gilbert Collection Museum in London and another in the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg, Russia.



Round table Designed by Michaelangelo Barberi, the micromosaic table top features a medallion design on a red, square-shaped cartouche and a black marble ground. In the centre is a view of St Peter's Square, which is surrounded by ovals, representing the four epochs of Rome. The ebony base has ornate ormolu mounts. c.1850. Diam:102cm (40 $\frac{1}{2}$ in). DN



St Peter's Square



Four epochs of Rome

shell forms characterized this look, which was particularly indebted to the work of French designer Bernard Palissy (1509–90). Although examples of fantasy furniture from the mid-19th century are generally considered inferior to earlier pieces, it was nevertheless a popular revival style.

ITALIAN TRADITIONS

The Renaissance revival was more representative of Italian history, and

the quality of furniture made in this style by Italian craftsmen demonstrates the high esteem in which it was held. The Florentine cabinet-maker Andrea Baccetti and the Siense wood-carver Angelo Barbetti both produced particularly fine pieces in the Renaissance style. Archaic forms, such as the settle and architectural wall mirrors, were made in walnut, with deep carving depicting Classical and grotesque forms.

Blackamoors, an 18th-century Venetian invention, remained popular well into the 19th century, either as bases for *torchères* or as decorative *objets* in their own right. Venetian glass-makers continued to produce mirrors of the highest quality. Particularly fine examples of mirrors with intricately etched glass frames

speak of the greatness of the glass-masters of Murano. Elaborate decorative techniques, such as micromosaic, provided a forum for the most accomplished artisans to demonstrate their proficiency.

In the later 19th century, the regional Italian furniture industry began to flourish, and regions such as Brianza and Pesaro, which are famous today for their fine work, started to develop the infrastructures and traditions that would ensure their future success.



WALL MIRROR

This Renaissance-style walnut wall mirror has a broken pediment carved with cherub heads and a female head. The oval mirror plate is flanked by carved caryatids with further cherub heads below. *Mid 19th century. H:148cm (59 1/4 in). L&T*



MAHOGANY ARMCHAIR

This elaborately carved grotto-style armchair is made of mahogany. The seat and back combine to form a huge, hinged scallop shell, linked by ornate, arms and splayed legs. *c.1890. H:94cm (37 in). B&I*

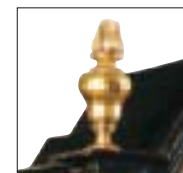


The stiles are inlaid with arabesques.

The drawers have moulded surrounds.

Frieze drawers feature stiff, dull, mechanical inlay work.

Turned, gilt-metal supports support the upper case



Gilt-bronze finial



Bronze figure

Slender, turned baluster legs support the stand.

A pierced, flattened cross-stretcher connects the legs of the stand.

CABINET-ON-STAND

This ebony and black-lacquered cabinet-on-stand is inlaid all over with ivory in a fine foliage pattern in imitation of the Baroque style of the 17th century. A narrow central door is flanked on either side by three drawers – one above the

other – and has a further three drawers, arranged side by side, below. The upper case has a gilt-bronze carrying handle on either side. It is supported on a similarly decorated stand with turned legs, joined by a carved, flat cross-stretcher. *Mid 19th century. H:165cm (65 in); W:112cm (44 in); D:37cm (14 1/2 in). BEA*

EARLY VICTORIAN BRITAIN

BRITISH FURNITURE DESIGN during the early Victorian period was confused. The prevalent styles were overlapping attempts at recreating looks from three key historical eras – the Greek, the Gothic, and the Rococo.

In reality, the actual forms of the furniture created at this time were largely standard and had little basis in the eras they purported to emulate. Rather, the “design” of a piece of furniture was all about the surface and the applied decoration it carried.

GOTHIC, ROCOCO, AND GREEK Victorian Gothic was a masculine style based on idealized notions of Tudor furniture. New cupboards, chests, tables, and chairs were created by piecing together fragments of older furniture from grand houses.

A.W.N.Pugin (see box below right) led a move towards a more authentic interpretation of the Gothic style. This was at least partially successful: his work on the interiors of the Houses of Parliament prompted Gillows to

introduce a range entitled “New Palace Westminster”, which was distinguished by the use of roundels incorporating a Tudor rose or thistle at the conjunction of the legs and stretchers.

The feminine Rococo taste was widespread throughout fashionable drawing rooms because of George IV’s particular interest in the revival. The florid decoration was structural – incorporated into the shape of the furniture rather than added to the surfaces. The heavy use of gilding was

The library at Tynesfield House, near Bristol Many of the rooms in this house were rebuilt in Gothic-revival style by businessman William Gibbs, who bought the original Regency-Gothic house in 1843.



Each oval porcelain plaque is painted with a French courtly lady.

The canted stiles are mounted with free-standing ormolu figures of Shakespeare and Milton.

Thuyawood panels are inlaid into an ebonized ground.

The legs are mounted with gilt-bronze mouldings and Sèvres floral plaques.

The mirrored back serves to reflect ornaments placed on the shelves.

The centre drawer has a hinged, leather-lined adjustable writing slope.

Casters made from brass are fixed to turned feet.

BONHEUR-DU-JOUR

This Louis XVI-style *bonheur-du-jour* of part-ebonized thuyawood is ormolu-and-porcelain-mounted. The upper section has a tall, central, mirror-backed display cabinet with a three-quarter gallery flanked by similar, but lower,

cabinets, each with a central porcelain plaque. The outset lower section has an *entrelac* frieze with three drawers above mirror-backed shelves. It is raised on turned, tapered, and fluted legs on casters. The piece is a mix of Victorian and French Court styles. 1860. H:149cm (58 $\frac{3}{4}$ in); 120.5cm (47 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); D:56.5cm (22 $\frac{1}{4}$ in). SI



Sèvres floral plaque



BREAKFAST TABLE

This early Victorian mahogany breakfast table has a round, tilt-top with a moulded edge. The table top is supported on a lappet-carved column and collar, which stands on a circular platform supported by paw feet. c.1840. Diam:131cm (51 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); H:74cm (29 $\frac{3}{4}$ in). DN



PAPIER-MÂCHÉ TRAY

This painted and gilt papier-mâché tray has a curvilinear-shaped outline and a deep concave rim decorated with gilt penwork leaves. The main panel is painted with a Himalayan mountain landscape, containing figures crossing a waterfall. c.1840. H:81.5cm (31in); W:62cm (24 $\frac{1}{2}$ in). L&T

condemned by architects, as it was used by many manufacturers to conceal shoddy construction.

The Greek style, informed by Henry Shaw's 1836 *Specimens of Modern Furniture*, was simple and solid, refreshingly free from the extraneous decoration that was a feature of much early Victorian furniture.

TRIED AND TESTED IDEAS

The stagnant state of the industry can be demonstrated by the fact that the same edition of the *London Cabinet-Maker's Union Book of Rules*,

a depository of patterns used by the trade, was in print continuously between 1836 and 1866. This situation was exacerbated by a new middle class who did not want to appear uneducated: the majority of people would rather rely on tried-and-tested ideas than risk committing a gaffe. Whereas the wealthy consumer of the 18th century would commission furniture tailored to his exact requirements, the aspiring Victorian gentleman had to make do with whatever stock was available in the showroom of his chosen retailer,

which generally consisted of rounded forms, such as the balloon-back chair, a staple of early Victorian design. The gradual mechanization that characterized the Victorian furniture industry led to a separation of the roles of designer and manufacturer, at least in urban centres.

The traditional role of the furniture-maker persisted in the provinces, as did many vernacular forms. In Lancashire, for example, ladder-back chairs were produced in stained ash instead of the mahogany fashionable in London.

Pockets of craftsmen throughout Britain created Windsor chairs with idiosyncratic features typical of the region in which they worked.

Niche markets arose in provincial cities as craftsmen in certain areas developed expertise in specific fields. Birmingham was a centre for the production of metal bedsteads, forged in furnaces fuelled by the coal and iron that were cheap and abundant in that industrial hub. Further east, Nottingham and Leicester were renowned as centres for cane and wicker furniture.



LIBRARY CENTRE TABLE

The octagonal, revolving top of this table is surfaced with green leather outlined by tooled and gilt lilies and centres on a lobed marquetry panel. The shaped border is inset with floral sprays and clusters of fruit, alternating with

Oriental scenes framed by Rococo cartouches. The table has four frieze drawers and rests on a concave-sided central support. Four splayed, inward-scrolling feet and the shape of the apron reflect Louis XV influence. Ebony, tulipwood, mahogany, pine, and cedar are all used. 1840. H:76cm (30in); D:152cm (60in). LOT



BALLOON-BACK DINING CHAIR

This balloon-back dining chair has a pierced scroll splat and is raised on acute cabriole legs. The upholstered seat is covered in green velvet. This style of dining chair was a popular early Victorian form. *GorB*



SHOW-FRAME ARMCHAIR

The back rail of this mahogany chair is carved and terminates in carved scrolls, where it meets the upholstered arms. The seat and back are padded. The chair is supported on carved, cabriole legs with brass casters. *DN*

A.W.N. PUGIN (1812–52)

PUGIN'S DEDICATION TO AUTHENTIC GOTHIC DESIGN WAS INFORMED BY HIS RELIGIOUS BELIEF AND HAD A PROFOUND INFLUENCE ON OTHER DESIGNERS.



Engraving of Pugin

Pugin's relationship with his father, a French aristocrat who fled Paris during the Revolution, was instrumental in the future direction of his career. Pugin senior worked for John Nash as chief draughtsman, and instilled in his son a respect for architectural style and decoration. Father and son drafted two volumes on Gothic design, which fuelled the Victorian penchant for works in this style.

Conversion to Catholicism in 1834 galvanized Pugin's admiration for what Victorians knew as the "middle-pointed" style, dating from the period between 1280

and 1340, when great cathedrals were built and the faithful expressed their devotion through the decorative arts. From the late 1830s, Pugin published works extolling the virtues of this "pure" Gothic style as distinguished from the bastardized attempts created by so many of his contemporaries.

In contrast to prevailing mid-Victorian taste, Pugin was concerned with coherence in his interiors. This philosophy is evident at the Palace of Westminster (Houses of Parliament), for which Pugin provided furnishings as well as assisting with the building's design. Pugin's work for the Medieval Court at the Great Exhibition in 1851 was one of his last commissions. The following year he became mentally ill and died at home.



Oak table, made for Horsted Place, Sussex This table is an example of the simpler Gothic-style furniture designed by Pugin especially for more modest houses. The carved decoration and use of chamfered, or bevelled, edges is drawn from church woodwork. 1852–53. H:76cm (30in); W:114cm (45in); D:75cm (29½in).

LATE VICTORIAN BRITAIN

THE LATER VICTORIAN PERIOD saw a growing distinction between general “trade” furniture and what came to be known as “Art Furniture” – that is, furniture made by firms that retained architects and specialist designers.

PARALLEL INDUSTRIES

Cabinet-makers in London’s West End, and their downmarket counterparts in the East End, continued to employ the cabriole legs and rounded backs that had already been made for many years. Newer developments in furniture included a proliferation of corner and mantelshelves for displaying decorative objects, and

the adoption of a gallery of turned spindles, from the French style. Art Furniture, in whatever guise it took, tended to adhere to certain structural or philosophical principles, leaving the manufacturers who ploughed the trade furrow to concentrate on such lesser concerns as comfort, practicality, and – most of all – affordability.

That British furnishers were operating on a two-tier basis can be demonstrated by the way they reacted to overseas influences. The gradual emergence of Japan from its isolationist shell led in a great deal of interest in Japanese culture and aesthetic traditions in all spheres of the arts, including the

furniture industry. Trade furnishers responded by churning out “Anglo-Japanese” pieces, adding fake Japanese decoration to existing Victorian forms. Exponents of Art Furniture, meanwhile, took a more studious and disciplined approach. The influential designer Christopher Dresser visited Japan in 1876 and became a champion of authentic Japanese style. Similarly, the designer Edward Godwin made close studies of Japanese art and carefully incorporated what he learned into

his furniture designs, as evident in his striking juxtapositions of horizontal and vertical pieces. Bamboo became very popular because it was very sturdy yet cheaper than exotic hardwoods.

NEW STYLE FROM THE PAST

A perennial favourite of historically minded furniture-designers, the Gothic style was as widespread as ever during the late Victorian period. Among its principal exponents was Bruce Talbot, a practitioner of the “Early English”

Renaissance-revival panels are fitted into each side cupboard door.

A mirror backs the upper display section of the cabinet.

A moulded architectural cornice frieze overhangs the two cupboards.



A glazed cupboard door allows ornaments to be seen.

SIDE CABINET

This inlaid Adam-style side cabinet is made of mahogany with satinwood banding, and was designed by Gillows. The upper section of the cabinet has a consoled reverse-breakfront cornice with a central bevelled mirror below. The mirror is flanked by

cupboards on either side, each with a grotesque-inlaid door in the Renaissance style. The deeper, lower section of the cabinet has three drawers in the frieze, above a central glazed door; on either side of the glazed door is an open shelf. The whole stands on bracket feet. *Late 19th century. H:177cm (69¾in); W:152cm (60in). L&T*



Brass corner clasp

LATE VICTORIAN WRITING TABLE

This top of this writing table is lined with green leather and framed by a brass edge moulding. The serpentine frieze, containing two narrow drawers, is faced with panels of floral marquetry, crossbanded in tulipwood and set into a zebra wood ground. *H:76cm (30in); W:101cm (40in); D:56cm (22in). LOT*



CHAMBER CUPBOARD

This Gothic-revival pedestal cupboard has a chambered top and stands on a chamfered plinth. The door has a central harewood panel with stylized flowers and circular rosettes. *1865. H:84cm (33in); W:36cm (14¼in); D:39cm (15¼in). LOT*



DINING CHAIR

One of a set of 21, this walnut chair has a curved back rail, solid splat, and upholstered bow-fronted seat. The Greek-revival chair is supported on turned, tapering legs. *c.1880. H:87cm (33¾in). DN*



style, who arrived in London in 1865. His predilection was for honestly constructed furniture of the Gothic school. He celebrated mortise-and-tenon joining and despised the use of glue for, as he stated: “Glue leads

The Drawing Room of Cragside House, Northumberland

The marble chimneypiece is a spectacular example of Renaissance-revival style. Added to Cragside by architect Richard Shaw in 1883–84, the carving includes putti, swags, arabesques, and strapwork.

to veneering and veneering to polish.” Rather than commit the sin of veneering, he offset the dark wood bodies of his work with decorative panels of contrasting colours.

REGIONAL FURNITURE-MAKERS

A number of provincial furniture centres flourished. Gillows of Lancaster built on an established reputation for quality furniture and continued to expand during the mid-19th century. Lancaster port provided Gillows with steady supplies of Caribbean mahogany. Shipyards also provided Gillows with commissions to furnish luxury yachts, the most

prestigious of which were the Royal Yacht *Victoria and Albert* and *Livadia*, constructed for Tsar Alexander II.

Wylie and Lochhead of Glasgow employed craftsmen to make furniture for their department store as well as for the grand liners that were built on the Clyde. Established in 1829, by 1870 Wylie and Lochhead made, upholstered, and sold furniture for the middle classes of Glasgow and beyond.

High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire was one of many centres of Windsor chair production. Chair bodging – the rural practice of making various parts of chairs, eventually spawned a number of chair factories.

GEORGIAN REVIVALS

HIGH-QUALITY REPRODUCTIONS OF 18TH-CENTURY, NEOCLASSICAL-STYLE FURNITURE WAS PARTICULARLY POPULAR DURING THE 1870S.

Many Victorians turned their backs on contemporary furniture design and imitated the 18th-century Neoclassical style instead. Many of the great cabinet-makers of that period had bequeathed the industry detailed pattern books, making it easy to recreate their products. In 1867, Wright and Mansfield made a cabinet designed by Crosse, which is credited with sparking the interest in Neoclassical decoration and style. It has a satinwood carcase, and incorporates marquetry in various woods, with giltwood mounts and Wedgwood plaques. The cabinet is now at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

Reproductions of 18th-century pieces by Chippendale, Sheraton, Hepplewhite, and Adam were pervasive during the

second half of the 19th century. Many of them were of very high quality and, now that they have aged, can be difficult to distinguish from the originals.

The look was characterized by profuse use of inlay and banding. Satinwood was highly prized for its pleasing colour, useful for contrasting banding, and gilt lacquer provided an alternative to the dark colours of the Gothic style. Cameo carving featured Classical motifs, such as urns, shell, and acanthus. The style was such a success, that unscrupulous salerooms would apply fake Neoclassical ornaments to plain 18th-century furniture. Popular at various times throughout the 19th century, the Neoclassical revival-style was especially fashionable during the 1870s.



Chippendale mahogany open armchair This chair has a splat with pierced, interlaced strapwork headed by acanthus sprays. It stands on cabriole front legs with carved acanthus knees and claw-and-ball feet. c.1900. D:12cm (30in). Bon



Adam-style gilt wall mirror The bevelled rectangular plate is flanked by panels with ribbon-tied husk pendants, and surmounted by an urn, anthemion, and floral swag design. Late 19th century. H:124cm (49½in). L&T



Sheraton-revival satinwood, semi-elliptical commode

This commode is painted with swags of flowers and female figures within ovals in Neoclassical style. The commode has a frieze drawer above a central panelled door and stands on square-section feet. Late 19th century. H:93cm (37¼in); W:98.5cm (39½in). DN



George III-style partner's desk The rectangular desktop has rounded corners and is inset with a leather writing surface. Below are four opposing frieze drawers. The whole stands on acanthus-carved cabriole legs, which terminate in claw-and-ball feet. Late 19th century. W:152.5cm (60in). SL

CAMPAIGN FURNITURE

SPECIALLY DESIGNED TO BE ERECTED AND DISASSEMBLED IN A FEW MOMENTS, THE FURNITURE PRODUCED FOR OFFICERS TO TAKE ON CAMPAIGN WAS AS FASHIONABLE AS THAT MADE FOR THE HOME.

AS STARTLINGLY INCONGRUOUS as the idea seems today, the military gentleman of the Victorian period would not countenance the idea of a foreign posting without taking his drawing room suite. Indeed, it appears that the 19th-century mindset detected nothing even faintly risible when Thomas Sheraton boasted in his 1803 *Cabinet Directory* that the addition of his stylish, collapsible furniture to one's kit bag "should not retard rapid movement, either after or from the enemy". Among the "absolutely necessary" articles he produced for use on campaign were elegant dining tables that would seat as many as 20 guests.

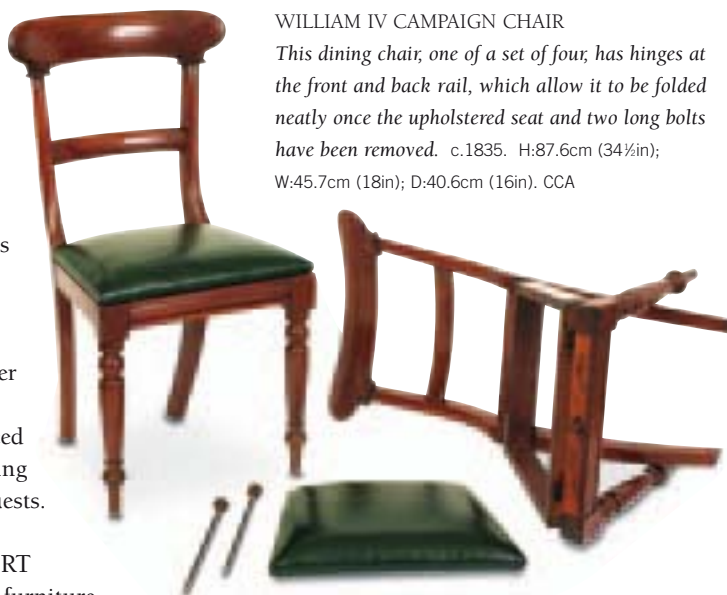
A LONG TRADITION OF COMFORT

Campaign furniture, or "knockdown" furniture as it was often called, has its roots in the campaigns of the Napoleonic wars (1800–15). Among the most popular examples from this initial period of production was the Wellington chest, named after the legendary Duke. Available in a variety of sizes, it featured a hinged, lockable bar that extended from the frame to secure the drawers.

During the reign of King George III (1760–1820), campaign furniture was commissioned almost exclusively by the wealthiest officers from the upper classes and was luxurious. Fine upholstery, leather lining, and intricate hidden compartments combined to make this furniture just as comfortable and elaborate as that produced for use in the home. Soon it was not just merchant officials and military officers who bought such furniture but also seafarers and families emigrating to start a new life abroad.

GOOD BUSINESS SENSE

By the mid-Victorian period, campaign furniture was a well-established and sophisticated feature of the best cabinet-makers' repertoires. Of course, the most important feature of campaign furniture was that it should be easily transportable. Whereas most ordinary furniture was held together with dovetail or mortise-and-tenon joints, it was crucial that knockdown furniture could be quickly erected and taken apart with the minimum of fuss.



WILLIAM IV CAMPAIGN CHAIR

This dining chair, one of a set of four, has hinges at the front and back rail, which allow it to be folded neatly once the upholstered seat and two long bolts have been removed. c.1835. H:87.6cm (34½in); W:45.7cm (18in); D:40.6cm (16in). CCA



CAMPAIGN SECRÉTAIRE CHEST

Two drawers side-by-side sit below a carved, three-quarter gallery and above the secrétaire drawer of this camphorwood chest, which features brass-bound corners and contains a further four short drawers and three long drawers, all with sunk handles. 1835–40. H:148cm (58½in); W:106cm (41¾in); D:48cm (18¾in). L&T



The iron supports can be dismantled.

The cotton canopy is white to reflect the sunlight.

The column supports are reeded and baluster-turned.

The slatted base is lightweight and can be folded.

The turned legs are on casters so that the bed is easy to move.

Brass hinges connect the sections of the slatted base.

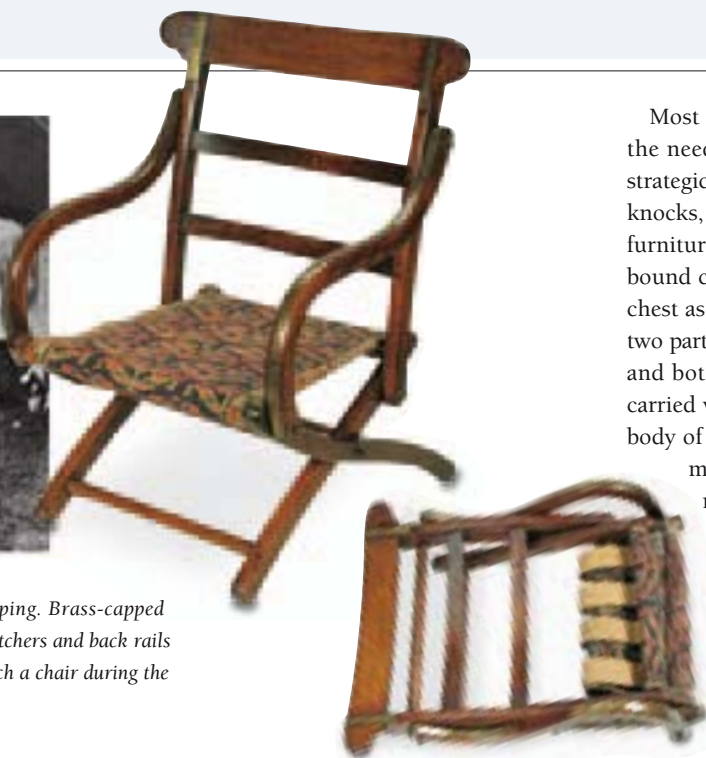
REGENCY CAMPAIGN BED

This mahogany campaign bed, made by John Durham of London, has a rectangular headboard, downswept half-sides, reeded baluster-turned posts, an arched tester, slatted base, and six ring-turned legs. c.1810. W:193cm (76in). S&K



COLONIAL FOLDING CHAIR

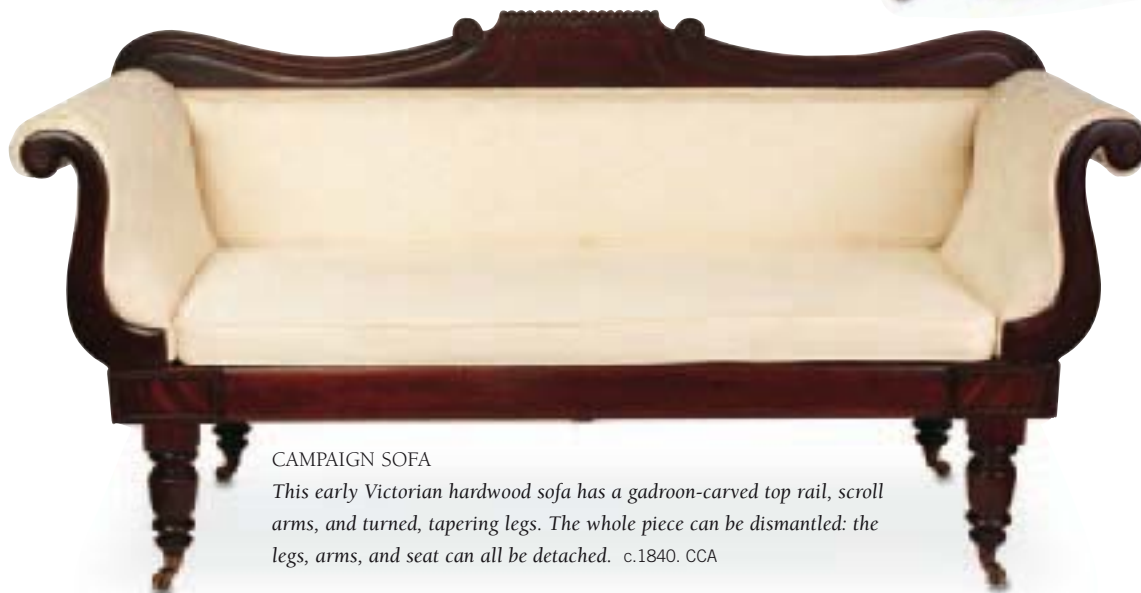
This teak folding armchair is strengthened with brass strapping. Brass-capped bolts hold the sections together, to allow it to fold, and the stretchers and back rails are pegged. General Philip Henry Sheridan (1831–88) used such a chair during the Plains Indian wars (above). 1875–1900. H:73.6cm (29in). CCA



Most examples used screws, which did away with the need for specialist tools. Brass mounts, placed strategically in areas that were subject to bumps and knocks, especially the corners, helped to protect the furniture while it was in transit. A Victorian brass-bound chest of drawers succeeded the Wellington chest as a campaign furniture staple. Composed of two parts, it was a simple matter to separate the top and bottom sections, which could then easily be carried with the aid of brass handles sunk into the body of the wood. Much campaign furniture was meant for use in the tropics and cabinet-makers used materials that were suited to extremes of heat and humidity. Canvas seats were more comfortable in these conditions than wooden or upholstered examples, and cane furniture was far lighter and better suited to tropical climates than solid wood.

FASHION ON THE FRONT

Although campaign furniture was generally less fussy than that used in the home, expats and those on overseas assignments strove to keep up with the latest London fashions. The insular and competitive nature of life on camp was such that people would attempt to trump the efforts of the next man by acquiring the most extensive suite of furniture in the most up-to-date design. Furthermore, it was important for the colonialists to establish their perceived superiority over their charges. By displaying the wealth and sophisticated fashions of the seat of empire, an unspoken message might be conveyed to the “barbarous” natives. As a result, a typical officer's domicile might be furnished with a sofa, a dining table complete with six chairs, and two library or armchairs, all specifically designed for an itinerant lifestyle. Styles tended to lag slightly behind fashions at home, and pieces were often made in the country in which they were intended for use.



CAMPAIGN SOFA

This early Victorian hardwood sofa has a gadroon-carved top rail, scroll arms, and turned, tapering legs. The whole piece can be dismantled: the legs, arms, and seat can all be detached. c.1840. CCA

THE BRAMAH LOCK

JOSEPH BRAMAH'S PATENT CYLINDER LOCK LED THE FIELD IN SECURITY AND WAS FITTED TO MUCH OF THE KNOCKDOWN FURNITURE TAKEN ABROAD BY BRITISH OFFICERS AND MERCHANTS.



Campaign chest This chest has a hinged lid and metal carrying handles. The chest has the typical Bramah lock, which remained unchanged for over 100 years. CCA

The Bramah lock

Locksmiths competed strenuously to come up with the most secure devices. In 1784, Joseph Bramah, an ingenious Yorkshireman whose curiosity took him into the realms of hydraulics and printing, patented a lock that still bears his name today. After a professional locksmith managed to crack Bramah's first design, he improved the mechanism and defiantly offered a 200-guinea prize to the first person that could successfully defeat it. The improved Bramah lock had 494 million possible permutations, and included dummy notches cut into the mechanism to foil the unscrupulous, not to mention persistent, lock-picker. The substantial prize went unclaimed for more than 50 years until a flamboyant American locksmith called Alfred Charles Hobbs caused a sensation by defeating both Bramah's patent lock and the Chubb Detector in 1851.



TRAVELLING GAMES TABLE

This early Victorian mahogany table has a top formed from its storage box. The top is marked with rosewood and boxwood veneers for chess and is supported by a telescopic column on tripod legs. c.1840. H:72.3cm (28½in); W:39.4cm; (15½in); D:33cm (13in). CCA



GERMANY AND AUSTRIA

THE GERMAN-SPEAKING world developed its own style years before the modern German state took shape. Although the Biedermeier style had evolved from the Neoclassical movement, particularly the Empire look that emerged from Napoleonic France, it was distinctly Germanic. Its popularity was such that Biedermeier furniture never quite disappeared in the 19th century and a number of popular revivals occurred, particularly in the 1860s. At the same time,

Germany and Austria embraced the same eclectic historicism that was popular throughout Europe during the mid 19th century.

ROCOCO REVIVAL

The Rococo revival was met with particular favour in Vienna, a city whose conservative nature was such that the court had never relinquished the original Germanic *Rokoko* of the 18th century, and so there was a seamless progression to the revival

style. New processes and technologies ushered in by the Industrial Revolution made it possible to recreate Rococo forms from published patterns at a fraction of the original cost and in less time, making them accessible to a wider market. Machines cut much finer veneers and carved Rococo ornament for application to carcasses constructed from local woods.

One of the pinnacles of the Rococo-revival style was the refurbishment of the Palais Liechtenstein in Vienna,

which made a lasting impression on public taste. Michael Thonet (*see pp.284–85*), who assisted Peter Hubert Desvignes in this mammoth task between 1837 and 1849, went on to revolutionize the furniture industry in his adopted Austria with his mass-produced bentwood furniture.

Other accomplished masters included Anton Pössenbacher, whose lavish carved and embroidered chairs for King Ludwig II represent the zenith of Bavarian Rococo.



The base contains four drawers.

The handles and escutcheons are intricately carved.

Carved details resemble Classical columns.

PRESS CUPBOARD

This massive cupboard is made of oak, and is decorated with architectural-style motifs. The design is completely symmetrical, in keeping with the Neoclassical style. The upper section of the cupboard consists of a moulded cornice, which projects above a carved frieze. Pilaster supports are positioned either side of two framed doors, which are designed

to resemble those found in Classical architecture. Below this are four narrow drawers. The lower section of the cabinet consists of two small cupboards with heavily inlaid and carved doors, also flanked by fluted pilasters. The whole piece is supported on a base that contains a further four drawers. Such an impressive piece would have belonged to a wealthy household. *Late 19th century. H:251cm (100½in); W:223cm (89in); D:67cm (27in).* VH



SIDE CHAIRS

These two chairs are from a set of six Biedermeier-style, walnut-veneered and polished side chairs made in Austria. The curved crest rail is supported on flat supports above a rounded, upholstered seat with lightly sweeping legs. *c.1900. H:91cm (35½in).* GK



GAMES TABLE

This Louis-Philippe-style mahogany games table has a moulded table top above a serpentine apron with carved finials at the corners. The rectangular table top opens up to reveal a playing surface, supported on a baluster column and four cabriole legs with floral carving. *1850–60. H:78cm (30¾in); W:84cm (33in); D:42cm (16½in).* BMN

UNIFICATION AND RENAISSANCE
Reworking of historical styles was characteristic of German and Austrian furniture design at this time. The same Gothic, Rococo, and Renaissance revivals that informed furniture design in Paris and London diffused through the continent far more quickly after the development of an integrated rail network in the mid 19th century. After the eventual unification of the German states under Bismarck in 1871, there was a general reappraisal of the roots

of German culture, creating a fusion of traditional vernacular design with these wider European trends.

Just as the United States embraced the Neo-Renaissance style after winning their independence from Britain, German designers developed a particular affinity for the style following the Franco-Prussian war in 1871. Known as the *Gründerzeit*, this style continued to be popular into the 20th century, remaining fashionable in some circles in parallel with the

more radical *Jugendstil*. New wealth, industrialization, overseas trade, and colonial acquisitions all contributed to a burgeoning confidence in the new German state.

GOTHIC STYLE

The German Gothic revival, a lighter and fussier aesthetic than its British counterpart, often featured boullework – a product of Louis XIV's France rather than of the medieval period.

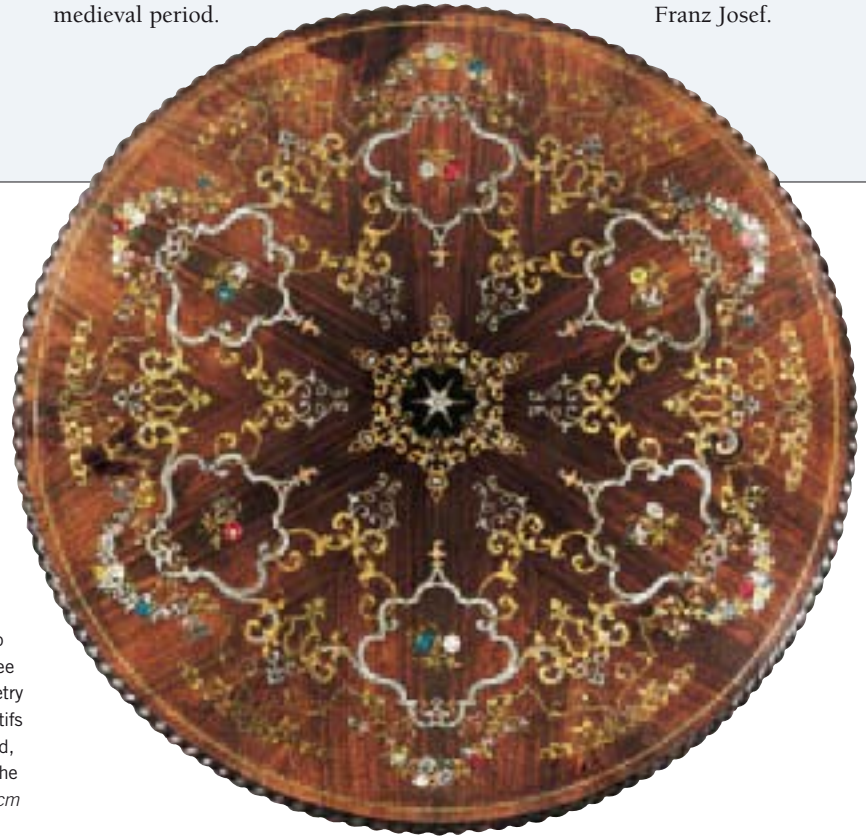
The German version of the Gothic style was more elaborate, making use of multiple colours where the original French version had been predominantly monochrome. A carved oak bookcase designed in Gothic style by Austrian cabinet-makers Bernardo de Bernardis (1808–68) and Joseph Cremer (1808–71) was displayed at the Crystal Palace exhibition in 1851, and afterwards it was presented to Queen Victoria by Emperor Franz Josef.



DINING TABLE

The round surface of this exquisite intarsia dining table is richly decorated with rosewood, brass, and mother-of-pearl inlaid into a kingwood veneer. The table top is supported on a solid oak-carved frame with three cabriole legs, which terminate in brass casters. The table is the work of Franz

Xavier Fortner (1798–1877). The table top design brings together influences from three different historical styles. The overall symmetry of the design is Neoclassical, the scrolling motifs resemble those popular in the Rococo period, and the central medallion of the table takes the Gothic style as its inspiration. c.1840. H:77cm (30½in); D:133cm (52¼in). BMN



PORCELAIN MOUNTS

GERMANY MAY NOT HAVE BEEN AT THE CUTTING EDGE OF EUROPEAN FURNITURE DESIGN IN THE MID 19TH CENTURY, BUT THE PORCELAIN MOUNTS PRODUCED WON INTERNATIONAL ACCLAIM.



Porcelain plaque

Ever since Meissen produced the first European porcelain, Germany has been a market leader in the ceramics industry. During the mid 19th century, enterprising cabinet-makers undertook to harness this resource and combine it with their own stock-in-trade. Cabinets decorated with porcelain mounts were not an entirely new concept – Oriental craftsmen had been making furniture with applied ceramic plaques for centuries, although their minimalist designs

Ebonized cupboard This piece is richly decorated with Meissen porcelain mounts, the most prominent being the oval panel on the cupboard door. They have chased gilt-metal borders and depict courting couples. The cupboard has a rectangular top with conforming gallery and is flanked by four polychrome, floral-decorated detached columns above turned, bulbous feet. c.1880. H:133.5cm (52½in). FRE

were a far cry from the elaborate models produced in Germany. In France, Sevres plaques had been used to adorn cabinets on occasion, but it was in Germany that the most celebrated examples were made.

The carcasses of these cabinets were roughly constructed from pine in Renaissance forms. An ebony veneer or, more usually, a coat of black paint provided a suitably dark ground on which to mount elaborate porcelain plaques, pillars, and feet: the dark wood acted as a foil to the richly decorated white ceramic. The best examples, many of which came from the Meissen factory, were hand-painted with scenes taken from 17th-century paintings with antiquarian or folk themes. The public appetite for these cabinets was vast, and William Oppenheim won widespread acclaim for an example he exhibited in Paris in 1878 for the Royal Dresden factory.

THONET'S BENTWOOD

THONET'S DEVELOPMENT OF THE BENTWOOD CHAIR – ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PRODUCTS EVER CONCEIVED – HAD AN ENORMOUS INFLUENCE ON THE COURSE OF FURNITURE DESIGN.

MICHAEL THONET (1796–1871) WAS BORN in Boppard-am-Rhein, a picturesque town that was then part of Prussia, now part of Germany. He trained as a cabinet-maker and set up a workshop in his home town as soon as he finished his apprenticeship. However, it was not until he was in his thirties that he began to experiment with steaming laminated wood veneers in order to create bentwood furniture. At first, he was only able to use this process to produce component parts, such as chair backs, which he incorporated into pieces constructed from more orthodox, straight, wooden elements. Still, his work was innovative, and Thonet's exhibit at an 1841 Koblenz trade show attracted the attention of Chancellor Metternich, who invited him to Austria to make some furniture for the Palais Liechtenstein.

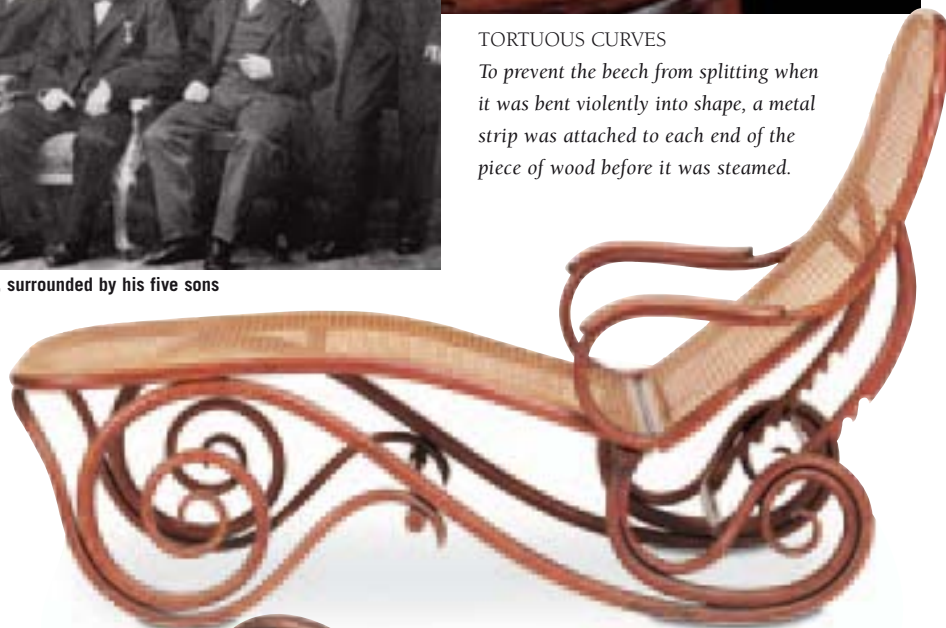


Michael Thonet (centre), surrounded by his five sons



TORTUOUS CURVES

To prevent the beech from splitting when it was bent violently into shape, a metal strip was attached to each end of the piece of wood before it was steamed.



BENTWOOD CHAISE LONGUE

Inspired by Arts and Crafts styling, the sinuous lines of the frame and arms of Thonet's chaise longue are created from long pieces of bent, solid, laminated beech. The seat is made of woven cane. Suitable for the conservatory or the garden, this recliner appealed to the taste for more rustic styles of furniture in the late 19th century, although it was, in fact, industrially produced. It is the precursor of Le Corbusier's chaise longue, designed in 1928, which used tubular steel instead of bent wood for the frame (see pp.432-33). 1883-84.

ROCKING CHAIR

The frame of this beech Thonet rocking chair exemplifies the Thonet technique of using single pieces of wood to create elaborate, elegant, curved structures. The seat and back of the chair are each made from a simple green fabric sling. c.1880. H:88.5cm (33½in). QU



GEBRÜDER THONET

FROM FAMILY BUSINESS TO GLOBAL CORPORATION, GEBRÜDER THONET BECAME PHENOMENALLY SUCCESSFUL.

Gebrüder Thonet was established in 1853. The runaway success of the company's bentwood furniture led to rapid growth, and within 20 years it had offices in London and New York. Expansion within continental Europe continued apace and, by the end of the 19th century, Gebrüder Thonet was operating more than 50 factories. Collaborations with eminent designers and architects, such as Josef Hoffmann, Otto Prutscher, and Emile Guyot, kept the firm at the forefront of new trends. In 1922, Gebrüder Thonet became part of the Thonet-Mindus holding company, employing 10,000 staff under the direction of Leopold Pilzer, who established Thonet Industries Inc. in New York. Throughout the latter half of the 20th century, a steady focus on innovation and contemporary design has sustained the company's identity, and Thonet remains a world leader in industrial furniture design.



Chair No. 14 This classic bentwood chair is perfectly shaped, elegant, and light. Designed by Thonet in 1859, 50 million were sold by 1930. The currently available No. 214 is its direct descendant. H: 64cm (25¼in); W: 43cm (17in); D: 52cm (20½in).

The component parts Only six pieces of wood make up the backrest, seat, and legs of chair No. 14.



The bending process Steamed until pliable, the solid wood is bent into shape. The men have to work in perfect unison with each other as they manipulate the wood, opening and closing a series of clamps to keep control.



VERSATILITY AND SIMPLICITY

By 1842, Thonet had perfected his steam-bending process, and in July of that year he was granted an international patent that protected his "chemical mechanical methods" from imitation. The extravagant curlicues of the bentwood furniture he produced for the interiors of the grand Rococo staterooms at the Palais Liechtenstein are testament to the versatility of his invention.

Once softened through immersion in steam or boiling water, the wood (beech was particularly suitable) could be moulded into almost any shape with the aid of a press. A single piece of timber could be manipulated to form the back legs, uprights, and top rail of a chair. Thonet's process meant that furniture could be constructed from far fewer members and did away with the need for dovetails, tenons, or any kind of joint; simple screws and nuts would suffice to hold the parts together.

In 1853, Thonet set up his own furniture company – Gebrüder Thonet – with his five sons (Franz, Michael, August, Josef, and Jacob), and designed a factory in Vienna to produce furniture that could be packed flat for shipping and assembled at its destination. Before long, Thonet's bentwood furniture was being exported all over the world.

WORLD-BEATING DESIGN

Mid-19th-century Vienna was famous for the lively political and cultural debate that found its focus in the city's cafés, and these establishments proved the ideal testing ground for Thonet's new bentwood chairs. Light yet durable, their distinctive but understated style and modest cost made them a hit with the hospitality industry. Thonet's first large-scale commission was to supply chairs to Vienna's *Daum* coffeehouse in the late 1850s, and the world-beating "No. 14" chair was developed for this purpose. It was so successful that before the turn of the century more than 15 million No. 14 chairs had been made and sold throughout Europe. This was functional furniture for the masses rather than furniture as a signifier of wealth, and the industrial production lines in Thonet's factories across central Europe were turning it out in huge quantities.

THE CONTRIBUTION LIVES ON

When compared to the convoluted decoration of so much mid-19th-century furniture, the bentwood designs of Thonet and his sons are positively spartan. Le Corbusier commemorated this refreshing aspect of Thonet's *oeuvre* in 1925 when he used the No. 14 chair as part of his hugely influential *l'Esprit Nouveau* exhibit, espousing his rejection of decoration in favour of function. It is unlikely that John Henry Belter (1804–63) would have had so much success with his carved laminate furniture in New York had Thonet not laid the foundations before him. Thonet's legacy has endured well into the modern age – he precipitated Charles and Ray Eames's mass-produced office chairs (see pp. 456–57), and, of course, the modern flat-pack domestic furniture industry.



SETTEE NO. 2

A single length of bent wood forms both the back rail and the back legs of this settee. The back is constructed from just three lengths of bent wood, curled and intertwining to form a symmetrical pattern. The wickerwork seat is supported within a beech wood frame and stands on tapering legs. This Thonet settee bears the company's stamp. c. 1888. W: 117cm (46¼in). DOR

LOW COUNTRIES

THE NEOCLASSICAL REVIVAL persisted in the Netherlands under the auspices of the Waterstaat ministry, who presided over church construction until 1875. This “Waterstaatsjil” was primarily inspired by Grecian temple forms and became firmly entrenched in the Dutch consciousness, informing furniture design throughout the mid-19th century.

HISTORICISM BY NUMBERS

The interiors of many Catholic churches constructed at this time were decorated in an approximation of the Baroque style, although many of the features were false: plaster vaulting and walls painted to look like marble were common. This falsification was also a feature of Willem II Gothicism, an early Dutch Gothic-revival style that was championed by Pierre Cuyper among others.

Despite having studied under Viollet-le-Duc, the architect of so many sympathetic restorations, Cuyper's work was more of a pastiche than a genuine representation of the Gothic era. Native oak was used to construct Gothic-revival furniture, often with a similarly scant regard for the fundamental principles of the Gothic style.

INFLUENCES FROM THE EAST

The Dutch enjoyed their privileged position as the only Western people to trade with the Japanese until the 1850s. They imported lacquer furniture inlaid with fine pieces of shell, and restrained, plain versions of Western forms such as chairs, tables, and high cabinets finished in the finest lacquer.

Other colonial interests in the region, particularly in Indonesia, provided the Netherlands with fine exotic hardwoods. These were often quite different from the woods used elsewhere in Europe, where they were imported predominantly from the Caribbean and Africa. Dutch cabinet-makers used satinwood from the East Indies to create copies of 18th-century Neoclassical furniture, with slim, tapering legs, metal mounts and fine inlays, and stringing made from contrasting timbers.

A PASSION FOR MARQUETRY

The main centres of furniture production in Belgium were Antwerp and Malines. Many of the craftsmen active in these areas were very adept in marquetry techniques, a perennially popular form of surface decoration in the Low Countries. Apart from the appearance of Neoclassical elements in the late 18th century, the distinctive style of Dutch marquetry did not change much from the early 18th century to the end of the 19th century. Ebony, kingwood, satinwood, and other fine and exotic timbers were used to create intricate and arresting floral designs, often in a variety of colours.

This practice was not limited to new furniture – demand was such that these same craftsmen adapted older pieces of plain walnut furniture and made them more saleable through the application of their art. Table tops, drawer fronts, back splats, friezes, and skirts were all considered appropriate places for marquetry design. However, with the advent of mass production in the late 19th century, the quality of the marquetry work deteriorated.

Brass, ebonized, and tortoiseshell mirror This wall mirror has raised foliate brass decoration centred and surmounted by a mask motif. The bevelled rectangular plate sits within a brass and ebonized frame, which in turn is surrounded with a further panelled and moulded tortoiseshell frame. The piece is Baroque in its overall appearance. *Late 19th century. SL*



CORNER CABINET

This satinwood corner cabinet is painted to simulate marquetry decoration and has leaf-cast, gilt-brass mounts. The shaped triangular top is centred by an oval panel of oak leaves and has padouk banding. It sits above a frieze

of scrolling roses issuing from a basket of fruit, below which is a single door centred by a putti mask in a panel. The case is raised on pyramidal legs with small, brass bun feet. Predominantly Neoclassical in style, the central mount is distinctly Rococo in design. *Late 19th century. W:89cm (35½in). L&T*



MARQUETRY CABINET

The rectangular top of this mahogany and marquetry cabinet sits above a single, long ogee frieze drawer, below which is a pair of doors, flanked on each side by a pilaster. The case is supported on a plinth and turned feet.

All the surfaces of the chest are richly decorated with a marquetry design of baskets, flowers, and birds. The moulded frieze drawer is typical of 19th-century designs. The marquetry on the doors is a little awkward but still identifiably Neoclassical in style. *Mid 19th century. W:97cm (38¼in). L&T*



SIDE CHAIR

This early 18th-century-style floral marquetry side chair has a solid vase-shaped back splat and drop-in seat. The shaped seat rail is supported on cabriole legs, which terminate in claw-and-ball feet. *Mid 19th century. DN*



RECTANGULAR SIDE TABLE

This ebony and floral marquetry side table takes inspiration from the late 18th century. The table top is centred with marquetry birds on an urn and has a moulded edge above a frieze drawer of similar decoration. The table top is supported on spiral-turned legs, joined by a flat cross-stretcher, and terminating in bun feet. *H:73cm (28 3/4in). DN*



OVAL CENTRE TABLE

This Neoclassical-style oval centre table is made of mahogany and decorated with marquetry. It is inlaid throughout with scrolling foliate designs and the table top is centred by a flowering urn design. The piece is raised on slender, square, tapering legs, with tiny, brass bun feet. *c.1880. W:96.5cm (38in). FRE*

The cartouche crest is carved with scrolls and acanthus.

The moulded cornice is in the Baroque style.

The arched door and shaped edge are a mixture of Baroque and Rococo styles.

The glazed front door opens on to a shelved interior.

The velvet-lined interior is intended for the display of porcelain artefacts.

The top of the lower cabinet has a serpentine edge.

The lower cabinet is bombé in form, which is typical of Dutch furniture.

The gilt-bronze handles are in 18th-century style.

Satinwood floral marquetry decorates the drawers in typical Dutch style.



MARQUETRY DISPLAY CABINET

This mahogany and marquetry display cabinet is profusely inlaid with floral marquetry. The upper section has an arched cornice centred by a green man, above a corresponding glazed door and sides. The lower section of the cabinet has a shaped top and four long, graduated *bombé* drawers. The case of the lower section has canted angles and stands on claw-and-ball feet. The piece contains elements of both Baroque and Rococo, and has the symmetry of late 18th-century marquetry. *Mid 19th century. H:197cm (77 1/2in). L&T*

The sides of the lower cabinet are inlaid with urns on stands issuing flowers in Rococo and Neoclassical style.

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

ON THE IBERIAN PENINSULA, styles from countries that had close relationships with Spain and Portugal, in particular, Morocco, were fused with a dominant French aesthetic. This resulted in distinctive, solid furniture peppered with lighter touches.

SPANISH FUSION

“Isabellino” furniture was the Spanish interpretation of the French Second Empire style. Richly decorated with contrasting colours, it was more exuberant than its French counterpart, and its symmetry allies it more closely with the Baroque than with the Rococo revival that swept across the rest of

Europe. Pieces made for the court of Isabella II (1833–68) were the most sumptuous of all and set the agenda for the aspiring merchant classes.

The use of mother-of-pearl inlays, frequently in geometric patterns, was very widespread. Other fashionable decorative elements included mounts of bronze or gilded wood, and painted decoration applied directly to the timber. Classical motifs, including carved putti and acanthus leaves, were also commonly used.

Openwork carving often made use of themes drawn from Morocco, Spain’s closest neighbour to the south, and one that has lent a distinctive

Islamic twist to the Spanish decorative arts for centuries. Moorish forms and decoration, such as woven upholstery and turned spindles, were widespread throughout Spain during this period. In fact, Moroccan influence was by now so well established that it broadened to include elements from other Islamic cultures.

Isabella II's bedroom at the Palacio Real, Aranjuez The solidity of the dark wood furniture and fittings is offset by the sumptuous gilded carving that adorns the bed.



SPANISH MOORISH DRESSING TABLE

This walnut and ebony dressing table is inlaid with intarsia. The cabinet is surmounted by an arched mirror, at the base of which are two small drawers. A frieze drawer sits above a pair of panelled doors, which enclose a fitted interior. The case stands on block feet with casters. *Mid 19th century. H:195cm (76½in). L&T*



PORTUGUESE CENTRE TABLE

This centre table is made of rosewood and is in the style of those popular in the late 17th century. The rectangular table top has brass mounts at the corners and the frieze is fitted with drawers and dummy drawers. It stands on bulbous, twist-carved legs joined by twisted stretchers. *c.1880.*



PORTUGUESE SIDE TABLE

This side table is made of stained walnut. Beneath the plain top is a single frieze drawer. The overall form, with its H-stretcher and central uprights, is 17th-century French, but the style of carving gives it a Portuguese provenance. *Late 19th century.*



SPANISH CABINET

The parquetry top of this tortoiseshell, mother-of-pearl, and walnut cabinet has projecting corners. The case has seven drawers, flanked by free-standing columns, and arranged around a central door and two drawers below. The Moorish influence is apparent in the Arab-style design. *Mid 19th century. W:114cm (45½in). L&T*



PORTUGUESE COMMUNE

This is one of a pair of carved Rosewood *petite* commodes. The exaggerated waisted shape is a very common Portuguese form during this period. The ball-and-claw feet on cabriole legs are taken from mid 18th-century English designs. *Late 19th century.*

Cyrillic script betrays the central Asian provenance of some Moorish furniture constructed in Spain at this time. Carpets used as upholstery were sourced from the Tekke of Turkestan, for example. Heavy silver adornments were another decorative element borrowed from this part of the world.

The drawing-room suite, usually comprising a sofa and a pair of armchairs, became extremely popular in Spanish homes during this period. The occasional table continued to enjoy the popularity it had won in the earlier “Fernandino” period. Around 1870, after a period of civil war that followed the end of Isabella’s reign, designers

began to seek inspiration in traditional Spanish furniture from the 16th and 17th centuries.

PORTUGUESE ASSIMILATIONS

The Portuguese had suffered greatly at the hands of Napoleon’s forces but had been impressed by a system of government that freed them from the yoke of a repressive monarchy. Rebellion and civil war plagued the reigns of Maria II, Pedro V, and Luis I, the rulers of Portugal during the mid 19th century.

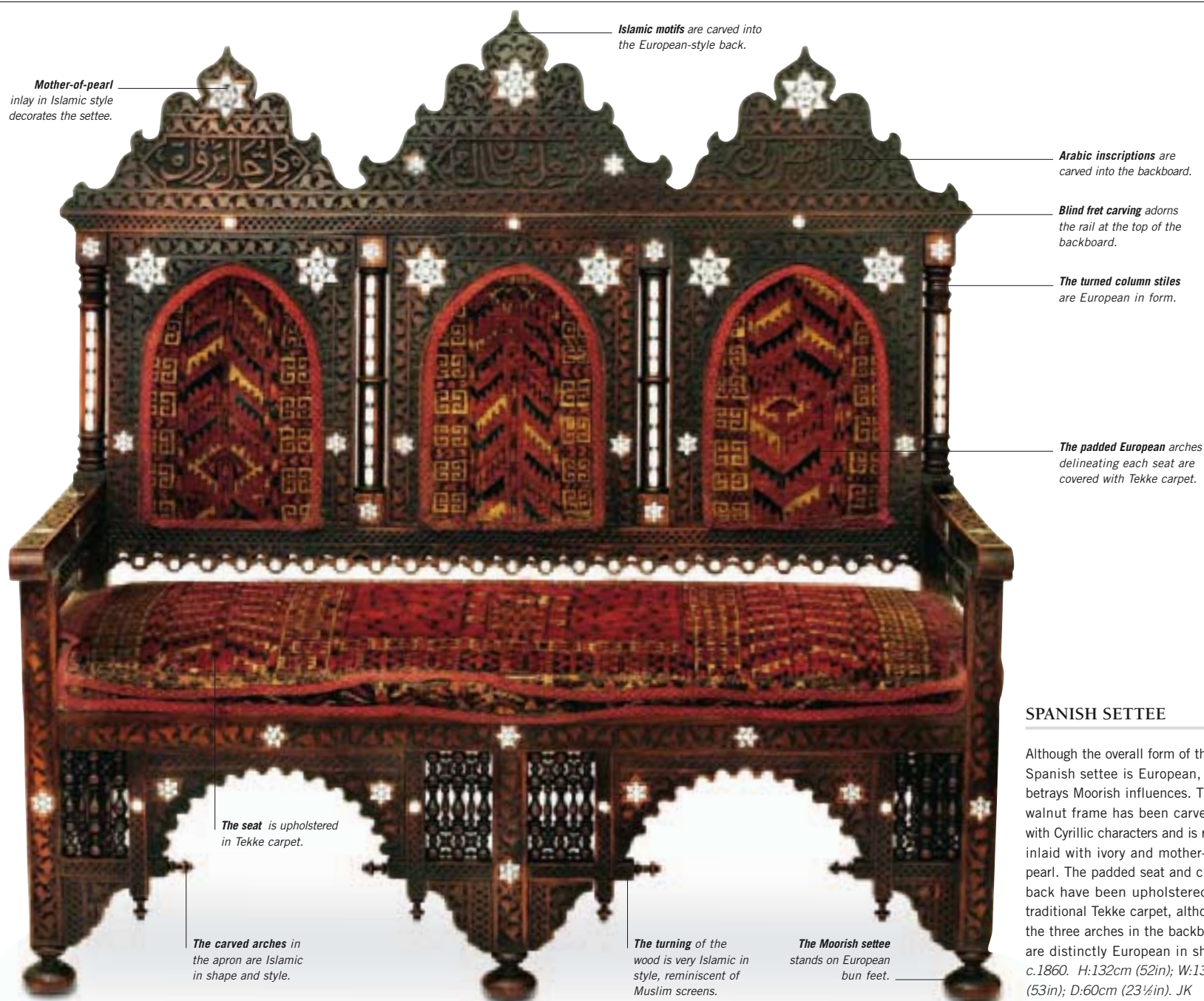
French influence had declined after liberation from Napoleon, and designers began to follow the work

of British cabinet-makers more closely. As a result, features such as the cabriole leg and paw foot became widespread in Portuguese furniture. Another important outside influence came from Germany. The Portuguese embraced the fading Biedermeier style through Maria II, who had a number of German consorts.

Towards the end of the century, Spain began to embrace styles based on the more distant past of their own peoples, while Portugal embarked on an enduring affair with designs from the João V period (1706–50). Rosewood continued to be the favoured wood because of Portugal’s colonial interests.

LATIN AMERICAN NEOCLASSICISM

The thriving Latin colonies in Central and South America had never been exposed to the French Empire style that had pervaded Europe and from which the bulk of European mid-19th-century furniture had developed. The widespread diaspora of patterns originally drawn by 18th-century masters, such as Chippendale and Hepplewhite, did reach these distant western outposts and were the basis for a Latin American Neoclassical revival. Latin American furniture in the mid 19th century was, therefore, far closer to British forms than that produced on the Iberian mainland.



SPANISH SETTEE

Although the overall form of this Spanish settee is European, it betrays Moorish influences. The walnut frame has been carved with Cyrillic characters and is richly inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl. The padded seat and chair back have been upholstered in traditional Tekke carpet, although the three arches in the backboard are distinctly European in shape. c.1860. H:132cm (52in); W:135cm (53in); D:60cm (23½in). JK

SCANDINAVIA

THE SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES emerged from a period of economic strife in the 19th century, eventually finding the confidence to channel the historical revivals of the period into a distinctive regional style.

DANISH TASTE

In Denmark it was the Late Empire, or Christian VIII style, first popularized by the architect Gustav Friedrich Hetsch (1788–1864), that held sway in the mid 19th century. It expressed

a rigid Classicism through applied ornament carved with urns, acanthus leaves, and similar motifs. Some of this decoration was not carved but instead was made from sawdust pressed into moulds, an economical innovation that illustrates how the profession embraced new technologies.

The improvement of the Danish economy in the 1830s was spurred on by a series of four national trade and industry exhibitions. The displays at these exhibitions were reviewed by a consortium of the cultural, scientific, and artistic elite put together by Hetsch himself. Under the

watchful eyes of these arbiters of taste, who included the physicist H.C. Ørsted, the Danish furniture industry managed to avoid some of the creeping vulgarization that afflicted so many other European nations. Although there was a certain lowering of standards among the mass-market trade, the best practitioners maintained very high standards.

Cabinet-makers in Copenhagen actually enjoyed a boom that echoed that of 18th-century London, with master craftsmen beginning to combine workshops with grand exhibition spaces in which they could both display and sell their wares. C.B. Hansen, the

court chair-maker, was among the first of these newly successful furniture-makers.

SWEDEN AND NORWAY

Swedish furniture in the mid 19th century was still dominated by the Gustavian style, which had emerged more than half a century earlier. Imitations and reproductions of the Rococo and Neoclassical forms produced during that time also remained extremely important.

The very light, off-white stains and painted finishes that are hallmarks of Gustavian furniture were ideally suited to Swedish interiors, as maximizing



DANISH SAFE

This steel, two-door safe has a stepped top with two reeded finials and an overhanging cornice moulding with leaf-tip borders. The two cabinet doors have Neoclassical and foliate decoration and are flanked by circular pilasters raised on paw feet. *Mid 19th century. H:165cm (65in); W:68.5cm (27in); D:56cm (22in). EVE*



SWEDISH ARMCHAIRS

Each one of this pair of Swedish Empire-style, beech or fruitwood, painted open armchairs has a rectangular, padded, and leaf-tip-bordered backrest, a spool-turned

cross-form splat, and down-swept armrests raised on curved supports. The upholstered seat is raised on circular, tapered legs, which are decorated with leaf banding. *1880. H:92.75cm (36½in); W:57cm (22½in); D:52cm (20½in).*



SWEDISH CENTRE TABLE

This Gustavian-style painted table has a rectangular top above a bead and leaf-tip frieze with swags. Acanthus leaves adorn the tapering, fluted legs. *Mid 19th century. H:78.8cm (31in); W:88.25cm (34¾in); D:62.8cm (24¾in).*



DANISH ARMCHAIRS

These armchairs are part of a suite of Danish painted furniture, which includes a settee and four side chairs. Each armchair has an upholstered rectangular backrest with laurel-leaf

carving between rows of bead carving. The drop-in upholstered seats with a leaf-and-vine frieze and rosette corners, are raised on turned and fluted legs headed with fish-scale carving. *Late 19th century. H:101.5cm (40in); W:68.5cm (27in); D:63cm (25in).*



DANISH WORKTABLE

This Empire-revival walnut worktable has an oval top above a frieze drawer. Supported on two tapering legs, it is headed by gilt wings and has outswept feet. *c.1870. H:75cm (29½in); W:60.5cm (23¾in); D:38cm (15in).*

the available light was a boon in Scandinavian countries. The *bois-clair* look, a remnant of the Gustavian style, remained a firm favourite, at least for case furniture and chairs. Woods that could not be stained to achieve a light finish were often painted white or pale grey, or sometimes parcel gilt.

A version of the Danish style pioneered by Hetsch was adopted in Sweden for a time, but failed to survive the first half of the 19th century. Instead, the Swedish were quicker to embrace the Gothic-revival style that had been so successful in Britain. Hansen was one of the pioneers of the Swedish Gothic revival,

employing a much lighter touch than his British counterparts, to correspond to the pale Scandinavian palette.

Norway enjoyed a growing economy during the mid 19th century, and the laying of the first railways and a growing merchant shipping fleet helped to increase internal and external trade. Despite a growing nationalistic feeling, Norwegian furniture of the period was largely based on Swedish and British models. However, some of the vernacular furniture produced did carry a recognizably Norwegian aesthetic in the form of brightly painted folk art roses and other traditional details.

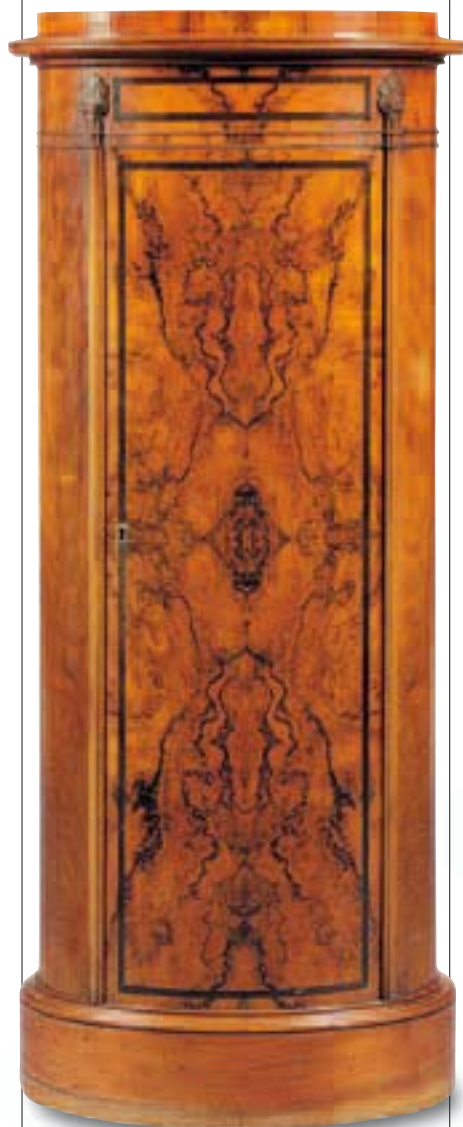
A SCANDINAVIAN AESTHETIC

The Neoclassical, Gothic, and Rococo revivals dominated Scandinavian interiors as they did throughout Europe. Denmark and Sweden produced a great many salon suites in these revival styles, consisting of a sofa and four side chairs, sometimes also including a pair of armchairs. The popularity of these suites was such that they could be found in most fashionable middle-class homes.

Much of the furniture of this period was made from painted soft woods, such as pine or beech, and drew inspiration from French, Russian, and German designs. From about 1870, a

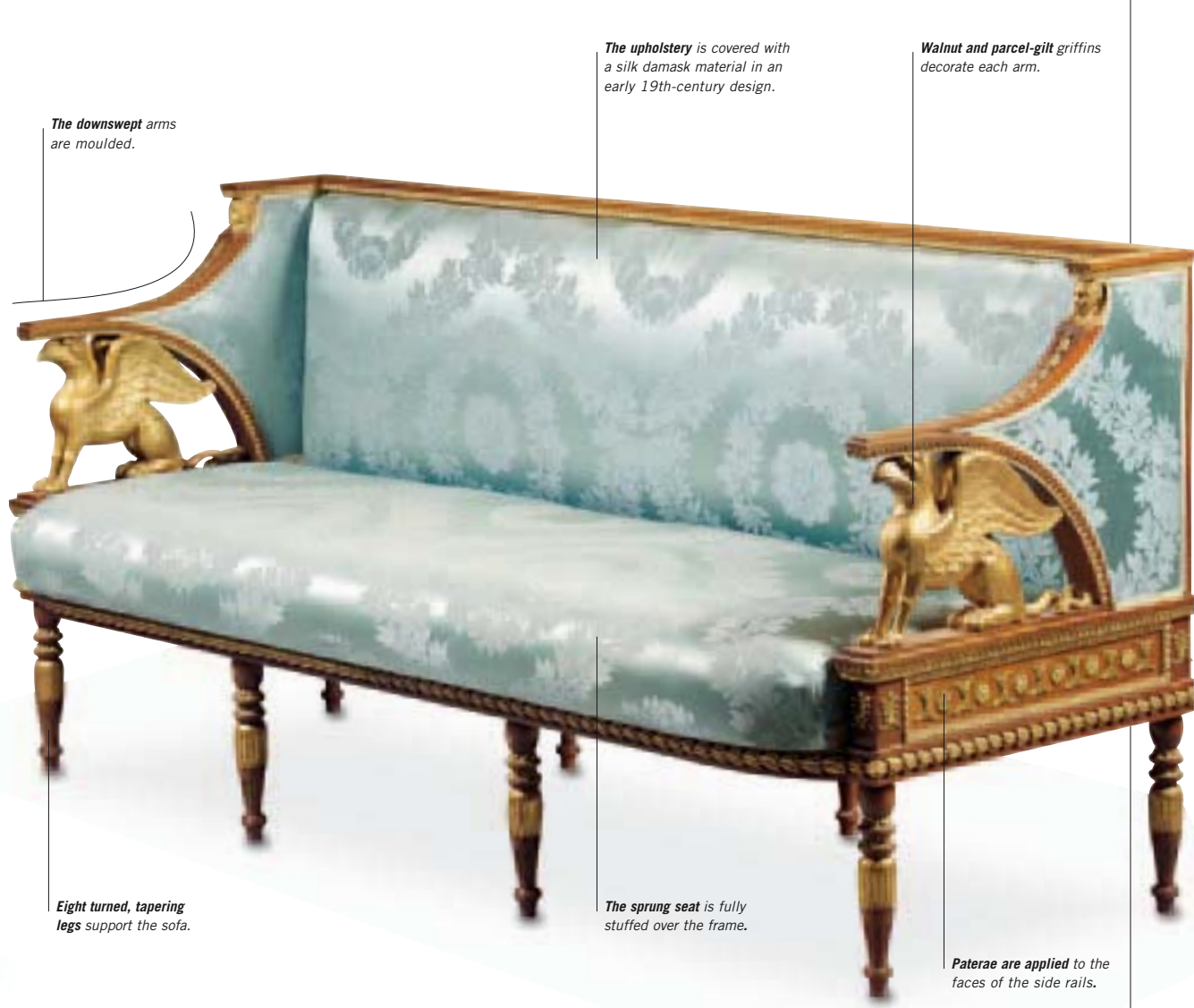
Biedermeier revival began, and lighter birch wood was used. Forms remained simple and veneers became thinner and plainer in design.

Towards the end of the 19th century, the Scandinavian furniture industry began to assert a distinct regional identity with the enthusiastic uptake of a starker, Modernist aesthetic. Lilla Hyttånäs, the cottage inhabited by the great Swedish artist Carl Larsson from 1888, became the archetype for austere but homely interiors throughout Sweden. The textile and furniture designs of his wife Karin helped to introduce an abstract aesthetic to the wider Scandinavian consciousness.



DANISH PEDESTAL CUPBOARD

This tall, oval, pedestal cupboard is made of walnut with inlaid ebony decoration. The curved door encloses three shelves, which are intended to store hats. *c.1860. H:142cm (56in); W:62cm (24½in).*



The downswept arms are moulded.

The upholstery is covered with a silk damask material in an early 19th-century design.

Walnut and parcel-gilt griffins decorate each arm.

Eight turned, tapering legs support the sofa.

The sprung seat is fully stuffed over the frame.

Paterae are applied to the faces of the side rails.

SWEDISH SOFA

This Swedish sofa is made of walnut highlighted with parcel-gilt, and is based on a late 18th-century design. The straight, rectangular top rail and the faces of the side rails are decorated with paterae and beading. The arm supports are carved

in the shape of griffins and give the piece a very Neoclassical appearance. The pale blue silk damask upholstery is similar in style to patterns popular at the beginning of the 19th century. The piece stands on eight turned, tapered legs decorated with gilt banding. *Late 19th century. W:182cm (71¾in).*

RUSSIA

WHILE RUSSIA'S SERFS scraped a meagre existence tied to the land, the affluent society centred around the Imperial court in St Petersburg enjoyed an extremely high standard of living that was reflected in the grand furniture they commissioned.

EUROPE'S MELTING POT

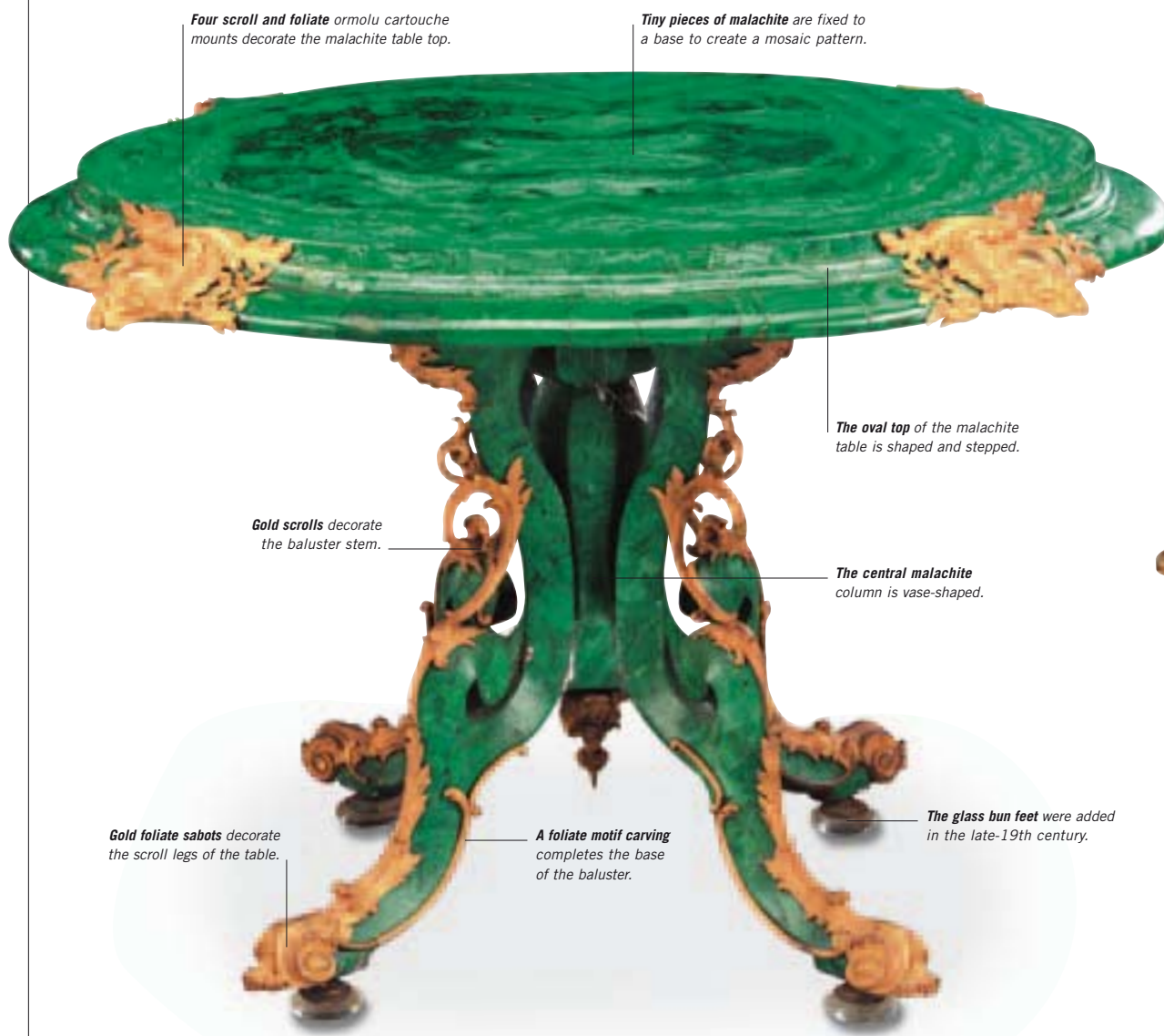
St Petersburg was a cosmopolitan city in the mid 19th century, with strong ties with France, the Low Countries, and the German and Italian states. Craftsmen from each of these areas flowed into the Russian capital, bringing with them ideas and designs from across Europe. French influence, in particular, was very

strong. Many of these journeymen were masters of their professions – Leo von Klenze, for example, was Court architect to Ludwig I of Bavaria before he designed interiors for the New Hermitage. He continued to champion the Russian Empire style well into the mid 19th century with his malachite and marble furniture. Russian rule over Finland meant that there was a free exchange of information between the two countries, and many Finnish craftsmen plied their trades in St Petersburg. As a result, the dominant Russian style of the period was an amalgam of fashions from many different places. The heavy

aspect of polite Russian furniture, designed for use in large spaces, was complemented by grand mounts of gilded wood or brass, featuring Classical motifs drawn from the European tradition.

Among the peculiarly Russian specialities of the period was metal furniture, which was used more frequently here than elsewhere in Europe. The Tula Imperial Armoury, an important weapons foundry, became famous for its iron furniture, such as the dressing room suite on display at the Pavlovsky Palace Museum. Carl Fabergé, jeweller to the Imperial Court from 1884, designed a

handful of superb items of furniture that exerted an enormous influence on the fashionable elite. These high-fashion pieces were the exception, however, as a general decline took place in the Russian furniture industry during the late 19th century. Increased mechanization was the death knell for many craftsmen who could not compete with the new factories in



Four scroll and foliate ormolu cartouches decorate the malachite table top.

Tiny pieces of malachite are fixed to a base to create a mosaic pattern.

The oval top of the malachite table is shaped and stepped.

Gold scrolls decorate the baluster stem.

The central malachite column is vase-shaped.

Gold foliate sabots decorate the scroll legs of the table.

A foliate motif carving completes the base of the baluster.

The glass bun feet were added in the late-19th century.

MALACHITE TABLE

The shaped, stepped oval top of this Alexandre II malachite low table is mounted with four scroll and foliate ormolu cartouches. Beneath the table top, a baluster stem, ending in a foliate motif carving, is flanked by four scroll legs on scroll and foliate sabots. The table stands on glass bun feet, which were added at a later date. The malachite used to create this table

was mined at Yekaterinburg in the Ural Mountains. Malachite from the same source was also used to create the Malachite Room at the Winter Palace in St Petersburg (see above right). Russian craftsmen from the Peterhof and Yekaterinburg works used the Russian mosaic technique to cover large surfaces; they cut pieces of malachite into 3mm (1/8in) thick slices and attached them to a base to produce an attractive overall pattern. c.1860. H:66cm (26in); W:100.5cm (39½in); D:75.5cm (29¾in).



ROUND-BACKED ARMCHAIR

Carved out of mahogany and upholstered in velvet, this armchair with a rounded back was made at the Melzer factory for the Alexandria Palace in Peterhof. Late 19th century. H:81cm (32in); W:55cm (21½in); D:45cm (17¾in).



SILVER-MOUNTED TABLE

The top of this Louis XVI-style Fabergé table has a beaded silver border. The drawer is applied with a silver laurel wreath with ribbon cresting. The fluted legs are joined by a silver-mounted stretcher. Late 19th century. H:70.2cm (27¾in).

terms of output or cost. In these factories, machine-cut pine carcasses were covered with very thin machine-cut hardwood veneers before finally being finished by hand. In this way, furniture that appeared to equal the quality of that created by the artisan was produced far more cheaply.

Winter Palace interior Designed by Alexander Bryullov, the Malachite Room was rebuilt in 1837 as a drawing room for Alexandra Fyodorovna, the wife of Tsar Nicolas I. The richly gilded furniture was produced by the workshop of Peter Gams from sketches by Auguste de Montferriand.



UPHOLSTERED ARMCHAIR

From a suite of furniture made for the Winter Palace in St Petersburg, this carved and gilded armchair is upholstered in crimson silk. It was created in Louis XV style. 1853. H:92cm (36in); W:50cm (19½in); D:48cm (18¾in).



GOTHIC CHAIR

This Gothic-style, high-backed chair carved out of walnut was designed by E. Gams for the Gothic Study of the Golitsyn-Stroganov estate in Maryino. Mid 19th century. H:123cm (48½in); W:64cm (25¼in).



MAHOGANY BOOKCASE

This two-door glazed bookcase has a broken pediment with a brass moulded edge and brass fluted decoration to the central frieze. The doors have well-figured mahogany frames with central glazed panels and boldly modelled

brass astragals. The doors have canted corners with brass flutes, surmounted and supported by brass square paterae. The sides are inset with panels, bordered by brass lines. The whole stands on a plinth, supported on square, tapering legs, terminating in brass sabots. c.1840. H:208cm (82in); W:143cm (56in).



Roll-top curved lid



Carved, gilded swans



CYLINDER BUREAU

The drum-shaped case of this mahogany desk is supported by two shaped legs with carved and gilded swans at the top and partly gilded claw-and-ball feet at the bottom. The legs are joined by a flat, carved cross-stretcher. The

desk has a fitted interior, containing shelves and compartments for letters and writing equipment, and a leather writing slide. A series of wooden slats attached to a single piece of cloth composes the roll-top lid, which retracts to the back. Late 19th century. H:95cm (37½in); W:87cm (34¼in); D:45cm (17¾in). GK

UNITED STATES

A RENEWED RUSH of immigration from northern Europe swelled America's population in the mid-19th century. After the Civil War (1861–65), the victorious North was imbued with new vigour and wealth as the tide of industrialization swept across the states.

APPROPRIATIONS FROM EUROPE

The American Empire style reached its zenith around 1840, when the tide of fashion turned in favour of plain surfaces. Heavy furniture in mahogany and rosewood veneers dominated the later American Empire period.

The Empire manner was gradually ousted from its central position in American taste by an influx of European craftsmen, who helped to disseminate the Rococo-revival style. The Classical motifs of Empire furniture gave way to emblems drawn from the natural world, and rounded Rococo forms replaced the earlier architectural structures. The development of laminate veneers greatly aided the practitioners of the Rococo revival, led by German-born New Yorker J.H. Belter (see pp.296–97). Some American designers, such as Alexander Roux, eschewed the use of laminated bentwood in favour of a more authentic Rococo look. Roux was a French immigrant whose elaborately carved pieces featured decorative motifs drawn from hunting, such as grouse, dogs, and deer.

The Gothic style also remained popular during the second half of the 19th century. Examples of solid dark wood furniture crowned by cathedral-style trefoils and quatrefoils could be found in many middle-class homes.

HOMEGROWN INGENUITY

George Hunzinger, a German who arrived in the United States in 1855, devised ingenious space-saving, mechanical furniture. He amassed more than 20 patents during his career, for furniture that folded, extended, collapsed, or converted. William Wooton, a native of Indiana, secured a patent for an equally clever, but altogether more immutable form in the 1870s. The Wooton Patent Secretary was a large desk that concealed innumerable small drawers and compartments for the storage of documents and chattels.

A NEW AMERICAN RENAISSANCE

Renaissance forms were rediscovered after the Civil War and incorporated into a new, distinctly American look. The 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition was a statement of the nation's confidence and marked the culmination of the Renaissance revival. Luminaries of the Gilded Age, such as J.P. Morgan, commissioned grand houses designed in the Renaissance style. The Centennial also spawned an interest in a revival of American colonial furniture forms.

The American people had long been fascinated with Egyptology, and a number of exhibitions of ancient Egyptian artefacts drew vast crowds during the latter half of the 19th century. It is therefore no surprise that Egyptian motifs found their way on to furniture of the period. Actual Egyptian forms were rarely used. Instead, lotus, sphinx, and other emblems were applied to Renaissance-revival furniture.

The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts The current building was designed in the popular Gothic-revival style by American architect Frank Furness (1839–1922). The Academy opened in 1876.



CHIPPENDALE-STYLE CHAIR

This mahogany side chair with an upholstered drop-in seat has an openwork splat, shaped top rail, and scrolled ears. Elegant cabriole legs terminate in claw-and-ball feet. It is one of a set of six chairs. c.1900. H:100cm (39in). BRU



GOTHIC-REVIVAL ARMCHAIR

This walnut armchair has a carved and pierced crest. The back is flanked by spiral spindles and stiles. The ring-turned arms terminate in ball-turned hand-holds, and the seat is raised on spiral-turned legs. H:118cm (46½in). SL



CHEST-ON-CHEST

This Colonial-revival chest-on-chest is made from mahogany. The upper section of the chest consists of an outset gadroon-carved top, two moulded frieze drawers, and three graduated drawers. The lower section has two

long drawers positioned above a gadroon-carved base and the piece is supported on claw-and-ball feet. The overall form is based on a mid 18th-century original. The legs are inspired by a mid 18th-century form, while the moulded top drawer is 19th century in style. Mid 19th century. H:152.5cm (60in). S&K



TEA TABLE

This tea table or card table, is an exact copy of a late 18th-century piece, with a top that opens out to provide a larger surface. Made from mahogany, the table is inlaid with boxwood. The frieze is inlaid with an urn motif, and the table is raised on square, tapering legs. *Mid 19th century.*



TRIPLE-ARCH SOFA

This Renaissance-revival, laminated walnut, triple-arch sofa is influenced by Louis XV style. It has a pierced foliate, scroll-and-grape clustered frame, centred by a carved mask crest. The tufted back of the sofa is in three sections above a padded serpentine seat with a floral-carved apron on cabriole legs. *c.1865. W:200cm (80in). S&K*



Interior detail



Detail of crest



Detail of drawers

WOOTON DESK

This imposing variation of the fall-front desk has an elaborate, domed pediment. Two lockable, hinged front panels open to reveal an extensive, complex arrangement of interior drawers and divisions. The writing surface, also hinged, lifts from horizontal to vertical so the panel doors can close. The doors are also fitted with shelves and divisions. *Late 19th century.*



The pediment has a central domed crest.

Hinges allow the heavy panels to open outwards.

The panel doors are as deep as the desk itself.

Two small drawers flank either side of a central recess.

The writing surface is hinged so it can be raised when locking up the desk.

Panel doors are fitted with shelves and divisions.

The wooden knobs are in a darker wood than the drawers.

BELTER AND THE ROCOCO REVIVAL

BELTER WAS THE STAR OF THE AMERICAN ROCOCO REVIVAL – HIS FURNITURE COMBINED TECHNICAL WIZARDRY WITH TRADITIONAL SKILL AND WON HIM THE ADORATION OF NEW YORK'S GLITTERATI.

JOHN HENRY BELTER (1804–63), as he came to be known, was born Johann Heinrich Belter, near Osnabrück in present-day Germany. He was trained in the art of wood-carving in Württemberg, a town steeped in the traditional Black Forest traditions of hewing complex designs from the native hard woods. Belter left his homeland for America, arriving in New York in 1833. Within six years he had become a naturalized citizen of the United States, and was in business as a cabinet-maker in his newly adopted city as early as 1844. It was not long before his name, like that of Thomas Chippendale, became synonymous with the type of furniture he produced.

A SINGULAR TALENT

Unlike many of his contemporaries in the furniture business, Belter only ever worked within one idiom. Somewhat fortuitously, but also due in no small part to Belter's own great skill, the Rococo-revival style in which he excelled remained in vogue throughout his career and long after his death. His great triumph, and the exclusive feature of his work that kept him in the vanguard of the competition, was the series of breakthroughs he made in the lamination process.

LOVE SEAT

Asymmetrical in design, this small, upholstered love seat has a carved, laminated satinwood frame. The crest of the frame is richly carved with fruits and foliage, and the pierced back rail sweeps down gently, in sections, to meet the seat rail. The whole is supported on elegant cabriole legs, which terminate in brass casters. c.1855. H:101.5cm (40in); W:101.5cm (40in); D:101.5cm (40in). AME



BELTER PATENTS

AT THE TIME BELTER WAS WORKING, THE US PATENT OFFICE WAS PROCESSING THOUSANDS OF APPLICATIONS A YEAR TO HELP FOSTER A CLIMATE OF INNOVATION.

The distinctive style in which John Henry Belter worked would not have been possible without his innovative technical and methodical achievements. A patent effectively acted as a limited monopoly sanctioned by the State, and could prove extremely lucrative if used wisely. Although Belter was successful in securing a number of patents during his career, he apparently failed to exploit them to their full potential as he never became very wealthy. It seems likely that some of Belter's rivals, including Charles Baudouine of New York, infringed his copyright in their imitations of his work.

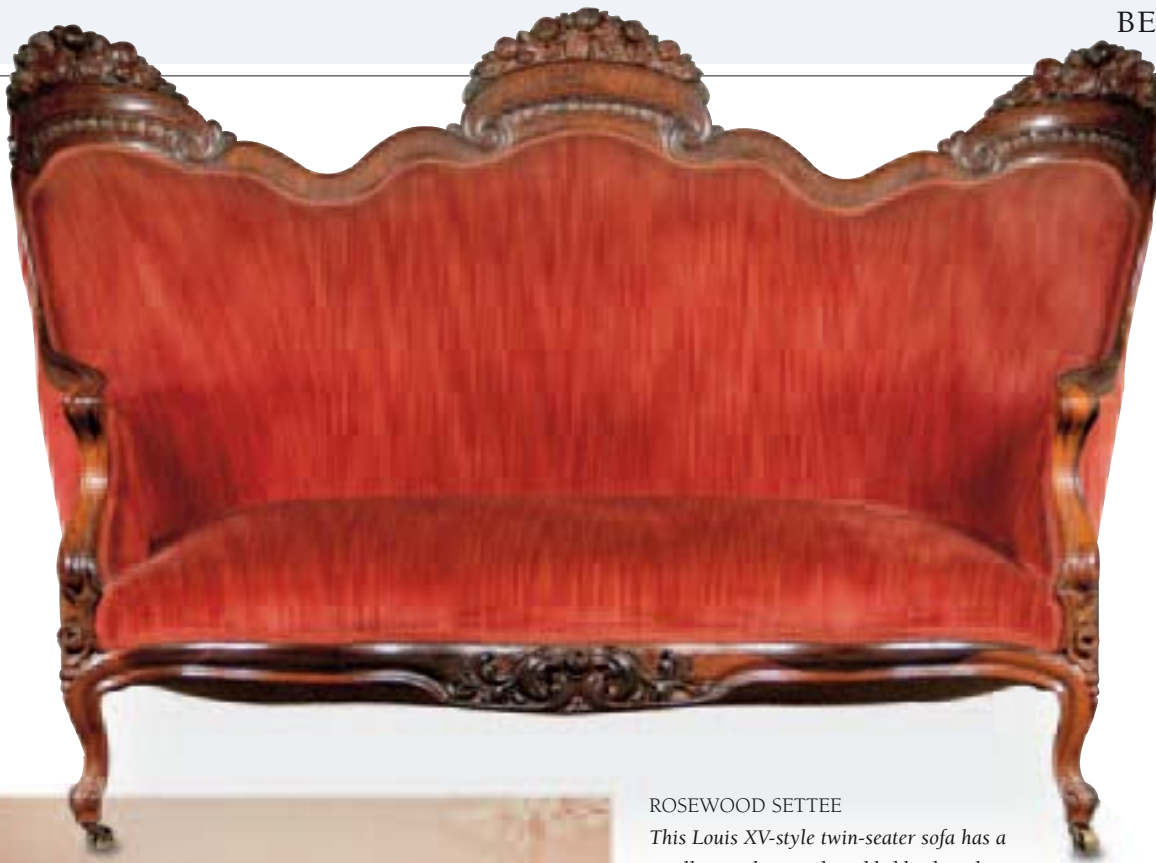
The first of Belter's patents was granted in 1847. His "machinery for sawing arabesque chairs" made it possible to cut intricate curves through his tough laminate boards. This was followed in 1856 with a far more specific application to patent a laminate bedstead. Belter was evidently very proud of this item, boasting that its simple two-piece construction allowed for swift disassembly in case of fire and had no recessed joints to harbour bed bugs. Two years later, Belter belatedly patented refinements he had made to his laminate and cutting processes. An ingenious central locking device provided the basis for Belter's final patent in 1860, through which he sought to protect a mechanism that secured multiple drawers at the turn of a single key.



A Belter label This label was affixed to the back of one of Belter's patent pattern chairs and to the bottom of its rear seat apron. 1852.

Belter bedstead Made of laminated rosewood, the footboard of this bedstead is bent and decorated with a small carved panel. An elaborate carved Rococo-style crest adorns the headboard.





ROSEWOOD SETTEE

This Louis XV-style twin-seater sofa has a scroll-carved top rail, padded back and seat, and cabriole legs. The angled ends encourage users to turn towards each other.

H:106.5cm (42in);

W:157.5cm (62in);

D:86.5cm (34in).

BRU



1850S AMERICAN INTERIOR

Belter-style furniture is prevalent in this home. The furniture and furnishings are influenced by Louis XV style and Rococo taste.

DRESSING TABLE

This mahogany dressing table has an oval mirror, surmounted by an ornately carved crest, and a shaped white marble top. The serpentine apron has carved acanthus at the corners and is supported on cabriole legs, terminating in scroll feet. The legs are joined by a pierced and carved cross-stretcher with a carved finial at its centre. It was made by Prudent Mallard, New Orleans. Mid 19th century. AME



Belter fashioned strong laminate panels by affixing thin strips of wood together, the grain in each layer lying perpendicular to that of the layer below. This practice enhanced the natural strength of the wood, rendering it extremely resistant to cracking or splitting. Rosewood was especially fashionable at the time – Belter sourced his from Brazil and India – but he also worked in oak, mahogany, and other hard woods, sometimes ebonizing them.

DRAMATIC CURVES

A typical Belter piece might be constructed from a series of eight-ply laminate boards, although he sometimes used up to 16 layers of wood. Additional panels carrying carved decoration were often glued on to the frame of a piece of furniture. These panels had been bent under extreme pressure with the application of steam to produce the dramatic curves that are a hallmark of Belter's *oeuvre*, along with tight "C" and "S" scrolls. The hardness lent to wood by Belter's lamination process enabled him to produce elaborate open crestings and aprons.

High-backed chairs provided him with an ideal canvas for his carving skills. Naturalistic depictions of flowers and fruits – vines were a favourite – feature alongside more Classical motifs such as scrolls. It is often only the quality of the carving and the audacity of the openwork that show that a piece came from his workshops. Belter's furniture was of a consistently high quality, and he was patronized by some very wealthy New York clients. He also designed a table in ebony and ivory for display at the 1853 "Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations".

EXCLUSIVE TO A FAULT

Belter's refusal to cater to the mass market left him open to rivals who had no such qualms and made small fortunes selling a diluted version of Belter's pieces to aspiring, less wealthy consumers.

Despite this, however, Belter was not unsuccessful. In 1854, he had his own five-storey factory erected on Third Avenue, on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. Two years later, he was joined in business by his brother-in-law, John H. Springmeyer. In 1861, William and Frederick Springmeyer also came aboard. When Belter succumbed to tuberculosis in 1863, the Springmeyers continued in business. It is a testament to the singular skill of John Belter that they were unable to survive for more than four years, despite the unabated popularity of the Rococo-revival style that the firm had made its own. Belter's absence was felt keenly, and in 1867 the company was forced into closure.

JAPAN

HAVING REMAINED almost completely isolated from the rest of the world for several hundred years, Japan entered a period of momentous and unprecedented change in the mid 19th century, instigated by the *Kurofune Raiho* (visit of the black ships) in 1853. Commodore Perry's American fleet effectively forced the Tokugawa government to reopen Japanese ports to international trade.

THE NEW ORDER

Japan had been a rigid feudal society, steeped in conservatism and slow to change. In 1868, after a short civil war, the last Shogun was overthrown and

the Meiji Emperor – Mutsuhito, who ruled from 1867 to 1912 – was restored, promising modernization. Japanese industries developed at an astounding rate, and her citizens began to turn their backs on many aspects of their traditional past and adopt Western attitudes and customs.

Changes were gradual at first. Although it became fashionable among the wealthy elite to add rooms with a Western theme to their houses, these were generally areas in which to

Six-panel silk and paper screen This screen is decorated with a stylized landscape scene depicting wildlife – predominantly birds – in their natural habitat. c.1880. H:156cm (62½in). NAG



DISPLAY CABINET-ON-STAND

This rosewood display cabinet is from the Meiji period (1867–1912). It has an elaborately carved pediment and stand, both featuring representations of birds and vegetation. The cabinet also has a number of inlaid gold lacquer

panels. Some of the panels slide open to reveal numerous interior shelves and compartments. The relief-carved ivory, bone, mother-of-pearl, and lacquerwork depict figural scenes, floral arrangements, and birds. The whole cabinet is of very fine quality. Late 19th century. H:230cm (90½in); W:166cm (65½in).



TWO-FOLD LACQUERED SCREEN

Consisting of two lacquer panels, this hinged screen from the Meiji period has carved rosewood and mahogany surrounds and a similarly carved rosewood and mahogany frame. The face of the screen is inlaid with

ivory and mother-of-pearl, and depicts an anthropomorphic battle of frogs, including a commander, infantry, standard-bearers, and trumpeters. The back of the screen is decorated with flowering cherry trees in *togidashi* (lacquerwork). Late 19th century. H:188cm (74in); W:172cm (67½in).

entertain guests, rather than living spaces. Traditional Japanese furniture, rectilinear and plain, was the product of a culture in which people sat on the floor to eat and converse. Cabinets and tables therefore had very short legs. The case furniture in many houses was limited to a large chest for storing bedding, a smaller chest, and a stand for a mirror.

Modular living spaces were divided by a paper screen, typically consisting of two to six panels, and often decorated with paint or simple inlays of ceramic or wood. The joints in the lacquer frame were sometimes disguised with metal mounts. Lacquer was by far the

most common form of surface decoration – usually in black, though sometimes in red.

EXPORT FURNITURE

The greatest changes within the furniture industry were those that catered to the export market. The unsurpassed quality of Japanese lacquer was widely known in the West, and craftsmen began to construct cabinets and screens with gold lacquer grounds, elaborately inlaid with precious natural materials, including ivory and mother-of-pearl, to form designs with Japanese motifs such as dragons or Samurai. This kind of crowded

decoration was anathema to Japanese taste but very popular in the West, and business was brisk.

The export market also benefited from a renaissance among Japanese woodworkers. Although intarsia techniques had been widely understood in Japan for more than 1,000 years, they had fallen into disuse owing to the preference for lacquered furniture. A process known as *Ran Yosegi*, or “random parquetry”, whereby mosaics of different woods were assembled to draw attention to their various textures and colours, established the Hakone region as the pre-eminent centre of intarsia work in Meiji Japan. Later,

craftsmen began to adapt Kimono designs for use on furniture, and the process became more refined as it was mechanized.

Japanese expertise in manipulating wood extended to the art of carving. Again, this was an alien concept to most Japanese and the bulk of carved furniture produced in Japan at this time was sent to international exhibitions and sold abroad. Friezes and crests were carved with scenes adapted from shrines and temples. Traditional Japanese symbolic motifs, such as ripped leaves signifying autumn, delighted Western consumers and found a ready market.



DECORATIVE IRON CASKET

The cover of this iron casket by Ryuunsai Yukiyasu is inset with a copper panel decorated in silver and gold relief with a basket of flowers and insects. The sides depict aquatic scenes, flowering trees, and Mount Fuji. The inner rim is ornamented with wisteria and grape vines. *c.1870. W:15.5cm (7 1/4in). WW*



FOLDING CHAIR

This red-lacquered priest's folding chair is from the Edo period (1603–1867). The back is gold-lacquered and carved with *manji* diaper and a trellis of repeated *manji* motifs. Originally *manji* was a Sanskrit symbol that has come to represent Buddhism in Japan. *Mid 19th century. H:93cm (36 1/2in).*



The black-lacquered base provides a perfect foil for the gold and silver panel scenes.

The panels on the front and sides of the cabinet are slightly recessed.

The cabinet is furnished with engraved metal mounts.

There is an arrangement of five shallow and four deep drawers behind each cabinet door.

The roundels depict stylized rural and landscape scenes in gold, silver, and coloured lacquerwork.

The shaped sabre feet are mounted in metal.

COLLECTOR'S CABINET

This unusual lacquered cabinet has been made as two stacking parts. The front and sides have recessed panels decorated with roundels on a deep gold ground. The roundels show various scenes in gold and silver, and display a variety

of techniques, including lacquerwork. The upper section of the cabinet has two doors, which open on to a fitted interior containing ten shallow and eight deeper drawers. The lower section has two deep drawers. The whole stands on shaped sabre feet. *c.1900. H:132cm (52in); W:149cm (58 1/2in); D:84cm (33in).*

INDIA

UNTIL THE 19TH CENTURY, artistic depictions of domestic Indian interiors tended to portray very little furniture. A low, canopied bed, a small dressing table, and a chest were quite often the only pieces present in such images. The throne chair, a staple form in most world cultures, was a symbol of prestige and had more currency as a ceremonial object than as a piece of domestic furniture.

Even the wealthiest of the Indian elite had very sparsely furnished homes until the 19th century, when they became influenced by European colonialists, whose opulent lifestyles they eagerly imitated.

A UNION OF TWO TRADITIONS
The ease with which Indian wood workers turned their hands to producing furniture in European forms was astounding. Fanny Parks, a British traveller, published a journal in 1850 that included an account of how an Indian carpenter constructed a table from a model she had made from river mud.

The Dutch had encouraged Indian craftsmen to make furniture for export during the 17th century, establishing a tradition that was to flourish as the British consolidated their grip on the subcontinent. As more and more British citizens arrived in India,

demand for furniture that was similar to that which they had used at home increased steadily.

From the mid 19th century, a new style of furniture that came to be known as Anglo-Indian began to evolve. Indian cabinet-makers were quick to adopt British forms, such as the cabinet-on-stand, or the armchair, but they transformed them into something entirely new through the application of decorative elements drawn from their own culture. The use of surface decoration was profuse – it is not uncommon for every available surface of a table to feature

elaborate openwork carving or intricately patterned inlays.

A WEALTH OF RESOURCES
The practitioners of the Anglo-Indian style had a huge creative resource



The table ends are carved with acanthus leaves.

The roundels are carved with beads.

The stretcher is carved with stylized acanthus.

The feet are scroll-carved.

The frieze drawer is carved with a fruiting vine motif.

WORKTABLE

The rectangular top of this early Victorian Anglo-Indian rosewood worktable has an egg-and-dart moulded edge above a carved frieze drawer with pierced brackets. Below the frieze

is a tapering, pierced wool bin. The worktable is supported on pierced and carved trestle supports joined by a similar stretcher. The overall form is British, but the carving and wood is Indian. *Mid 19th century. H:76cm (30in); W:78cm (30½in); D:45cm (17¼in).*



Fruiting vine motif



MAHOGANY JARDINIÈRE

This Anglo-Indian *jardinière* has profuse leaf-and-scroll carving. The circular well has a gadrooned edge and is supported on a turned, baluster column and three stylized bird consoles. The concave triform base has paw feet. *Mid 19th century. H:77cm (30¼in); Diam: 43cm (17in). L&T*



QUILL BASKET

This Anglo-Indian quill basket is of tapering, rectangular form with a deep, flat lid. The quills – typically porcupine – are spaced at regular intervals to form the sides of the basket. The black lacquered surfaces have decorative ivory inlay. *c.1860. W:25cm (9½in). SS*

available to them in the shape of India's diverse and rich cultural heritage. Devotional carvings from sacred sites, such as the Buddhist monuments at Sanchi, were incorporated into furniture design.

The great natural bounty of India had an equally important role to play. Although timber from the Far East was imported, the majority of Indian furniture was constructed from teak, rosewood, ebony, and padouk, all of

which was harvested locally. Ivory was widely available and craftsmen used it frequently as an inlay material, carving it with intricate designs before applying dark shellac varnish to enhance the decoration. It was not unheard of for chairs and other smaller items to be hewn from solid ivory. Even elephant or rhinoceros feet were incorporated into some of the more outlandish furniture designs of the mid-19th century.

STYLES OF DECORATION

Cheaper alternatives to ivory-inlaid furniture were pieces decorated with penwork. Regional centres throughout India soon developed their own specialities. The town of Vizagapatam became famous for its wood and quillwork ornamental boxes, while Baharampur – notable as the flashpoint of the Indian Mutiny in 1857 – was renowned for the skill of its carvers. The care taken by Indian

craftsmen was most evident in the ornament of the furniture they created. By contrast, hidden areas, such as the tops of cabinet doors, would often be finished somewhat roughly and bear visible tool marks.



MINIATURE CHESS TABLE

This Vizagapatam, ivory-and-bone veneered miniature chess table has an octagonal top with an inlaid chessboard and an applied filigree border. The table top is supported on a baluster column with a studded knob on a conforming octagonal base with carved paw feet. *Mid 19th century. Diam:25cm (10in). L&T*



COLONIAL OCCASIONAL TABLE

This striking table has been made from the hide and skin of a rhinoceros. The square top is made from glass and has a brass edge. It is laid on a wooden base above three curved supports, which terminate in three rhino feet. *Mid 19th century. H:77cm (30½in); W:62cm (24½in); D:62cm (24½in). L&T*



IVORY-VENEERED ARMCHAIR

The padded back of this armchair has a scroll-carved, ivory-veneered frame with tablet cresting. Padded open arms with carved, reeded terminals extend above a cushioned seat. The seat rail has a medallion and foliate boss above a pierced scroll apron. The cabriole front legs end in collared paw feet. *Mid 19th century.*

OSLER GLASS FURNITURE

THE ELABORATE GLASS ORNAMENTS AND UNUSUAL FURNITURE MADE BY THE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL OSLER GLASSWORKS COMPANY IN BRITAIN WERE ESPECIALLY FAVOURED BY INDIA'S ELITE.

The glassworks of F. & C. Osler was one of the most successful in Victorian Britain. Founded in Birmingham at the beginning of the 19th century, the firm rose to such prominence that its crystal was shipped all over the British Empire. In Britain, Osler's most prestigious commission was to construct the enormous centrepiece fountain for the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in 1851. The project took eight months to complete and used 4 tonnes of crystal glass. It was joined at the exhibition by a massive chandelier that held 144 candles, which was also made by Osler. The firm's reputation for delivering monumental glass objects spread far and wide, and they established a showroom in Calcutta to cater for their customers on the subcontinent.

Osler glass was shipped to the Himalayas for use in the construction of Seto Durbar's magnificent crystal hall in Nepal, completed in 1893 but destroyed by fire in 1933.

The wealthy rulers of India were smitten with Osler's grand designs and willingness to undertake the largest of projects. In Hyderabad, the Falaknuma Palace is home to 40 Osler chandeliers, which are among the largest in the world, each incorporating about 140 arms.

The company's most famous patron was Maharana Sajjan Singh of Udaipur in Rajahstan, India's north-western desert kingdom. He commissioned Osler to supply him with an enormous array of vessels, trinkets, and ornaments in finest crystal. Most audacious of all, his order also included tables, chairs, sofas, and even a bed, thought to be the only one ever made from pure crystal glass. Sadly, Singh died before Osler's shipments arrived at the Grand City Palace, and the crystal languished in packing crates for years. In more recent times, the whole ensemble has been arranged and is on display in the Fateh Prakash Palace in Udaipur.

Osler crystal glass chair

Upholstered in red silk velvet, this is one of a pair made for a maharajah and his consort. The solid glass legs are faceted and richly cut. They support steel and wooden frames and ornately faceted backs. *1894. H:122cm (48in); W:67cm (26½in); D:67cm (26½in).*



CHINA

WOODWORKING AND cabinet-making were advanced industries in the China of the late Qing dynasty (1644–1912). Although most authorities agree that the best Chinese furniture was made before the 19th century, traditional methods and forms persisted well into this period of greater communication and trade with the West.

A PERIOD OF DISTRESS

By the mid 19th century, China was home to British, American, Russian, Japanese, German,

Italian, and French colonies. Foreign influence in China was further extended when, in the aftermath of the first Opium War (1839–42), China was compelled to open five of its ports, including Canton and Shanghai, to foreign trade. This number was increased in 1860 following another Chinese military defeat. Far from being a welcome addition to the cultural diversity of China, these foreign incursions were resented by the majority of the populace.

More pressing matters dominated the political and social landscape during this period. China was beset with internal rebellion, famine, and drought – a series of calamities that conspired to wipe out 60 million people in the course of the next 12 years.

Western powers were quick to help the Qing dynasty during these periods of crisis, yet their primary aim was always to open up Chinese markets to the West to improve Western economies. Consequently, Chinese furniture of the mid 19th century, although predominantly based on Ming and early Qing ideals, bore the

stamp of Western influence to a greater extent than ever before.

A MIX OF OLD AND NEW

The last years of the Qing dynasty, though troubled, did produce some fine furniture. A deep reverence for the past kept the traditions and monumental forms of the early Qing period in production. Concurrent with this, there was a general softening of the strict rectilinearity that had previously characterized Chinese furniture. Rounded forms, such as spoon and horseshoe backs, began to proliferate, as did peculiarly European



The back is inset with a Chinese lacquer panel.

A pierced medallion is centred above the panel.

The top rail is curved into a horseshoe shape to simulate bamboo.

A cane seat is fitted into the rosewood seat frame.

The turned legs simulate the appearance of bamboo.

HORSESHOE ARMCHAIR

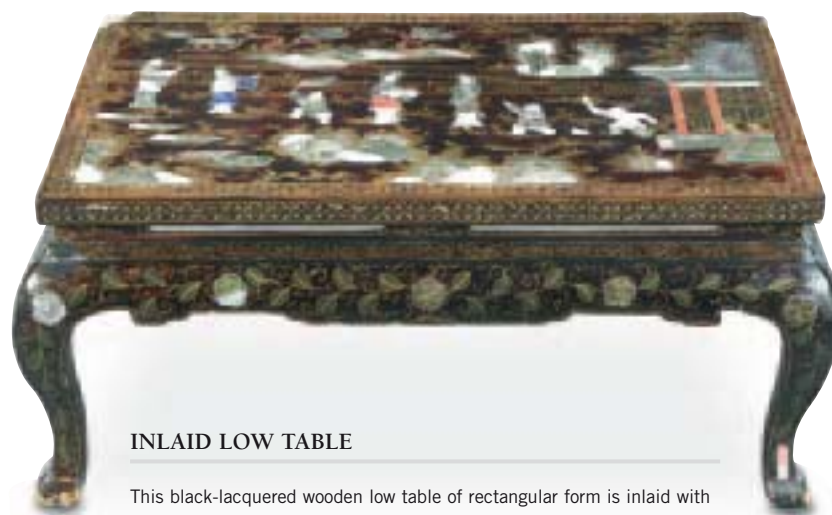
This is one of a pair of rare horseshoe armchairs made of *huanghuali*, the Chinese name for rosewood. It has a U-shaped, bamboo form, a carved top rail, a cane seat, and a lattice splat. The top rail and legs have been carved to simulate the appearance of bamboo. S&K



ANGLO-CHINESE CENTRE TABLE

This Anglo-Chinese centre table is made from amboyna and ebony and has three drawers – one long and two short – with dummy drawers at the back. It is raised on carved ebony

trestle supports, terminating in claw feet. The supports are joined by an ebony stretcher. Although it was made in 1840, the design of the table is closer in style to examples from about 1810. c.1840.



INLAID LOW TABLE

This black-lacquered wooden low table of rectangular form is inlaid with mother-of-pearl and hard stones, depicting a rural scene. The image includes a pavilion and figures within a walled garden on a black ground. The table is supported on similarly decorated cabriole legs, terminating in paw feet. W:79cm (31in). SI

shapes, such as the breakfront. Continuity came in the shape of plant stands, low tables, screens, and a variety of other forms that had been popular in China for many years.

Cabinet-makers continued to use lacquer to decorate a great deal of the furniture, although the quality Ming lacquer furniture was never surpassed. Three predominant styles of lacquer decoration date from this period. The most common were *daqī*, a thick lacquer coating applied to a paste undercoat, and *tulqī*, a thin wash painted directly on to the wood. Less

common and more elaborate was *miaojin*, which incorporated gold-coloured highlights on a ground of black and coloured lacquer.

Another traditional decorative element, the ceramic plaque, enjoyed something of a revival towards the close of the Qing period due to the work of porcelain masters, such as Liu Xiren, who worked in Jiangxi province.

ELABORATE DECORATION

The persistent admiration for Chinese furniture was due in no small part to the quality of the exotic woods

available to craftsmen. Hardwoods, particularly rosewood, were ideally suited to the profuse pierced and carved decoration practised by so many cabinet-makers. *Huali*, a type of rosewood, was found to fade to an attractive golden colour after prolonged exposure to light, and furniture with this hue became known as *huanghuali* during the late Qing period. Hard stones, either in the form of decorative inlays or inset marble table tops, appealed to the European taste and became staples of more ornate Chinese furniture of the period.

The export market was a prime source of commissions and revenue for many cabinet-makers, particularly those in the newly opened city ports, such as Shanghai. European markets demanded that this export furniture look as Oriental as possible, with the result that decoration that might be rejected as over-exuberant by the Chinese was carried out on some furniture purely to satisfy Western buyers. Intricately inlaid figural landscapes containing pavilions and other typically Chinese features are hallmarks of this new direction taken by Chinese craftsmen in the second half of the 19th century.



PLANT STANDS

These intricate plant stands are made of rosewood and have shaped tops with polished marble insets. The tops are supported on profusely carved frames and shaped legs, which are joined by stretchers and headed by mask motifs. The stands terminate in animal-paw feet. *c.1900. SI*



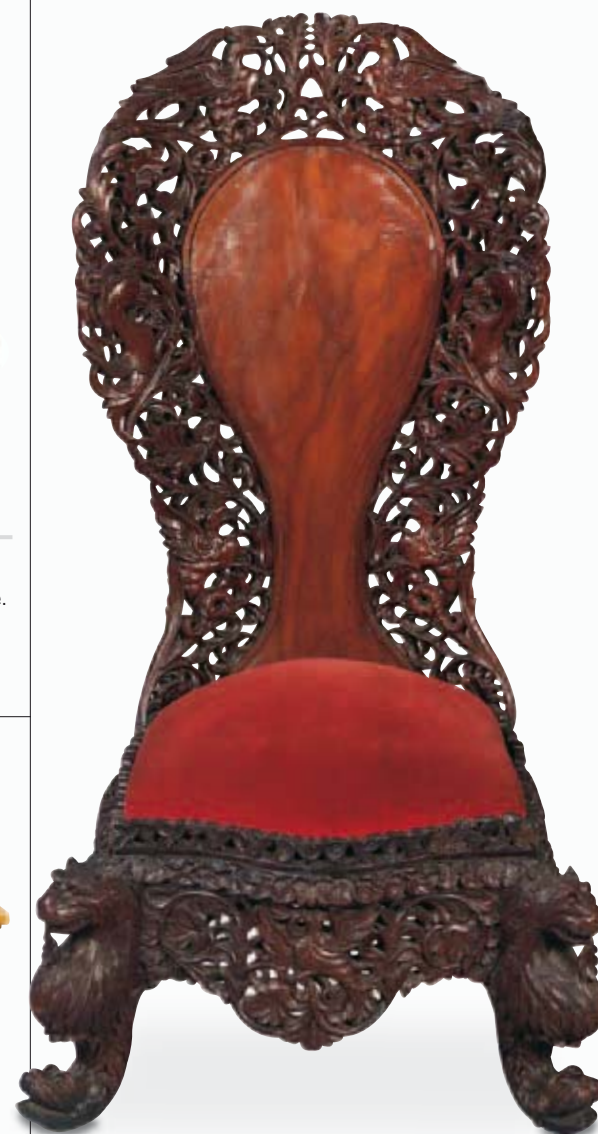
NEST OF TABLES

This set of four hardwood tables graduates in size, fitting one inside the next, making the tables easy to store when not in use. Each table has a tray top and a decorative pierced apron set above shaped legs, which are joined by similarly shaped stretchers. *Largest: H:71cm (28in). L&T*



ANGLO-CHINESE SIDEBOARD

This Anglo-Chinese amboyna and ebony pedestal sideboard has a frieze containing two drawers. Each pedestal contains a cupboard door enclosing shelves, as well as a deep drawer for storing wine. Made in colonial style, the shape of the sideboard is Regency. *c.1840.*



SPOON-BACK NURSING CHAIR

This Burmese, carved hardwood nursing chair features ornate, pierced, carved decoration throughout. The shaped back has a deep, carved surround with bird and foliage motifs. The padded drop-in seat has a similarly carved seat rail and is supported on cabriole legs moulded as rampant lions. *c.1900. SI*

NEW STYLES

FURNITURE THAT DEBUTED during the mid 19th century was imbued with the innovative spirit, social mores, and the whimsy of its age. Metamorphic furniture allowed cabinet-makers to show off their technical expertise.

The German-born American cabinet-maker, George Hunzinger, pioneered the design of functional, mechanical pieces in the United States, and many manufacturers soon followed suit.

Stephen Hedges patented a desk in 1854 that converted from an elegant side table to an *écritoire* combined with a seat. It became known as the Aaron Burr desk after an article appeared in the *New York Herald* in 1911, stating that Burr had challenged the presidential candidate Alexander Hamilton to a duel in a letter written at one of them. In fact, Hedges had patented the ingenious desk 50 years after the duel and 18 years after Burr's death, but the desk became forever known as the Aaron Burr desk.

Various collapsible and extendible forms, including dining tables and buffets, proliferated as people became enamoured with their ingenuity and space-saving qualities.

SOCIAL MORES

The fashion for lavish entertaining gave rise to the cocktail cabinet, which contained crystal decanters and perhaps a cigarette case or humidor. The wealthy displayed their valuables in a glass-topped *bijouterie* – the name is derived from the French word for “jewellery”. The Sutherland table, named for Queen Victoria's Mistress of the Robes, was used for taking tea and playing cards. A precursor of the coffee table, it was never very popular.

The repressive morality of the period conspired to create the *dos-à-dos* and the conversation suite. Both these seat forms enabled courting couples to become acquainted in what was regarded as a seemly manner.

The exterior surface of the desk has a simple panel with beading.

The hinged top opens to reveal a seat and a drawer.

The seat is upholstered in leather, fixed to the wood with rivets.



The underside of the desk bears the patent label, “by Stephen Hedges”.



Lockable drawer

The scroll feet terminate in brass casters.

AMERICAN AARON BURR DESK

This ingenious, space-saving design was patented by Stephen Hedges. The long, oval top of an unassuming mahogany side table is hinged so that it can fold back on itself, and the case of the desk is also hinged to open at

the front. When both are opened, the table is transformed into a writing desk with a drawer to one side and a leather upholstered seat to the other. The piece is supported on cabriole legs and scroll feet on casters for portability. 1854. H:74.3cm (29½in); W:84.5cm (33¼in); D:64.8cm (25½in). POOK 4



CONVERSATION SUITE

This upholstered suite in Louis XV manner comprises four independent buttoned sections – two long sides and two short ends – arranged back-to-back with each other. The angled ends of each section make it easy for a person

seated with another in one of the long sections to turn towards a person seated in the adjacent smaller section and converse. The sections are supported on rosewood scrolling feet and casters: a 19th-century innovation allowing ease of movement around the room. Late 19th century. L&T 4



SHOW-FRAME SOFA

This early Victorian show-frame sofa is made from rosewood. It has two high-backed, rounded ends and a lower back section with spirally fluted supports. The seat, back, and scroll arms are upholstered in green raised

fabric. The seat is supported on carved legs with ceramic casters. The sofa is a combination of styles: the twist decoration is Jacobean, while the cabriole legs are inspired by Louis XV style. c.1850. W:181cm (71¼cm). DN 3



METAMORPHIC OAK CHAIR

This chair converts into a set of library steps. The chair seat is hinged near the front so the chair back swings up and over the seat to become the rear support for the steps, which double as the back legs of the chair. Late 19th century. WW 1

**GOTHIC-STYLE CHAIR**

This walnut chair features Gothic-style, needlework upholstery and Jacobean twist carving. The tall back is framed by barley-twist columns above a spreading seat. The high back and low legs make this a new form. *L&T 1*

**MAHOGANY COCKTAIL CABINET**

This cabinet has a divided, hinged top, which encloses a rising interior with crystal decanters, glasses, and a cigarette box. It is supported on square-section, tapering legs with brass caps and casters. *c.1900. W:59cm (23¼in). L&T 2*

**MAHOGANY BIJOUTERIE CABINET**

The circular hinged top of this cabinet is inset with bevelled glass. The cabriole legs have gilt mounts, terminate in hoof feet, and are joined by a shaped stretcher. *Late 19th century. H:76.5cm (30¼in); Diam:45cm (17¼in). L&T 3*

**BIJOUTERIE CABINET**

This mahogany and gilt-metal mounted cabinet has a serpentine top with floral marquetry, inset with glass. The case is supported on slender cabriole legs, which are united by an undertier. *W:63.5cm (25in). WW 1*

**SCOTTISH DINING TABLE**

The top of this extending dining table has *demi-lune* ends and boldly moulded edges above a plain frieze. The table top is raised on turned and tapering legs with fluted decoration, ending in brass caps and casters. The table is extended by using a winding mechanism operated by a key. The mechanism was

invented in 1835 but became popular later in the century. It can use up to six extra leaves. *Late 19th century. W:460cm (185in). L&T 5*

**ENGLISH ROSEWOOD CARD TABLE**

The serpentine top of this Victorian table opens out and swivels to provide a playing surface. It has a moulded edge, enclosing a round baize lining, and rests on four scroll supports with a central finial and scroll legs with recessed casters. *Mid 19th century. W:92cm (36¼in). DN 2*

**Scrolled bracket****Scrolling foot with caster****ENGLISH MAHOGANY BUFFET**

The top of this buffet has moulded angles and a counterbalanced undershelf. Beneath that lies a third shelf. On opening the buffet, the bottom shelf slides down the supports at each end of the table, the middle shelf remains in place, and the top opens out to form the upper tier. It is raised on panelled trestle supports and scrolled console brackets. *c.1860. W:120cm (48in). L&T 3*

**SUTHERLAND TABLE**

This burr walnut, oval, drop-leaf table has a veneered top over twin, carved, baluster uprights with carved cabriole supports on casters, joined by a turned stretcher. It has a swinging action to each side. *W:91cm (35¼in). BAR 1*

CHESTS OF DRAWERS

MANY OF THE CHESTS made and sold in this period were direct descendants of their 18th-century counterparts. The chest was still in widespread use, both in the bedroom as a clothes store and in the salon, very often for display purposes only. Examples with specialist uses, such as music cabinets and folio chests, augmented the range of commodes, cabinets, and vitrines already found in the home. The traditional low, broad chest was frequently of very fluid form, incorporating serpentine, *bombé*, or bowfront curves reminiscent of 18th-century styles. Elaborate commodes were rare, however, and, in the drawing room, were often replaced by credenzas, or side cabinets.

CONTRASTING STYLES

A more contemporary look was provided by a new generation of tall and slender, rather elegant, filing cabinets, precipitated by the best-selling Wellington chest. These filing

cabinets tended to be less fussy than the more old-fashioned chests of drawers, particularly those in the Rococo-revival style, which were often excessively ornamented. Profuse use of gilt-metal mounts, sabots, and inlays combined with marble tops, carved skirts, friezes and aprons, and intricate marquetry decoration often made these very busy items of furniture. Neoclassical and Gothic forms sat alongside chests in the Rococo style, although these labels often referred to little more than token applied decoration, used by cabinet-makers to distinguish an otherwise plain piece of furniture.

FAVOURER WOODS

Tropical hardwoods, such as mahogany and rosewood, were frequently used for chests, although Dutch cabinet-makers often substituted walnut for their marquetry-decorated pieces, and cherry wood was sometimes used in the United States.

The gilt-bronze corner mounts are Louis XV in style.

The top of the commode is made of brèche d'Alep marble.

The division between the two drawers is disguised by the sans transverse marquetry.



The gilt-bronze apron mount is Rococo in style.

Each cabriole leg terminates in a gilt-bronze sabot.

FRENCH COMMODOE

This 18th-century-style commode has a moulded, veined marble top above a Rococo-style, rosewood- and walnut-veneered *bombé* case with polished, gilded, bronze mounts. The front of the piece is inlaid with colourful

marquetry, and shows an asymmetrical floral pattern. The case is set on cabriole legs. It is an accurate copy of a Louis XV commode and uses expensive materials. However, this mid 19th-century example was constructed by machine rather than by hand. *H:86cm (33 $\frac{3}{4}$ in); W:106cm (41 $\frac{3}{4}$ in); D:60cm (23 $\frac{3}{4}$ in).* VH 6



ITALIAN PARQUETRY COMMODOE

This kingwood parquetry commode is of *bombé* form and has a moulded Siena marble top above two chequer-veneered drawers. Each drawer has a flower-head motif centred over

the escutcheon plate. The same motif appears on the sides of the case. It is raised on square, cabriole legs, terminating in sabots. Although almost an exact copy of an 18th-century piece, its excessively slender legs reveal its 19th-century origins. *W:117.5cm (47in).* FRE 3



DUTCH CHEST OF DRAWERS

The moulded top of this Dutch, Empire-style, walnut and marquetry tall chest of drawers has an outset frieze drawer. Below this are five equal-sized drawers, decorated *sans traverse* with fine floral marquetry inlaywork, which

exhibits a mixture of mid 18th- and late 18th-century styles in its overall design. The oval border is Neoclassical in inspiration, while the floral design within it is asymmetrical and, therefore, more Rococo in style. The case is supported on tapering, square-section feet. 1880. *W:104cm (41in).* SI 3



ANGLO-INDIAN WELLINGTON CHEST

Made of the distinctively striped coromandel wood – a type of ebony from the Coromandel coast of India – this Wellington chest also features surface carving typical of the subcontinent. *c.1880. H:90cm (36in); W:45cm (18in); D:26.5cm (10½in). JK 5*



FRENCH FILING CHEST

This late Louis XVI-style ebony and brass filing chest has a moulded edge above eight drawers. The drawers have leather fronts and brass catches and are supported on a plinth base. *c.1900. H:166cm (65½in); W:57cm (22in). DN 4*



BRITISH WELLINGTON CHEST

The moulded top of this figured maple chest protrudes above its frieze. Beneath the frieze are seven graduated drawers, flanked on either side by a locking flap. At the top of each flap is an applied scroll-leaf decoration. *c.1860. H:122cm (48in); W:56cm (22in); D:42cm (16½in). L&T 4*



GERMAN COMMODE

This mahogany commode has a protruding rectangular top above four flame-mahogany veneered drawers. The front of the case has canted corners, with a carved scroll and acanthus top and bottom. The case is supported on carved scroll, bracket feet. *c.1850. H:82cm (32¼in); W:83cm (32¾in); D:49cm (19¼in). BMN 1*



FRENCH COMMODE

This bowfront kingwood commode has a moulded, veined marble top. The four drawers have veneered fronts, and are divided and flanked by brass-lined flutes. A veneered herringbone pattern is on each side. The commode has a shaped apron with gilt mounts and stands on bracket feet. *c.1900. W:82cm (32in). L&T*



BRITISH CHEST OF DRAWERS

This rectilinear chest of drawers has two short above three long, equal-sized drawers. Each drawer is decorated with laurel swags, and the long drawers also feature a central carved rosette. The chest is supported on a shaped plinth base. *Late 19th century. W:113.5cm (44¾in). DN 1*



GERMAN COMMODE

This small commode is made from solid mahogany and veneered in various exotic woods. There is a single frieze drawer below the moulded top and two additional, *bombé*-form drawers decorated, *sans traverse*, with flowers, figures, and rocaille. *c.1900. H:64.5cm (25¼in); W:62cm (24¼in); D:32cm (12¾in). WKA 1*



Painted side panel

AMERICAN CHEST OF DRAWERS

This chest has been grain-painted in ochre and yellow with dark green mouldings and recessed side panels. The backboard is dark green with the initials "A" and "M" in gold and copper. The chest has two short above four long drawers. Each side panel is stencilled with a vase of flowers. *c.1863. W:99cm (39in). FRE 6*



AMERICAN BUTLER'S CHEST

This cherry wood chest has panelled sides and four dovetailed drawers with glass handles. The top drawer has a drop front with spindle columns and opens onto a fitted interior with four drawers, eight cubbyholes, and a central prospect door. *Mid 19th century. H:117cm (46in); W:107cm (42in); D:54.5cm (21¼in). BRU 2*

BUFFETS AND SIDEBOARDS

THE VICTORIAN PENCHANT for formal social gatherings made the buffet and the sideboard very important items of furniture in more affluent households. Both were used in the dining room to display food and house crockery. They differed in that the buffet was a rather grand superstructure with two or more tiers, similar to the kitchen dresser, whereas the sideboard was a less imposing, single-tiered cabinet.

DIFFERING STYLES

A wide variety of shapes were popular during this time, incorporating elements from various periods and styles. Arched tops and backs became more common as forms in general grew more rounded, although the traditional rectangular shape certainly persisted. The range of leg shapes used included cup and cover, square, tapering, and cabriole – all very different in style.

Woods used for buffets and sideboards tended to vary just

as they had in the late 18th century. Although these pieces of furniture were often made of mahogany or oak, many carried veneers of burr timbers.

From the mid 19th century, people wanted everything in a room to match in style and material. As a result, in many houses, all the furniture in the dining room, including the buffet or sideboard, would be made of a single wood, such as oak or walnut.

DESIGNED FOR STORAGE

As well as displaying and serving food, the buffet was used to store cutlery, dinnerware, and even decorative *objets*. Victorian households were cluttered environments, and the sideboard was a reflection of this. They were peppered with various compartments, cupboards, and drawers, each with their own specific purpose and many fitted with locks. Buffets in the grandest houses could be exceptionally large, with an average height of more than 183cm (6ft).



A twin-handled urn finial surmounts the central curve of the shaped backboard.

A carved coat-of-arms of family antiquarian interest is applied to the centre of the backboard.

The apron is composed of intricate strapwork carving.

Each of the plinth bases is carved with paterae.

Cup-and-cover gadroon supports surmount the pedestal feet.

BRITISH SIDEBOARD

This early Victorian, possibly Anglo-Indian, oak sideboard has an elaborately shaped backboard surmounted by a number of finials and with an urn at its centre. Below the urn is an applied, carved coat-of-arms. The stepped, rectangular

top of the sideboard has a carved edge, above a gadrooned guilloche frieze and an elaborately carved strapwork apron. The sideboard is raised on carved cup-and-cover legs with gadroon supports above plinth bases carved with paterae and pedestal feet. *H:171cm (67½in); W:215cm (84½in); D:75cm (29½in). L&T 4*



FRENCH LOUIS XV-STYLE BUFFET

This Louis XV-style, cherry and burr walnut buffet has a moulded, gently arched top above a frieze carved with a flowering basket. The upper section of the buffet has a number of open shelves for displaying cups, plates, and decorative objects. These open shelves are

flanked by a pair of decorative serpentine panelled doors. The lower section of the buffet has two small frieze drawers and two further large panelled doors carved with swirling foliate decoration. The buffet has an ornamental shaped apron and is raised on short, slightly cabriole legs. *Late 19th century. H:213.5cm (84in). SI 2*



BREAKFRONT SIDEBOARD

This British mahogany breakfront sideboard is simply decorated with satinwood banding and boxwood and ebony stringing. Two square, bowed doors flank the two graduated central drawers. The case stands on six square,

tapering legs, terminating in spade feet. This elegant piece is Neoclassical in style and was probably based on a Sheraton example of around 1780. The deep cupboards would have been used for storing wine, and the frieze drawers for storing silver or cutlery. *Late 19th century. W:168cm (66½in). DN 2*


ITALIAN POLYCHROME CREDENZA

This painted cabinet has a rectangular top with a coved centre section and ends. The conforming case has three small drawers above three cupboard doors, all opening to shelved interiors. The case is supported on a moulded base with bracket feet and is painted with arabesques, swags, flowers, birds, figures, and masks on a crackle ground. *c.1900. W:168cm (67¼in). S&K 3*


BRITISH MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD

This mahogany sideboard has a scrolling, arched backboard that is centred by a cabochon with mask surmount. The reverse breakfront top contains ogee frieze drawers and the four arched panelled doors enclose both sliding trays and shelves. The whole sideboard is raised on a plinth base. *W:202cm (79½in). L&T 3*


FRENCH OAK BUFFET

The upper section of this oak buffet stands on turned supports and has a moulded cornice above two glazed doors, which open on to a shelved interior. The doors are flanked by fluted pilasters. The rectangular top of the lower section has two frieze drawers above two cupboard doors with applied carved decoration showing a Classical urn filled with flowers. It stands on squashed bun feet. *Late 19th century. H:188cm (74in). SI 1*


ANGLO-INDIAN CABINET

The shelved upper section of this rosewood bookcase cabinet has leaf-moulded cresting above twin doors with elaborate pierced and carved panels, flanked by scrolling brackets. The lower section has two long, carved frieze drawers above two similarly carved doors. The piece stands on carved bracket feet. *W:104cm (41in). L&T 5*


ANGLO-INDIAN SERVING TABLE

The backboard of this hardwood serving table is elaborately carved with anthemion, acanthus, and birds. The rectangular top has bold, leaf-carved edging and rests on carved brackets with foliate fretwork to the back and sides. The table has a curved support with carved paw feet. *Mid 19th century. W:122cm (48in). L&T 4*


BRITISH PEDESTAL SIDEBOARD

This fine George III-style mahogany, satinwood, and marquetry sideboard was made by Wright and Mansfield. The pedestals of the desk contain cellaret drawers for storing wine. The decorative motifs are strongly Neoclassical in manner, inspired by Robert Adam's (1728–92) delicate interpretation of the style. The

elongated urns centred on each of the pedestals also serve to indicate their contents. Lightly drawn swags and striking anthemion motifs are used to define the individual drawers and cupboards, and to accentuate the essential symmetry of the piece with its carefully balanced use of curved and flat surfaces, sinuous lines, and geometric shape. *c.1880. H:92cm (36¼in); W:218cm (86in); D:28cm (71in).*

CHAIRS

CHAIR DESIGN HAD NEVER been so diverse as in this eclectic age. The different styles seen in other types of furniture also existed in chairs. Elements from the popular revival styles – from Classical acanthus carvings to Gothic arches and all points in between – combined to create a multifarious riot of forms.

Chairs were often designed to complement other pieces in a room, but were also influenced by fashion, which resulted in the design of low, wide seats to accommodate full skirts.

COMFORT FIRST

An emphasis on comfort was at the core of many mid 19th-century chair designs, especially those that emanated from France, where padded arms, seats, and backs were *de rigueur* components of the Rococo- and Neoclassical-revival styles. In Britain, the easy chair was thickly padded in fabric or leather and

provided a respite from the more ascetic oak chairs in the Gothic style. There was a renewed interest in the designs of Chippendale, Sheraton, and Adam towards the end of the century.

Two separate interpretations of the Rococo style – the bentwood laminate styles of the Thonet and Belter factories on the one hand, and the padded giltwood offerings of French workshops on the other – both enjoyed popularity. Classical motifs such as urns, acanthus, and festoons were equally prolific. Oriental and Anglo-Indian furniture expanded the canon of Western decorative arts to include elements from these two ancient Eastern cultures.

Salon suites also became popular in middle-class homes during this period. The suite typically comprised a sofa, a *chaise longue*, four side chairs, a lady's armchair, a gentleman's armchair, and a stool – all in the Louis XV style.



A carved top rail adorns the top of the shield seat back.

The shield back is carved with anthemions and acanthus motifs.

The upper side of each serpentine arm is carved with a guilloche motif.

The square, tapering legs with bellflowers terminate in spade feet.

A Neoclassical tablet is centred on the carved seat rail.

BRITISH ARMCHAIR

This mahogany shield-back armchair has been made in the manner of 18th-century interior designer Robert Adam. The shield back has a carved top rail, an inlaid satinwood border, and

applied, carved decoration showing Classical motifs, including swags, laurel leaves, and urns. The upholstered seat has a carved seat rail and is supported on leaf-carved, square-section legs, terminating in spade feet. c.1860. CATO 7



FRENCH OPEN ARMCHAIRS

These open armchairs are made of white-painted wood and each have a flower-carved crest and apron. The seat, arms, and back are upholstered in a pale fabric decorated with a floral and foliate pattern. In each case, the



serpentine seat is supported on painted (formerly gilt) cabriole legs. The chairs are Louis XV in style and make an interesting contrast to the armchairs shown below. c.1880. DN 2



FRENCH OPEN ARMCHAIRS

Each one of this pair of giltwood open armchairs has an upholstered back, arms, and seat. The frame of each chair is carved with a scroll, ribbon, and swag crest and stiff lead



borders. Each chair has fluted, finial-surmounted supports and tapering legs, which terminate in brass casters. The chairs are Louis XVI in style. c.1900. H:103cm (40 $\frac{1}{2}$ in). 3



GERMAN CHAIR AND ARMCHAIR

This solid mahogany chair and armchair are designed in the Empire style, with scrolled top rails and upholstered backs and seats. The supports, armrests, and seat rails are inlaid



with bronze decoration. The arm supports are giltwood sphinxes, while the cabriole legs have carved and gilt griffin heads and paw feet. c.1880. H:103.5cm (40 $\frac{3}{4}$ in). WKA 3



AMERICAN SIDE CHAIRS

This pair of Rococo-revival, laminated, rosewood side chairs each has a shaped, moulded back, enclosing scrolling devices. The upholstered seats have a flower-carved rail and are supported on cabriole legs. 1850. H:83cm (32½in). FRE 1

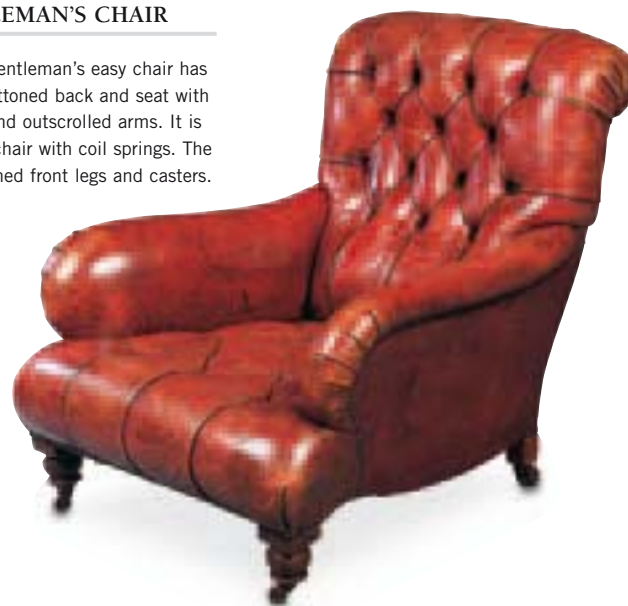


BRITISH EASY CHAIR

This George III-style, mahogany, upholstered easy chair has a curved crest above rolled arms and is raised on cabriole legs with claw-and-ball feet. The chair has rose and beige silk damask upholstery. c.1900. H:97.5cm (39in). S&K 1

BRITISH GENTLEMAN'S CHAIR

This walnut-framed gentleman's easy chair has a Morocco-leather buttoned back and seat with studded decoration and outscrolled arms. It is a good example of a chair with coil springs. The chair is raised on turned front legs and casters. 1890-1900. L&T 3



Carved splat panel

CHINESE ARMCHAIRS

These red-lacquered elm armchairs from Shangxi Province each have a scrolling top rail and a panelled splat carved with an animal and objects. Each panel seat with a carved seat rail is supported on square-section legs with stretchers. c.1880. SI 1



BLACK FOREST HALL CHAIRS

Each one of this pair of chairs has a stained and carved frame inlaid with hunting scenes on the back and seat. The waisted, pierced, scrolling back rises above a shaped serpentine seat, which is supported on cabriole legs. L&T 2



BRITISH OPEN ARMCHAIR

The rounded back and seat of this armchair in George I style are upholstered with *gros* and *petit-point* woolwork. The walnut frame has shepherd-crook arms and shell-carved cabriole legs, terminating in claw-and-ball feet. DN 3



ANGLO-INDIAN OPEN ARMCHAIR

This Empire-style armchair has a shaped top rail, a square-section back rail, scrolled arms, and cabriole legs. Every surface is covered with *sadeli* work decoration set within ivory and ebony borders. c.1900. WW 1



ITALIAN ARMCHAIR

This lime and walnut armchair has an oval back with an upholstered panel framed by carved, gilt surrounds. The seat has a moulded top rail and is supported on cabriole legs. c.1840. H:99cm (39in); W:66cm (26in); D:51cm (20in). LOT



BRITISH SIDE CHAIR

The caned, shield-shaped back of this Sheraton-style, painted satinwood side chair is surmounted by a medallion, depicting a female figure. The seat is raised on square, tapering legs, which terminate in spade feet. c.1900. SI 1

SOFAS

THE MAJORITY OF 19th-century sofas were designed either for comfort or for formal seating. The fluidity of the revival styles during this period allowed for a certain poetic licence in the designs.

COIL-SPRING UPHOLSTERY

The French fashion for upholstering their luxurious *canapés* with sumptuous, overstuffed seats and padded backs soon spread across Europe. The increased thickness of the upholstery was the result of the introduction of coiled springs. These were, in themselves, quite deep, but they also required a thick layer of padding to prevent them from piercing the seat cover. Deeply set buttons were used to hold both the springs and the padding in place, and became a feature in themselves.

The fabrics used to cover these upholsteries were often extremely expensive, making it necessary to

shield furniture from direct sunlight, hence the Victorian reputation for gloomy interiors. Both *petit* and *gros point* were popular.

The *confidante*, or *tête-à-tête*, evolved from the standard French *canapé* as a slightly less formal design, allowing couples or parties to sit together and converse while facing each other. These were fairly variable forms, as were many of the Rococo-revival, show-frame sofas, chaises longue, and daybeds made at this time. They contrasted with Neoclassical- and Empire-revival styles, which made greater use of flat planes and regular angles.

Towards the end of the period, influences from the Middle East and the Orient began to infiltrate sofa design in the West. Turkish-style daybeds, Chinese bamboo frames, and the no-nonsense Arts and Crafts aesthetic started to reverse the trend for decadent, comfortable seating.

The lion's heads are supported on turned columns.

The arched top rail above the panels is inlaid with floral marquetry.

The seat back has scroll-topped supports.



The cabriole legs terminate in claw-and-ball feet.

Each seat is concave-fronted with a marquetry-inlaid apron.

The base of the chair back is galleried, with turned spindles.

DUTCH HALL BENCH

The triple concave-shaped back of this mahogany and marquetry-decorated bench has a moulded crest and a carved lion's head at each seat division. The sweeping arms terminate in carved heads. The shaped seat

has a similarly shaped apron and is raised on four carved cabriole legs to the front and two slightly sweeping, square-section legs to the back. The entire bench is profusely decorated with marquetry inlay, depicting flowers, leaves, urns, birds, and insects. *W:164cm (64½in).* HAD 3



Cushion tassels



Scrolled leg

BRITISH WINDOW SEAT

This mahogany, Regency-revival-style window seat has an upholstered back, outswep sides, and seat. The frame of the window seat is carved with acanthus and is supported on scroll legs with paw feet. *c.1900. W:126cm (49½in).* DN



BRITISH SHOW-FRAME SOFA

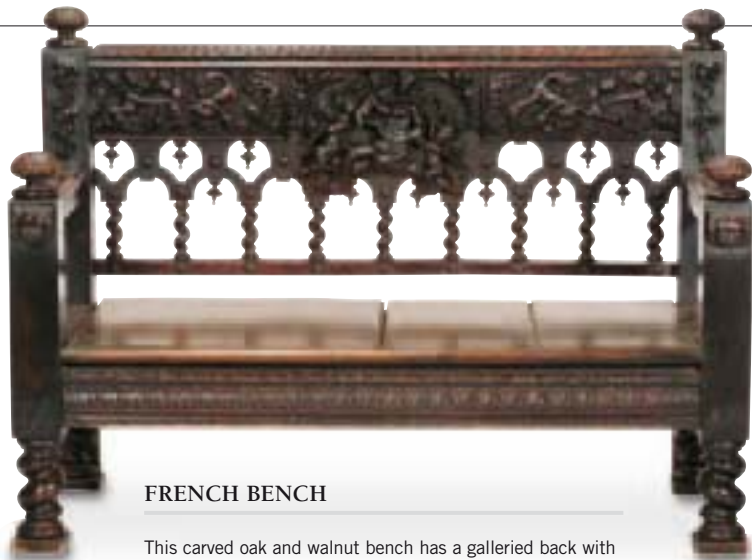
This early Victorian, Rococo-revival, show-frame sofa is made of rosewood and has a generously upholstered seat, arms, and back. The serpentine seat is supported on scroll-carved cabriole legs, terminating in ceramic casters. *c.1850. W:183cm (72in).* S&K 2



FRENCH DAY BED

This carved walnut and upholstered day bed is designed in the Louis XVI style. The reeded and scroll arms carved with leaves and the loose cushion seat are covered in a beige fabric and raised on turned and stop-fluted legs, joined by

a rope-carved apron. This piece would have been made for an alcove and placed parallel to a wall. It may originally have had a canopy of matching fabric suspended above it. *W:207.5cm (81½in).* FRE 2



FRENCH BENCH

This carved oak and walnut bench has a galleried back with carved panels, depicting dragons, figures, and cherubs. It has square arms above a solid seat and is supported on spiral-turned legs. *W:138.5cm (54½in). FRE 2*



FRENCH CANAPÉ

This Louis XVI-style walnut *canapé* has a carved crest rail above a padded back. The cushioned seat is supported on fluted, tapered legs, which end in peg feet. *c.1900. W:125cm (50in). DN 2*



Gilt-brass moulding



BRITISH SETTEE

This mahogany, Empire-revival settee has a scrolled crest rail, upholstered seat and back, and padded arms. The frame of the settee has Neoclassical gilt-brass applied mouldings throughout and is supported on turned legs. *Late 19th century. L&T 3*



Tapestry detail



FRENCH SOFA

This is one of a pair of Napoleon III-style ebonized sofas. The back is in three sections and has a central shaped, rectangular, upholstered panel flanked by two similarly upholstered oval panels in carved gilt frames.

The padded seat is supported on six turned and fluted legs, terminating in pad feet. The sofa is attributed to Charles-Guillaume Diehl. The tapestry upholstery was probably made by the prestigious Aubusson company. *BK 6*



AMERICAN SETTEE

This carved walnut settee has an undulating back and a crest rail carved with flowers and grapes. The padded, upholstered arms scroll outwards and show William IV influence. The padded, upholstered seat has a similarly carved

serpentine apron and has additional side cushions. The whole settee is supported on slightly cabriole legs. Chairs and sofas featuring elements of ornate, naturalistic carving in the Rococo-revival style were very popular in the United States, particularly between 1830 and 1865. *W:175cm (70in). S&K 1*



BRITISH SETTEE

This walnut, tub-shaped settee has an upholstered back, armrests, and seat. Originally, it was almost certainly part of a salon suite. The settee has a pierced back and is supported on turned legs, terminating in brass

casters. Neoclassical in style, it was probably inspired by Sheraton's furniture designs, combining the simple geometric forms of the pierced back with the gentle, curving contours of the seat and upholstered back shape. *c.1900. GorL 2*

TABLES

AN ABUNDANCE OF table types, each designed for a specific use, was made in the mid 19th century. Many of these were suited to popular pastimes of the period, such as playing cards. The general trend was for smaller, more portable tables in greater numbers.

TABLES FOR EVERY PURPOSE

Pier tables, originally used as early as the 16th century, became popular again as householders sought to fill their homes with more furniture than ever before. The card table was another popular addition to many homes; unobtrusive when not in use, when required for playing cards, the top of the table was opened to reveal a baize-lined playing surface. The worktable, designed to store needlework accoutrements or writing utensils, frequently incorporated a hanging bag as was previously the fashion. Despite the introduction of gas and oil lighting,

the *torchère* remained a very popular fixture on which to stand candlesticks.

A MIXTURE OF STYLES

Tables of all kinds were produced in a wide range of historical and cultural styles. Tables in the Rococo style were covered with extravagant “C” and “S” scrolls and rested on cabriole legs, whereas fluted, tapering legs were found on Classical- or Renaissance-style tables. A softening and rounding of contours was expressed in the West by the use of serpentine shapes and undulating mouldings, but Oriental forms remained steadfastly rectilinear.

French and Italian console tables often had marble tops, a fashion that was exported to many countries, especially Britain and the United States. Centre and side tables often had tripod legs. Such tables frequently featured foldaway tops so that they could be put away easily when not in use.

Scrolling brasswork is inlaid on a red tortoiseshell ground.

The table top has a shaped apron frieze.



Each cabriole leg features a gilt-bronze mount at its head.

The serpentine platform base has a red tortoiseshell ground.

Acanthus and scroll mounts decorate the base of each leg.

Bun feet support the shaped undertier.

FRENCH CONSOLE TABLE

This Louis XV-style boulléwork and ebonized serpentine console table is decorated with gilt-metal mounts, which are similar to the earlier *Régence* style in appearance. All the surfaces of the table are inlaid with scrolling brasswork

on a red tortoiseshell ground. The table top has a shaped apron and is supported on cabriole legs headed by putti and acanthus leaves. The legs are joined by a shaped undertier, below which are bun feet. The table probably had an elaborate mirror in similar style above it originally. *c.1860. W:131cm (51½in). SI 2*



CHINESE SIDE TABLE

This beech wood side table originates from the Shuzhou province. It has a rectangular top positioned above three drawers and an apron carved with simple roundels. The table top is raised on square-section legs, with carved bracket supports and terminates in spade feet. The back of the table is left undecorated as the piece is designed to stand against a wall. *c.1850. W:115.5cm (45½in). S&K 1*



CONSOLE TABLES

This pair of Louis XVI console tables is possibly Italian. Each one is gilded and has a shaped, mottled brown-black and white marble top with canted corners and coved sides set above a similarly shaped base. The bowed front of each table is decorated with a frieze hung with leaf

swags on either side of a Classical figural medallion. Each table is supported on Neoclassical-style fluted, tapering legs carved with leaves and drapery. The tables were probably designed to stand in piers – the spaces between two windows – possibly with matching gilded mirrors hung immediately above them. *W:112.5cm (45in). S&K 4*



CHINESE LOW TABLE

This rectangular low table is made of *huanghuali* wood (rosewood). It has a cleated top, which is positioned above an ornate frieze carved with stylized scroll motifs. The table top is supported on straight legs with angular, scroll-carved terminals. *1880. W:90.5cm (35½in). DN 2*

AMERICAN PIER TABLE

This is one of a pair of Classical, marble-top pier tables. It has a rectangular, ogee-moulded top on a conforming apron above scrolled supports, which are painted with acanthus leaves and ornamented with applied giltwood gadrooning. The rectangular base has a sloping, gadrooned skirt with a mirror back. It sits on claw feet. *Late 19th century. W:110.5cm (43½in). FRE 6*



ENGLISH JARDINIÈRE

This Victorian amboyna and ebony *jardinière* is rectangular in form with rounded ends. The top lifts off to reveal a well for plants. The table top has metal-beaded borders and simulated ivory inlay, with a moulded edge above a frieze set with green jasper-type round plaques with Classical figures. The case is supported on fluted, turned, tapering legs with ceramic casters joined by a shaped cross-stretcher centred with a turned finial. *1860. W:90cm (35½in). DN 3*



BRITISH TRIPOD TABLE

The marquetry-decorated circular top of this tripod table has a carved, moulded edge and is raised on a fluted, turned, and carved stem supported on three acanthus-decorated legs with scroll toes and original brass casters. *c.1860. Diam:56cm (22in). HamG 2*



BRITISH TEAPOY

The moulded-edge, hinged lid of this early Victorian rosewood teapoy has canted corners over a deep, ogee-moulded frieze, and is raised on a baluster upright, with a spiral-turned knob, on double C-scroll supports with brass casters. *c.1840. W:52cm (20½in). BAR 1*



ENGLISH WORKTABLE

This Sheraton-revival, painted satinwood worktable has an oval, hinged top decorated with putti, flowers, ribbons, and bows above a drawer on turned, tapering legs, which are joined by a cross-stretcher. *1900. H:76cm (30in); W:49cm (19¼in). DN 3*



GERMAN TRIPOD TABLE

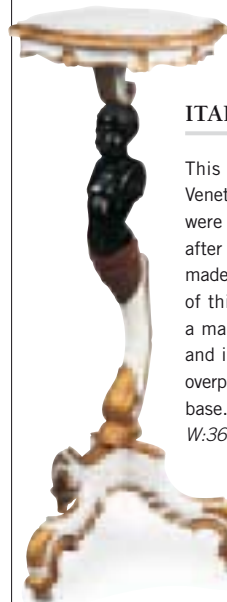
This carved walnut and inlaid tripod table is from the Black Forest. The shaped oval top is inlaid with oval panels of stags and is raised on a turned column support, ending in three foliate carved cabriole legs. *c.1860. H:76cm (30½in). FRE 1*



MONGOLIAN TABLE

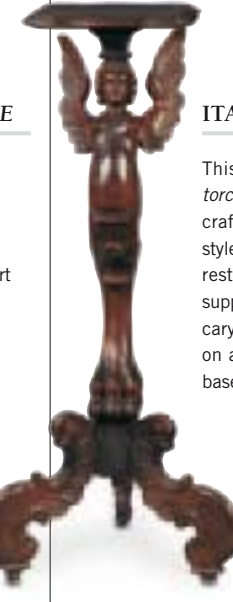
This low, Asian-style table is made from wood decorated with polychrome. It has a brightly decorated rectangular top above a moulded and carved apron and two carved end flaps. The table top is supported on four

circular-section legs, which are joined by a straight central stretcher. The table is decorated with a broad geometric border and 18th-century designs. Originally, this piece would probably have been used as a dining or occasional table. *Mid 19th century. W:64cm (25¼in). SI 1*



ITALIAN TORCHÈRE

This is one of a pair of Venetian *torchères*, which were painted some years after they were originally made. The scrolling support of this one incorporates a male Blackamoor torso and is raised on a white overpainted and gilt tripod base. *H:98cm (38½in); W:36cm (14¼in). L&T 2*



ITALIAN TORCHÈRE

This elegant, carved, walnut *torchère* stand is one of a pair crafted in Renaissance-revival style. It has a shaped square top resting on a columnar carved support in the shape of a winged caryatid. The *torchère* is raised on a carved, scrolling tripod base. *1880. SI 3*

GARDEN FURNITURE

THE FLORAL CHINTZES AND NATURALISTIC DECORATION OF MID 19TH-CENTURY INTERIORS SPILLED INTO THE GARDEN IN THE FORM OF SPECIALLY DESIGNED FURNITURE.

BOTANY WAS A HOUSEHOLD SCIENCE in the 19th century, appealing to the rational, genteel, pious, and relentlessly self-improving Victorian mindset. Its popularity inspired an unprecedented interest in gardening that permeated the social strata. Jane Loudon's 1840 publication *Instructions in Gardening for Ladies* advocated the pastime as one eminently suited to the disposition of the fairer sex, and was a runaway success. The terrarium, invented in 1827 by Dr Nathaniel Ward, allowed people to grow exotic plants in a cold climate – even on a window sill – and protected delicate specimens from harsh urban environments. The abolition of glass tax in 1845 made conservatories more affordable, and they became fashionable settings in which to entertain one's guests.

Gardens of the period were generally bright and bold, with vast beds planted with swathes of colourful plants very much in vogue. Garden ornaments took many forms, but were rarely subtle. The era that witnessed the introduction of the garden gnome to Britain also saw householders hang brightly coloured glass globes, called gazing balls, as decorative additions to their gardens. Urns, statues, birdbaths, obelisks, and even life-sized reproductions of animals, all in metal or stone, populated the gardens of the wealthy. The same ostentatiousness was at work in garden furniture design of the period. Where garden chairs and tables had been relatively restrained early in the century, they became increasingly elaborate as the 19th century progressed. Simple, wrought-iron forms gave way to industrial cast iron that mimicked the triumverate of styles – Greek, Gothic, and Rococo – that dominated interiors.

IRON CHAIRS FROM IRONBRIDGE

Cast iron was far cheaper than wrought iron or bronze and was ideally suited to use in the garden, owing to its strength and resistance to rust. A number of iron foundries across Europe had been engaged in the production of garden furniture for some time when the Darby family, owners of a large iron works at Coalbrookdale in Shropshire, turned their attention to the manufacture of iron products. Taking their lead from companies such as Val d'Osne in France, they built the Coalbrookdale

TRAINED TREE

Heinrich Weber's engraving shows a more unusual approach to garden furniture. Instead of buying a canvas sunshade for your garden table and chairs, it suggests creating a natural, yet rather formal, sunshade by training the branches of a tree over an umbrella-shaped trellis. The table and chair are cast-iron. c.1850.



WINTER GARDEN

This engraving by Georges Remon from *Intérieurs Modernes* shows an elaborate French conservatory. The fountain, trelliswork, and palm trees serve to bring the garden inside, where bentwood chairs share the ample space with cast-iron tables and chairs. 1900.

VAL D'OSNE CAST-IRON CHAIR This green-painted cast-iron garden chair has a Gothic cast-diamond back and a honeycomb seat. The cast-diamonds have quatrefoils at their centre. Pierced stretchers join the legs at the front and sides. L&T

CAST-IRON GARDEN SEAT

The back of this green-painted, cast-iron garden seat for two features a lily-of-the-valley design. The seat is a scrolling cast, and there is leaf decoration on the legs. It may have been made by the American A.J. Mott foundry. Late 19th century.



Company into the pre-eminent manufacturer of garden furniture of the mid 19th century. Its most popular designs are still in production today. The process was an industrial one: iron was cast from moulds in a variety of different shapes, and then pieced together to produce furniture of various styles. At the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, the company won a Council Medal, and Queen Victoria paid £300 for a statue of Andromeda made by them. The centrepiece of Coalbrookdale's 1851 exhibit was its new range of Nasturtium chairs and benches, which epitomized garden furniture design of the period. The ironwork was elaborately pierced with floral designs and scrolling to give a Rococo look, yet the actual construction of the furniture was simple and suited to mass production.



SWAN GARDEN BENCH

This garden bench with its simple board seat and back is transformed by the cast-iron ends formed in the shape of swans. There are traces of old white and orange paint and repainting in places. H:96.5cm (38in); W:183cm (72in); D:71cm (28in). BRU

RUSTIC FURNITURE

A vernacular tradition of handcrafted garden furniture persisted in tandem with the industrial cast-iron aesthetic. Local craftsmen fashioned and sold basic wooden benches and chairs, as well as more elaborate novelty forms. Unfortunately, few examples now survive due to wood's tendency to rot, especially when exposed to the elements. In the United States, a celebrated form of rustic timber furniture started to gain popularity in the later part of the 19th century. Named after the mountain range – now a national park – in upstate New York from which it originates, Adirondack furniture used native timbers, such as oak, cherry, butternut, birch, and walnut, and often included the bark. It echoed the local Great Camp style of architecture in that it assimilated the natural contours of the branches and roots from which it was fashioned.

KEW GARDENS

MORE THAN 300 YEARS IN THE MAKING, THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS AT KEW ARE THE CULMINATION OF EFFORTS MADE BY DOZENS OF ENGINEERS, SCIENTISTS, AND GARDENERS.

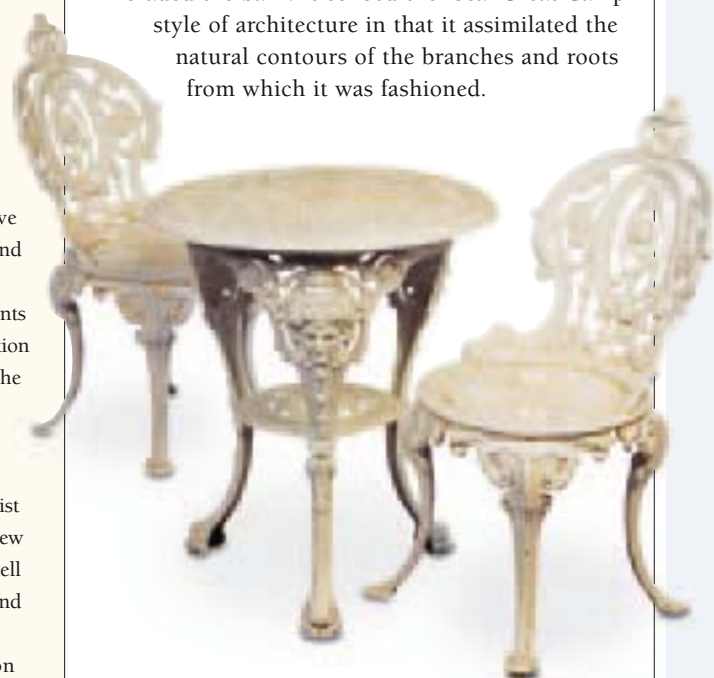
The first gardens at Kew Park were laid out by the Capel family during the late 17th century. In 1772, George III inherited the Gardens from his mother and, by the end of the 18th century, many of the monuments and buildings familiar to generations of visitors were in place. The development of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew coincided with a revival of interest in Classicism, itself a consequence of the vogue among the landed classes to go on the Grand Tour. Expeditions by botanists throughout Britain's expanding Empire unearthed myriad newly discovered plants, which were brought back and exhibited at the Gardens under the "kind superintendence" of Sir Joseph Banks, whom George III had established there in 1773. Banks, who became President of the Royal Society in 1778, established the Gardens as the

British centre for economic botany. His death in 1820 coincided with George III's, and Kew Gardens lost its direction for 20 years.



The Palm House This was built between 1844 and 1848 by Richard Turner, with Decimus Burton as architectural consultant. Light but strong wrought-iron "ship's beams" were used to create a vast 15.2m (50ft) open, pillarless span.

Between 1841 and 1885, father and son William and Joseph Hooker held consecutive directorships of the Gardens and contrived a renaissance in its fortunes. Among the developments they oversaw were the construction of the iconic Palm House and the Temperate House – the largest surviving mid 19th-century glass structure in the world. William Nesfield, a watercolourist turned landscaper, designed a new arboretum for the Gardens as well as the cedar-lined Broad Walk and the *parterres* around the Palm House. The Victorian obsession with botany bequeathed the world an educational and recreational landmark – Kew Gardens became a World Heritage Site in 2003.



CAST-IRON GARDEN CHAIRS AND TABLE

Each of these chairs has a pierced scroll back and circular pierced seat on four scrolling legs. The table has a solid top and stands on three scrolling legs. There is a lady's mask at the top of each table leg. 1880. Chair: H:86cm (34in). L&T



ARTS AND CRAFTS

1880-1920



REFORM AND REACTION

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION TURNED THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN, BUT WHILE SOME REVELLED IN URBAN PROSPERITY, OTHERS YEARNED FOR A SIMPLER LIFE BASED ON TRADITIONAL VALUES.

IT IS DIFFICULT to overestimate the dramatic changes in society that had come about by the start of the 20th century. The Industrial Revolution transformed Britain from a land of rural husbandry to a highly mechanized urban economy in less than a century. The railway, telegraph, and later the telephone, effectively shrank the country and accelerated the pace of life to a new, terrifying level.

THE SELF-MADE MAN

These social changes brought a new powerful class to the fore – middle-class industrialists who earned their prosperity, rather than inheriting it. Urban life offered the opportunity to “move up in the world”. Consequently, community spirit was often overridden by a focus on individual success.

THE DECLINE OF RURAL LIFE

Mechanization meant that the world of work was no longer ruled by the changing seasons or the setting of the sun. While cities and towns became the centres of the new world, rural communities became marginalized. Country life was considered backward and inferior.

THE DESIRE FOR CHANGE

In a world that was spinning faster and faster, eventually people began to demand a slowing of pace and a return to the less mechanized society of just a few generations before. Under the tutelage of its founding father, William Morris, the Arts and Crafts Movement used a desire for the simplicity and craftsmanship of the Middle Ages to reject the dehumanizing effects of industrialization and mass production.

Morris and his followers championed the revival of traditional craftsmanship and good-quality materials, emphasizing the importance of the home and artistic, individually crafted wares as part of integrated interior design.

Gamble House, Pasadena, California
This house, and its furniture, was designed by the architects, Charles and Henry Greene, in 1908 for David and Mary Gamble of the Procter & Gamble company.

Gustav Stickley vice cabinet

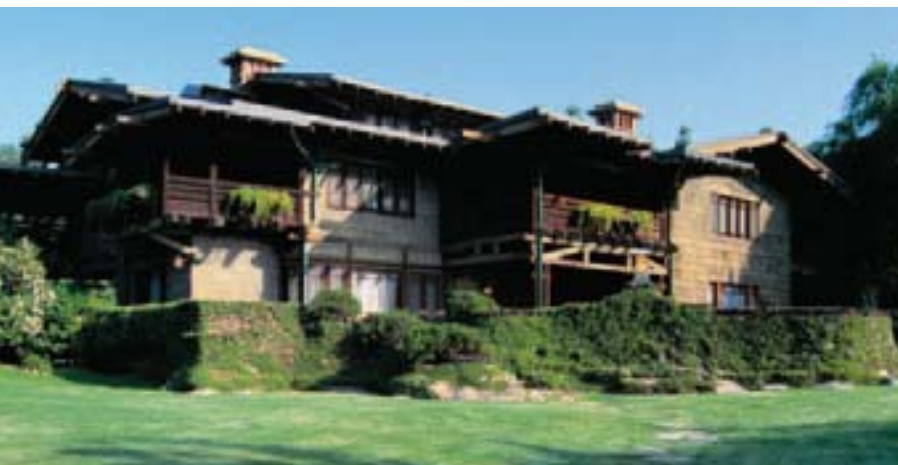
This piece has a hinged lid, a single drawer, and a lower cabinet. c.1909. H:61cm (24in). DRA



SPREADING FAR AND WIDE

The Arts and Crafts Movement soon became highly influential and its effect permeated every area of design, from textiles to glass and ceramics. Once Arts and Crafts designs became known in the United States in the 1870s and 80s, American designers interpreted the style in their own way, drawing inspiration from the Shaker Movement and the crafts of the Native American tribes. The American Movement focused on the use of natural materials, and houses were built from local wood and stone, to blend in with the surrounding landscape.

Following the pioneering example of William Morris, architects, designers, artists, and craftsmen around the world adopted variations of the Arts and Crafts style, in the spirit of social and artistic reform. Ultimately, the success of the Arts and Crafts Movement itself was relatively short-lived in Britain, as the designers' insistence on handcrafted furnishings proved prohibitively expensive. However, by promoting the revival of traditional handicrafts, a return to simple, honest social values, and the importance of art and beautiful objects in everyday life, the Arts and Crafts Movement set the stage for the far-reaching design movements that followed during the 20th century, from Art Deco to Modernism.



TIMELINE 1880–1920



Richard Wagner

Liberty opens his retail emporium in London. Brooklyn Bridge completed in New York. Fabian Society founded in London.

1881 William Morris sets up his Merton Abbey Works.

1882 A.H. Mackmurdo founds the Century Guild. Richard Wagner's last opera *Parsifal* is staged.

1883 Arthur Lazenby

First underground train (tube) runs in London.

1884 Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec settles in Montmartre in Paris, where he paints and draws cabaret stars, prostitutes, barmaids, and clowns.

Poster by Toulouse-Lautrec
This poster promotes a Paris appearance of the Irish performer May Belfort. 1895.



1887–89 Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society founded, with Walter Crane as its first president. The Eiffel Tower is designed and erected for the Paris Exhibition of 1889.

1888 C.R. Ashbee forms the Guild of Handicraft in the East End of London.

1890 William Morris establishes the Kelmscott Press, producing handmade books using handmade paper, in line with his philosophy.

1890–91 Louis Sullivan designs the Wainwright Building in St. Louis.

1893 *The Studio* magazine started by Charles Holme. World Exhibition held in Chicago.

1895 Sino-Japanese War. Marconi invents radio telegraphy.



Morris and Co. ebonized-walnut armchair The chair has a reclining back, turned spindle sides and stretchers, curved back legs, and upholstered arms and cushions. c.1865. H:92cm (36¼in).

Interior of Wightwick Manor, Staffordshire, England This manor, designed by Edward Ould, was furnished in the Arts and Crafts style. The house contains many Morris wallpaper and fabric designs.



William Morris

1896 William Morris dies.

1896 Spanish-American War. First modern Olympics held in Athens.

1897 The first Arts and Crafts Exhibition in Boston. Paris Metro opens.

1901 Gustav Stickley publishes his *Craftsman* magazine. Frank Lloyd Wright addresses the Arts and Crafts Society in Chicago with a speech on "The Art and Craft of the Machine".

1902 The Guild of Handicraft moves to the Cotswolds.

1903 First flight by the Wright Brothers.



Plate from Omega Workshops

1905 The architect, Hermann Muthesius, publishes his three-volume *Das Englische Haus* on English housing and design.

1908 Ford produces the first Model T car in the United States.

1913 The Omega Workshops, the last of the Arts and Crafts groups, established by Roger Fry in Bloomsbury, London.

1914 World War I begins.

1915 A German U-boat sinks the



R.M.S. Lusitania

passenger liner the *Lusitania* in the Irish Sea.

1918 Lytton Strachey publishes his landmark biography *Eminent Victorians*.

ARTS AND CRAFTS STYLE

LAMENTING THE INFERIOR quality of mass-produced furniture and the abandonment of handcraft skills, a new generation of architects and craftsmen aimed to create soundly constructed furniture by hand, using fine materials in solid, simple forms that were both attractive and functional. Inspired by the ideas of William Morris (see pp.332–33), and the writer John Ruskin, furniture-makers created a new style that was as much a social statement as an artistic one, championing the individual craftsman and rejecting the mechanized world of the late 19th century.

The new movement was named after the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, one of a number of groups promoting a return to traditional skills. Many of the furniture-makers who adopted the style originally trained as architects. This was key to the creation of Arts and Crafts furniture, in which simplicity was paramount, and designers let the materials and techniques of cabinet-making dictate shape and decoration. High-backed chairs, rectangular benches, square cabinets-on-stands, desks, and bookcases all reflected architectural influences.



Late Victorian kneehole desk This desk has an ebonized finish and parcel-gilt decoration in the Aesthetic Movement style. The top has a moulded edge above nine mahogany-lined drawers. The desk once belonged to Edward Austen Knight, brother of the novelist Jane Austen. c.1880. W:122cm (48in). DN

With an emphasis on the vernacular, oak was the favoured timber. The distinctive grain and finish of the wood was appreciated for its natural beauty. Elaborate metal fittings, such as hand-hammered strap hinges and drop handles were used as ornamental features on cupboards and cabinets. Cut-out patterns in the shapes of hearts, rectangles, and circles were another distinctive feature, as were elaborately turned stretchers and seat rails, and deliberately exposed construction details, such as mortise-and-tenon joints or corbels.

AN ADAPTABLE STYLE

The furniture was not exclusively vernacular, and many designers produced fine-quality pieces for their wealthy clientele. Richer woods – mahogany, walnut, satinwood, and ebony – were used and often enhanced with exquisite inlays of ivory, silver, mother-of-pearl, and colourful fruitwoods.

Although essentially a British movement, interpretations of the style varied between countries.

However, the unifying principle was a distrust of industrialization and mass production.

In the United States, the ideals promoted by Ruskin and Morris were translated into a more robust version of Arts and Crafts furniture. American craftsmen created solid oak furniture in rectilinear forms that mirrored the very best of British craftsmanship and design. However, unlike their British counterparts, American furniture-makers valued the role of the machine in manufacturing their designs, and they used mechanized processes to produce chairs, cabinets, and cupboards in the Arts and Crafts style.



An occasional table Made of mahogany, this table has an octagonal top above three twin tapering supports linked by a lower tier. H:69cm (27½in). L&T

THE AESTHETIC MOVEMENT

The Aesthetic Movement that developed in the 1870s coincided with the Arts and Crafts Movement and also aimed to produce well-designed, fine-quality furniture. Considering beauty as more important than practicality, in striking contrast to the Victorian taste for clutter, Aesthetic designers were influenced by the stark simplicity of Japanese designs rendered in dark woods with minimal decoration and arranged in pale, uncluttered interiors.

ENDURING IDEALS

Although by the late 1920s, Arts and Crafts furniture had fallen from favour, simple, practical design, good construction, and native materials remained popular features in furniture design until World War II. The Arts and Crafts style was rediscovered in the 1970s by collectors who appreciated elegant simplicity, fine materials, and handcrafted design. The influence of this revolutionary, idealistic movement continues to be felt today.



A music cabinet This cabinet was made by C.R. Ashbee for The Guild of Handicraft. It is made from pine and has elaborate brass hardware and a Moorish-style cut-out base. c.1899. H:124cm (49in). CR

CRAFTSMEN'S GUILDS

The medieval concept of the craftsmen's guild, which formed a cornerstone of the Arts and Crafts philosophy, flourished in the last two decades of the 19th century. Recognizing that artists working on their own could not effect meaningful change, a burgeoning number of groups emerged that championed the Arts and Crafts ideals. The first guild to be founded was A.H. Mackmurdo's Century Guild; other influential guilds that followed were the Art Worker's Guild and C.R. Ashbee's Guild of Handicraft, founded in 1888.

Craftsmen at work This photograph was taken in the Guild of Handicraft's metalwork shop at Essex House. The guild moved to Chipping Campden in 1902.



THE STICKLEY CHAIR

In the 19th century, the rocking chair enjoyed enormous popularity in the United States. Both stylish and functional, it was enthusiastically adopted by American Arts and Crafts furniture-designers such as Gustav Stickley, who produced many rocking chairs at his Craftsman Workshops, including this example.

Made of quarter-sawn oak, it boasts a time-worn, fumed surface finish and a lustrous dark patina. These effects were created by applying chemicals that reacted with the wood.

This rocking chair is an ideal prototype of the Arts and Crafts philosophy, which aimed to produce well-made, sturdy, and comfortable furniture by hand, and was often based on traditional designs.

Leather upholstery for drop-in seats and cushions, and construction features used for decorative effect such as exposed tenons, vertical slats, and short corbels beneath the flat chair arms, typically highlight Stickley's Craftsman furniture.

The top back slat is pinned to the back upright for added strength and visual beauty.

The seat is covered in padded leather for comfort and support.

The front leg support ends in a tenon through the front of each arm, serving both as supporting joinery and decorative detail.

Side slats between the arms and seats were a hallmark of Stickley's designs. These, like the rest of the chair, are covered with a rich, fumed finish.

Gustav Stickley Arts and Crafts rocker (no. 323) The chair has five vertical slats and short corbels beneath flat arms. The finish is original, although colour has been added to the tops of the arms, and the leather upholstery has been replaced. The chair is branded on the back stretcher. c.1880–1920. H:101cm (40in). DRA



ELEMENTS OF STYLE

Traditional materials, fine craftsmanship, and attention to detail were all key features of the Arts and Crafts philosophy and this was reflected in the furniture. Most pieces were essentially simple in structure and their beauty relied partly on the intrinsic colour, warmth, and fine grain of high-quality timbers such as oak or mahogany, often enhanced with decorative cut-outs, carved designs, and bold marquetry or inlays of contrasting timbers. Details of construction, such as hardware and joints, were frequently exposed or even exaggerated to form decorative features in their own right, and upholstery was covered with rich, specially designed textiles inspired by nature.



Mahogany occasional table

Handcrafted pieces

William Morris was opposed to mechanical production, believing it to lower the standard of furniture-making. Handcrafted furniture, often based on traditional vernacular forms, became a hallmark of the Arts and Crafts Movement.



Marquetry detail

Marquetry

Since they believed that the inherent beauty of the wood was sufficient decoration in itself, Arts and Crafts furniture craftsmen used marquetry sparingly. They rejected elaborate designs and exotic materials such as metals, ivory, and bone in favour of simple wood veneers, which detracted neither from the purpose of the piece nor its beauty.



Machine-turned table legs

Machine processes

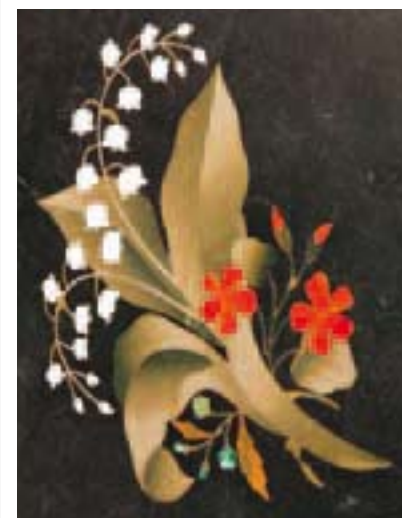
Not all Arts and Crafts designers, particularly those in the United States, believed that furniture should be entirely handcrafted. Steam-powered machinery was used not only to make cutting, sawing, and planing easier, but also to create various decorative elements, such as carved work, veneers, and turning.



Exposed tenon

Exposed construction

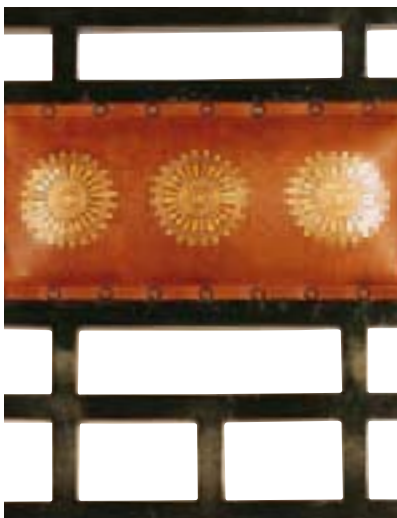
Arts and Crafts furniture-makers strongly believed that part of the beauty of an object was to be found in the way it was made. Construction features that would normally be concealed, such as mortise-and-tenon and butterfly joints, exposed or keyed tenons, pegs, dovetails, and corbel supports, were turned into decorative features in their own right.



Pietra dura decoration

Oriental motifs

The Aesthetic Movement celebrated art for art's sake and the sophisticated techniques discovered in designs created by Japanese artisans. Oriental-inspired asymmetric designs and subtle colours featuring flowers, birds, and insects embellished not only textiles but also furniture, including oak and mahogany tables and cabinets.



Detail of a chair back

Japanese influence

Designers of the Aesthetic Movement, were much inspired by the Japanese ceramics, lacquers, metalwork, and textiles that they saw at international exhibitions. Impressed by the simplicity, geometry, and abstraction of Japanese pieces and the high standard of craftsmanship, Aesthetic designers used Oriental motifs in their work and strove to emulate Japanese design.



Squirrel motif on a brass fender

Traditional metalwork

Machines could not compete with the finely wrought, complex, pierced designs for handcrafted metal wares, including furniture fittings and fire dogs, which were created by Arts and Crafts designers. Nature was the most important source of inspiration, and the plant and animal motifs were often influenced by medieval stonework, plasterwork, and ironwork.



Strap hinges

Handcrafted hardware

Exposed metal hinges, usually made of copper or brass, were inspired by medieval furniture. Strap hinges were used to add abstract, understated decorative motifs. The hinges were frequently hand-hammered to illustrate construction techniques, and the metal was sometimes chemically treated to produce a rich patina, as if weathered by time.



Exotic inlay on a table leg

Rich inlays

More sumptuous pieces were inlaid with designs using colourful exotic woods, leather, or metals such as copper and pewter, set against a background of maple, solid or veneered oak, or mahogany. Such designs brought a light, sophisticated dimension to the rather heavy and ponderous, but nonetheless well-constructed, Arts and Crafts style.



Carved detail of an oak leaf

Carved wood

While Arts and Crafts designers rejected elaborate carving, sturdy, solid, and relatively simple furniture was frequently "signed" with a single, deeply carved decorative motif, such as a flower-head, a simple pattern of an oak leaf, or the mouse used as a signature in later years by the workshop of Robert Thompson.



Detail of oak corbel

Wood grain

Arts and Crafts cabinet-makers accentuated the grain of woods to decorative effect. Oak was particularly appreciated for its natural beauty, its rich, warm colour, and the pleasing quality of its grain. In the United States, quarter oak was favoured: its tiger-striped figuring became a feature of American Arts and Crafts.



Morris & Co. "Compton" printed cotton

Stylized nature

William Morris's rediscovery of vegetable dyes and his handmade block-printed wallpapers and fabrics inspired Arts and Crafts designers to produce bold patterns in rich, natural colours for upholstery, curtains, wall hangings, and wallpaper. The designs were often based on stylized, interlacing wildflowers, leaves, birds, and animals.



Heart motif

Vernacular traditions

Most Arts and Crafts designers sought inspiration in traditional country furniture and tended to shun elaborate embellishments on their designs. Simple shapes cut out of the wood that formed chair backs and table supports were a common feature. Hearts were a popular motif, but squares, circles, and trefoils were also used.

BRITAIN: THE AESTHETIC MOVEMENT

AESTHETICISM, THE BELIEF that art and beauty were to be pursued for their own sake, became the foundation of the Aesthetic Movement, which developed during the 1870s and 80s. It gained support from designers who were reacting against the dark, cluttered interiors popular with many Victorians.

The Aesthetic Movement was essentially a British phenomenon, although it did inspire some American designers. It had much in common with the Arts and Crafts Movement with which it overlapped, but it was not concerned with the social and moral values of art.

Many of the theories of Aesthetic design had been set out during the preceding two decades by the British designers Owen Jones and Christopher Dresser. They believed that nature, combined with the best designs from disparate cultures and periods, should be reworked and blended into a new harmonious whole.

THE JAPANESE STYLE

Museum collections and exhibitions all provided design inspiration for the Movement. Britain had already been introduced to Japanese art in 1862 and this had a huge influence on Aestheticism. Visitors were captivated

by the simple furnishings in uncluttered, light-coloured settings.

E.W. Godwin, the most innovative designer of the Aesthetic Movement, adapted Japanese decorative and architectural elements into his Anglo-Japanese furniture, which was often ebonized to resemble Oriental lacquer furniture. Designs comprised symmetrical arrangements of horizontal and vertical lines, and decoration was restrained.

Manufacturers of cheaper furniture applied decorative Japanese fretwork to standard shapes, especially bedroom

furniture. More expensive pieces featured embossed-leather paper panels or sections of carved boxwood and geometric marquetry.

Oriental design forms were Westernized, while Western forms were orientalized, often with Japanese motifs such as dragonflies or fans.

The 1870 International Exhibition in London introduced the Aesthetic Movement to a wider audience. Design objects were soon sold through shops such as Liberty & Co., while furniture could be seen in showrooms such as Morris & Co. in London. Word also



ROSEWOOD CABINET

This fine-quality rosewood and calamander cabinet was made by furniture manufacturers, Collinson & Lock, and designed by the architect, T.E. Collcutt. The top has a gallery pierced with trefoils and vaulted side sections.

There are quarter-circular open shelves to both sides of the central fielded panel cupboard, which is supported on turned columns. The base has a further fielded panel cupboard with Aesthetic brass door furniture, and open shelving on both sides. *c.1870–80. W:158cm (62½in). DN*



EBONIZED CHAIR

This chair has a beaded top rail and stylized foliate tops on the fluted uprights. The cross rail has turned bobbins and the front supports have wreathed and turned banding. The back and seat are upholstered. *DN*



REVOLVING CHAIR

This mahogany chair, by James Pedal and attributed to E.W. Godwin, has a curved back with fine slats. The curved shape of the seat is echoed in the legs below. *c.1881. H:86.5cm (34in). PUR*



CORNER CABINET

This walnut, ebonized, and gilt corner cabinet is by Gillows of Lancaster, designed by Bruce Talbert. A single drawer is set above a door with inset and gilt-tooled leather panels and flanked by open shelves. The cabinet is raised on turned and tapering legs. *c.1870–80. H:96cm (37½in). L&T*

spread through interior decorating manuals such as Charles Locke Eastlake's *Hints on Household Taste*.

OTHER DESIGN STYLES

Inspiration also came from Classical and Moorish sources, as well as Jacobean and Gothic furniture. The Gothic style was popularized by the Scottish designer Bruce Talbert. Called Art Furniture, it was often ebonized, with decorative mouldings, painted panels, inlays, and mirror-backed to reflect the objects displayed.

By the mid 1870s, the Queen Anne style was in vogue. Furniture became more delicate with finer detailing.

New materials became fashionable, including rattan and cast iron, and designers mixed media, incorporating painted or *cloisonné* panels, ceramic tiles, or stamped leatherwork into the furniture.

The typical Aesthetic interior consisted of Art Furniture placed among Japanese-style pieces such as embroidered textiles, vases and fans, and displays of peacock feathers.



Metalwork details are typical embellishments on Anglo-Japanese furniture.

The lacquer and ivory panels reflect the Japanese Shibayama style.

The writing surface is inlaid with tooled leather.

Glazed doors reveal interior shelves.

An elaborate H-stretcher joins the legs.

Slender legs and stretchers and decorative fretwork provide an Oriental flavour.



WALL CLOCK

This wall clock contains many elements associated with Aesthetic Movement furniture, including the dark finish, galleried shelves, and fine spindle supports. *c.1880. H:81cm (32in).* TDG

WRITING CABINET

The influence of Japan is clearly evident in this mahogany writing cabinet by Gillows. The *Shibayama*-style ivory panels are inlaid with a picture of a warrior and flowering branches. The moulded top has a pierced, silvered gallery.

The upper section has glazed doors and sides and typical drop handles above a slide-out writing surface inlaid with tooled leather. The drawer is stamped "Gillow & Co. 1668" and bears the maker's label. *c.1880. H:131cm (51½in).* L&T

AMERICA: AESTHETICISM AND REVIVALS

THE ENTHUSIASM FOR Japanese art that inspired Britain's Aesthetic movement crossed the Atlantic in the 1870s. Philadelphia hosted an international exhibition in 1876, where a Japanese Bazaar helped fuel American interest in Japanese design.

Japanese design and motifs seemed to particularly inspire various furniture designers around New York; the firm of A.&H. Lejambre was an enthusiastic

exponent of the Anglo-Japanese style.

Luxurious materials and expert craftsmanship were the cornerstones of American Aesthetic furniture. One of the most influential champions of the American Movement during the 1870s and 80s was Herter Brothers. It produced superbly crafted, well-designed Art Furniture with a discreet Oriental influence, and catered for a wealthy clientele.

RENAISSANCE REVIVAL

Herter Brothers was also renowned for its furniture in the Renaissance Revival style – exuberant carving was a hallmark of its work. Other makers associated with this revival style include Berkey & Gay of Michigan and Prudent Mallard of New Orleans.

Renaissance Revival furniture was generally built on a large scale and combined rectilinear shapes with

Neoclassical motifs such as veneered panels and columns. Walnut was commonly used, with ash or pine favoured for less expensive pieces. Chairs and sofas were upholstered with silk or woollen fabrics decorated with symmetrical Neoclassical designs.

Mass production, and the trend for designers to combine historic styles in their own experimental way, created numerous revival movements in the late 19th century. Although the Rococo Revival was on the wane, the Gothic Revival continued to inspire designers such as Frank Furnace. The style took decorative elements such as Gothic



CHURCH PEW

This oak church pew designed by Frank Furnace has moulded armrests, with turned supports and applied geometric design, enclosing a simple plank seat and back. c.1870–80. FRE

Geometric carving



SIDE CHAIRS

These chairs (a pair) are made from inlaid and parcel-gilt ebonized wood, with upholstered seats. They have moulded, rectangular top rails, with three inlaid-and-gilt panels, above fret-carved splats.



TIFFANY STAND

This Tiffany & Co. bronze stand has a circular top centred with a medallion relief decorated with Classical figures. The piece is raised on three ribbed legs, and the base is accented with scroll-and-leaf decoration. Early 20th century. H:80cm (31½in). SK

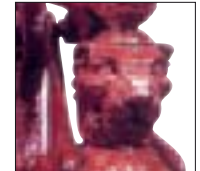


The back panels are upholstered in red leather.

Brass studs provide a decorative edging to the upholstery.



Carved mask detail



Detail of arm support

Neoclassical motifs, such as columns, were very popular on Herter Brothers furniture.

HERTER BROTHERS SOFA

The turned frame of this elaborate, large sofa is heavily carved with female masks and musical instruments on the top rail, reflecting the Renaissance style. The apron is decorated with a Greek key motif. The three back panels and the seat are upholstered in red leather. The sofa stands on eight short, bulbous legs. 1870–90.

arches, tracery, quatrefoils, and trefoils to create a medieval look on washstands, cabinets, and bookcases.

MOORISH CRAZE

The enthusiasm for the exotic Moorish style of the 1880s and 90s – also prevalent in Britain – was popularized in the United States by Tiffany & Co. Its furniture was simple in shape but with prolific decoration and had typical Moorish features such as horse-shoe arches and delicate floral inlays.

Louis Comfort Tiffany, like other exponents of the Aesthetic style, was inspired by a variety of cultures and periods. He also shared the Arts and

Crafts Movement's appreciation of fine craftsmanship. These influences can be seen in the interiors of Mark Twain House in Hartford, Connecticut, which Tiffany and his company, Associated Artists, helped to decorate.

COLONIAL REVIVAL

The Colonial Revival style was also in vogue after 1876. Inspired by the United States' colonial heritage, it reintroduced furniture styles popular in the 18th century. These tended to be narrower and more delicate than the originals, and included pieces such as gateleg tables and carver chairs made in oak, mahogany, and walnut.

COTTAGE STYLE

At the same time, Cottage style furnishings in simple, painted pine became popular with the working classes.

Eastlake furniture, the American version of Art furniture, was prevalent during the 1880s and 90s, with its rectilinear forms, spindled galleries, and turned uprights.

Renaissance-inspired decoration was also fashionable and appeared on furniture made by firms such as John Jelliffe.



DISPLAY CABINET

This elegant cabinet is made of mahogany. Two winged, mythical creatures adorn the top above a large alcove decorated with a carved shell motif. Open shelving flanks the central section, featuring mirrored panels, galleried shelves, and columnar supports. The lower section is decorated with stained glass.

CHARLES LOCKE EASTLAKE

THE WRITINGS OF ENGLISH ARCHITECT CHARLES LOCKE EASTLAKE HELPED TO SHIFT FASHION AWAY FROM OVERLY ORNATE INTERIORS IN FAVOUR OF FURNISHINGS WITH SIMPLE DESIGN AND QUALITY CRAFTSMANSHIP.

Born in Plymouth, England, Charles Locke Eastlake studied architecture before turning to journalism. In 1868, he wrote the famous *Hints on Household Taste in Furniture, Upholstery and Other Details* based on articles he had initially written for the *Cornhill Magazine* and *The Queen*. *Hints* became a popular and influential handbook, and featured Gothic-inspired decoration and design as championed by architect-designers such as George Edmund Street and Norman Shaw.

The hallmarks of Eastlake's design philosophy – honesty of materials and construction, rectilinear forms, ornament, and sharp geometric patterns – were instrumental in driving Victorian fashions from favour, but found even greater success in the United States, where six editions of *Hints* appeared between 1872 and 1879. The American Eastlake style for furnishings – said to be “Eastlaked” – had the same rectilinear forms as the English version but was more ornate, using materials such as ebonized cherrywood and drawing on a range of Moorish, Arabic, and Oriental styles. As such, it often

bore little relation to Eastlake's own principles and instead came to be associated with a mass-produced, shabby version of Gothic Revival taste.



An Eastlake carved walnut chiffonier The upper section of this chiffonier has a circular mirror and three open shelves. Below the marble top are three drawers over two panelled doors. c.1880. H:207.5cm (81½in). S&K



An Eastlake walnut and burr-walnut side cabinet This cabinet has a white marble top and has three frieze drawers. The four central drawers are flanked by narrow cupboards with moulded decoration on the doors. H:137cm (54in). S&K

TRIPOD TABLE

This *pietra dura* tripod table has a circular top with an inlaid floral spray and moulded edges. The top rests on cluster-columns, which are mounted upon turned, splayed feet. H:77cm (30in). S&K



BRITAIN: ARTS AND CRAFTS

THE ARTS AND CRAFTS Movement believed that good design could change and improve people's daily lives. Inspired by the example set by William Morris (see pp.332–33), Arts and Crafts designers endeavoured to breathe new life into traditional methods of craftsmanship and to produce functional furniture that was simple in design and true to the materials used.

Morris based his social and aesthetic philosophy largely on the medieval ideal, which celebrated the role of the craftsman and the establishment of workers' guilds. A number of Arts and Crafts guilds were set up in Britain

in the 1880s including Ruskin's short-lived St. George's Guild; A.H. Mackmurdo's Century Guild, whose craftsmen designed houses as well as their furnishings in a collaborative spirit; C.R. Ashbee's Guild of Handicraft (see p.335); and the Art Workers' Guild, which brought together artists, architects, designers, and craftsmen in the name of decorative unity.

Much Arts and Crafts furniture was austere, architectural in form, and had little surface decoration. It often

incorporated exposed constructional features into the design – beautifully cut dovetails, for instance, enhanced the natural beauty of the wood – while striking grain effects or figured

wooden panels were considered decoration enough. Strong vertical and horizontal lines reflected the movement's emphasis on simplicity and fitness for purpose.



Gold-tooled leather

CABINET-ON-STAND

This cabinet was designed by C.R. Ashbee and made by the Guild of Handicraft. The plain sycamore case rests on a stand made of walnut. Inside the cabinet are cedar drawers with gold-tooled Morocco leather. The sharp contrast

between the interior and exterior was inspired by the Spanish *vargueño* and Ashbee employed this to great effect in a number of his cabinet designs. The cabinet's wrought-iron fittings were probably added after 1906. c.1905. H:139.2cm (54¾in); W:107.2cm (42¼in); D:63.2cm (24¾in).



The plain oak exterior is contrasted with a painted red interior.

Long metalwork strap hinges are used for decoration.

An open stand supports the cabinet.

The legs are joined by stretchers.

KELMSCOTT OAK CABINET

This oak cabinet was designed by C.F.A. Voysey to hold *The Kelmscott Chaucer*, as illustrated by the metal lettering on the front. Further decoration comes from the large metalwork strap hinges. c.1890.



Fabric detail

WALNUT ARMCHAIR

This walnut armchair, designed by E. Punnet, has slatted sides and a solid bow-front seat. The shaped back is decorated with a stylized heart cut-out. The back is upholstered in a floral and foliate textile. c.1903. H:82cm (32in). PUR



LEADING DESIGNERS

Key designers such as Ernest Gimson, C.R. Ashbee, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, and C.F.A. Voysey were also architects and so were able to approach their work in an integrated style. Like their Aesthetic counterparts, Arts and Crafts designers borrowed extensively from other cultures and periods: Japanese design, Celtic and medieval motifs, and even Indian carpets were used. Symbolism also played an important role and motifs such as hearts often featured in their work.

Key furniture associated with Arts and Crafts interiors include medieval

pieces such as settles, dressers, long tables, and benches. These all reflected the movement's ideal of the home and communal living.

Morris & Co.'s version of a light, adaptable Sussex chair inspired many Arts and Crafts designers to come up with variations such as simple rush seats and ladderback chairs.

POPULAR IMITATIONS

Although the furniture made by the Arts and Crafts Movement was intended to be "good citizen's furniture" aimed at the middle classes, the handcrafted pieces were often prohibitively expensive. Responding

to a need for affordable, fashionable furnishings, British firms such as Heal's and Liberty & Co., produced popular imitations of Arts and Crafts furniture. However, while they brought

a diluted version to a wider public, these companies ultimately contributed to the demise of the guilds and hastened the decline of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

LIBERTY & CO.

ESTABLISHED IN 1875, THE CUTTING-EDGE STORE LIBERTY & CO. MET THE DEMAND FOR AFFORDABLE ARTS AND CRAFTS-STYLE FURNITURE.

Arthur Lazenby Liberty, founder of the pioneering London department store, Liberty & Co., recognized the commercial potential of Art furnishings, and in 1883, established a Furnishing and Decorating workshop under the direction of Leonard F. Wyburd. Charged with supplying affordable furniture for fashionable interiors, Wyburd developed a style

that married commercial concerns with the Arts and Crafts

design vocabulary. Liberty's cabinet-making studio borrowed liberally from renowned Arts and Crafts designers, turning out a range of clean-lined chairs and country-style oak and mahogany furniture, often with elaborate strap hinges and metal handles, inlaid decoration, and leaded glass panels.

By 1900, Liberty & Co. was celebrated across the globe as a leader in the production of artistic yet moderately priced furniture in the fashionable Arts and Crafts style.



Magazine advertisement This advertisement was for Liberty Art Fabrics, which were used for both furnishings and clothing and were very popular during this period. c.1900.

Liberty chair This piece was made from smoked oak, with a high, straight back, and a heart-shaped cut-out on the splat. c.1905. H:107cm (42in); W:45cm (17in); D:37cm (14in).



OAK SETTLE

This oak revival piece is panelled on the front and sides. The arms are open with horizontal slats, as is the back rest on which flowering plants are carved. The piece is supported on four block feet. The charm of the traditional

oak settle captivated William Morris, who instigated its revival in the late 19th century. c.1900. H:107cm (42in); W:111cm (43in). L&T



OAK TABLE

This sturdy oak table has a circular, moulded top and heart-shaped piercings on its four tapering supports. It is linked by cross-stretchers with exposed pegs. c.1900. H:67cm (26in). L&T



HALL CHAIR

This early C.F.A. Voysey chair has five vertical back slats, paddle arms, and tapering legs and back posts. This rare piece has a burgundy leather seat and retains its original dark finish. c.1895. H:140cm (55in); W:68.5cm (27in).

WILLIAM MORRIS & CO.

THE FOUNDING FATHER OF THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT, WILLIAM MORRIS EXTOLLED THE VIRTUES OF TRADITIONAL SKILLS IN THE QUEST TO PRODUCE SIMPLE, WELL-MADE OBJECTS.

ONE OF THE MOST prolific designers of the late 19th century, William Morris took a stand against the low standards of mechanical production methods and the decline of time-honoured craftsmanship. He campaigned for the revival of traditional skills and aimed to create quality, handcrafted objects that were both useful and pleasing to the eye. With a team of artist friends, including Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Edward Burne-Jones, Ford Madox Brown, and Philip Webb – who had designed, built, and furnished Morris's Red House in Kent – Morris and his design firm Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Company, promoted integrated decorative schemes influenced by medieval ideals, which made extensive use of local and natural materials and traditional crafts.

EARLY INFLUENCES

Trained as an architect, Morris's earliest furniture designs were for the rooms he shared with Edward Burne-Jones at 17 Red Lion Square in London. His most inspired designs, such as the early Throne chairs painted with scenes of Sir Galahad, featured narrative themes that were drawn from nature or from the romantic legends of the Middle Ages. Popular in the 1860s, this type of painted furniture, which reflected the influence of William Burges and was an early example of Morris's more formal furniture, featured in the company's display at the International Exhibition of 1862. Other sources of inspiration included 17th-century furniture and Oriental woodwork.

Morris believed that there were two distinct types of furniture: practical everyday furniture and grander, more formal furniture. The former needed to be solid, well made, and well proportioned. The latter was intended for more important rooms and had to be useful as well as aesthetically pleasing, with carving and inlaid or painted decoration to make it more elaborate and elegant.

From 1861, Philip Webb worked exclusively for the Morris firm creating furniture that was monumental and sturdy, and featured exposed joints and hinges. Webb favoured plain oak, often stained green or black but occasionally decorated with painting, gesso work, or lacquered leather. His early enthusiasm for Gothic design eventually gave way to other influences such as the Queen Anne and Japanese styles.

THE LONDON WORKSHOPS

Furniture made up a significant portion of the Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Company business and as the company became more successful, it moved to larger workshops in London. In 1875, it became Morris & Co., and produced stained glass, as well as



William Morris



Cushions were usually upholstered in leather, velvet, or Morris textiles.

The curved arms have padded rests.

A metal prop allows the chair back to be adjusted.

Turned decoration on the stretchers is continued on the arm supports.

Casters allow the chair to be moved around easily.

THE MORRIS CHAIR

This fully upholstered, everyday oak armchair sits upon four casters and has four angles of adjustment. The back legs and arms curve in parallel and are united by turned spindles. 1890. H:101cm (40in). GS

WALNUT SIDEBOARD

The plain solid top has fluted details, with arched panels supported by turned, knopped columns. The three frieze drawers, with field panels and cupboards below, have the original brass drop pulls. The piece was designed by Philip Webb. c.1890. W:156cm (61in). DN



MORRIS TEXTILES

MORRIS REDEFINED DOMESTIC INTERIORS BY CREATING DISTINCTIVE TEXTILE DESIGNS IN VIBRANT COLOURS, WHICH ARE STILL HIGHLY SOUGHT-AFTER TODAY.

Throughout his life William Morris was fascinated by textiles, considering them to be an essential part of the decoration and comfort of a home. Dismissing machine-made fabrics as mediocre and uninspiring, his love of pattern and textures led him to experiment from the beginning of his career with the design and techniques of textile production. His experiments with natural vegetable and animal dyes produced “aesthetic” colours, such as madder red,



“Tulip and Rose” textile design by William Morris
The design was registered on 20th January 1876.
H:94cm (37in); W:84cm (33in). Wroob

peacock blue, russet brown, soft yellow, and sage green, which brought his intricate plant-based designs to life.

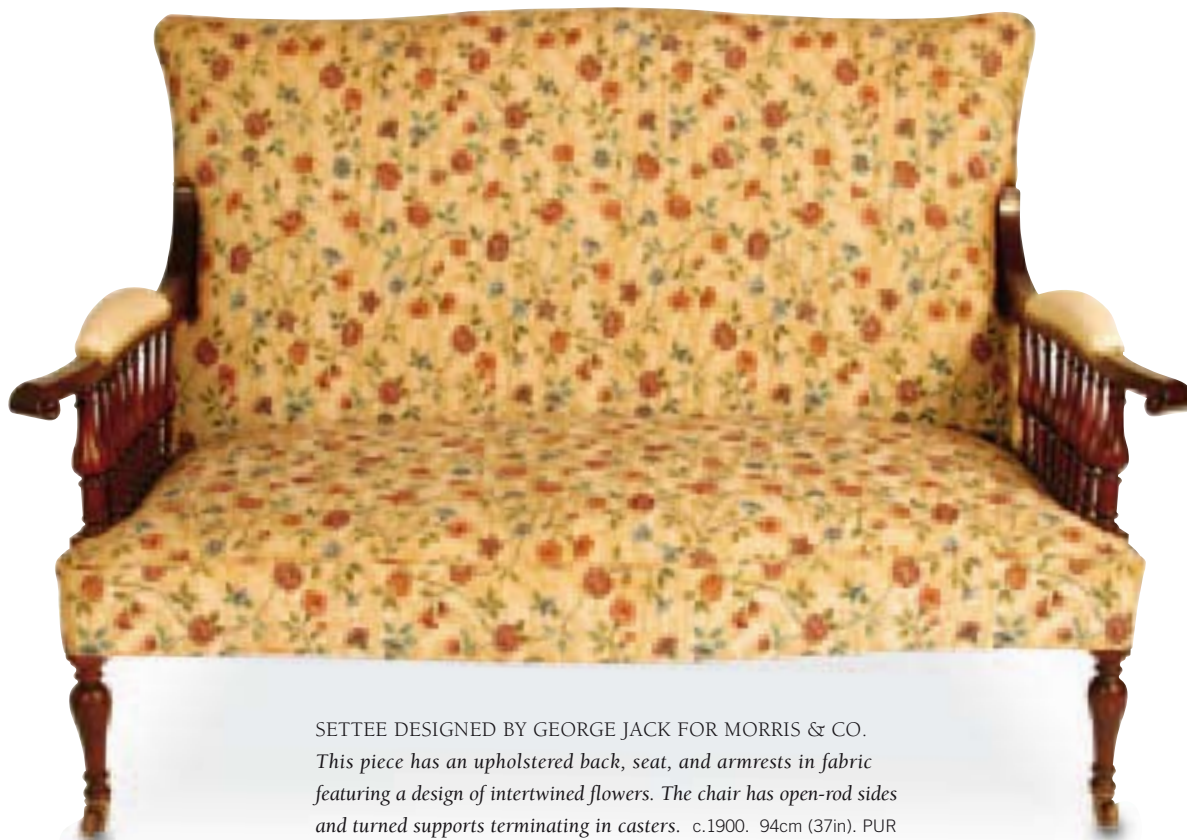
Morris & Co. produced textiles with a highly individual style, based upon flat, well-balanced, and integrated patterns of intertwined flowers, fruits, and foliage – roses, honeysuckles, tulips, strawberries, pomegranates, acanthus, and ivy – as well as bird and animal motifs in a palette of rich, glowing hues. Although he sought inspiration from the past and was enamoured of art and cultures from around the world, Morris created a range of fresh, modern designs that significantly influenced the work of a number of textile designers working in the Arts and Crafts style.

Morris & Co. grew in reputation and successfully fulfilled the middle-class demand for fashionable and stylish furnishings. Its woven and printed textiles – made of wool, cotton, linen, hand-woven silk, and sometimes embellished with delicate embroidery – were used for upholstery, as well as for curtains, wall panels, wallpapers, carpets, and tapestries. Morris’s textiles paved the way for a lighter, cleaner style of furnishing that finally superseded the Victorian penchant for heavy drapery and upholstery in dark colours.



Three-fold draught screen This screen is made from mahogany with floral panels in coloured silkwork. The top is shaped and surmounted by finials with a pierced frieze at the base. c.1890. H:187cm (74in). L&T

1880–1920



SETTEE DESIGNED BY GEORGE JACK FOR MORRIS & CO.
This piece has an upholstered back, seat, and armrests in fabric featuring a design of intertwined flowers. The chair has open-rod sides and turned supports terminating in casters. c.1900. 94cm (37in). PUR

sturdy furniture crafted in oak or occasionally in mahogany with satinwood inlay decoration, authenticated with the “Morris & Co.” stamp.

The Sussex chair took pride of place among the everyday designs. Based on a traditional country chair, Webb’s 1880s design had an ash frame with a handwoven rush seat and turned, vertical spindles, but was reproduced with an ebonized finish in various forms, including an armchair, corner chair, and settee. Other designs with lasting appeal were the spindle-backed Rossetti chair and the Morris chair.

THE LATER YEARS

Morris & Co. moved to Merton Abbey in 1881. When the American, George Jack, was appointed chief designer in 1890, the furniture shifted towards a more sophisticated taste. Jack favoured 18th-century furniture design and introduced more exotic timbers such as walnut and mahogany. Large buffets and dressers were now embellished with marquetry in sumptuous woods, glazed doors, and pierced carving.

Morris died in the autumn of 1896. Right up until his death he rejected the use of machines, although ironically this meant that only the very wealthy could afford his handmade pieces. The company finally closed its doors in 1940.

THE COTSWOLD SCHOOL

THE COTSWOLDS PLAYED HOST TO A NUMBER OF CHAMPIONS OF THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT WHO ESTABLISHED WORKSHOPS FOSTERING THE ARTIST-CRAFTWORKER IDEAL.

INSPIRED BY THE EXAMPLE set by William Morris, late 19th-century designers and craftworkers in Britain aspired to leave the city and move to the countryside. Such a move meant more space for workshops and a lower cost of living that allowed furniture and decorative household wares to become more affordable.

A popular location for such a move was the Cotswolds, a series of rolling limestone hills and wooded valleys in Gloucestershire. Among the first to decamp to this idyllic landscape was the architect and designer Ernest William Gimson who, together with a group of skilled craftsmen that included the Barnsley brothers, Sidney and Ernest, moved in 1893 to Pinbury Manor in Ewen, near Cirencester. Here, they aimed to leave behind their urban way of life and adopt the lifestyle of self-sufficient countrymen, rearing their own animals, growing their own food, and setting up their own workshops. Ernest Barnsley moved into the manor house while the two brothers set up home in the workers' cottages. All three enthusiastically became part of the local community and were quick to cultivate working relationships with local artisans.

Gimson set about producing ladder-back chairs and decorative plaster panels, Ernest Barnsley began to restore the manor house, as required by their rental contract, while Sidney Barnsley – who worked independently – mastered carpentry skills, ultimately becoming an accomplished cabinet-maker.

OAK MONK'S BENCH

Made by Sidney Barnsley, this bench is based on a traditional form that originated in late medieval times. It combines a settle and table. The back can be tilted forwards to create a table.

Medieval designs were associated with communal living and were regularly used in Arts and Crafts interiors. c.1925.

H:70cm (27in); W:152cm (60in); D:70cm (27in). DP



Oak was the timber of choice for Barnsley's austere, geometric furniture.



Oak runners sit either side of the armrests when the back of the settle is lowered.

Plain, panelled construction is typical of Barnsley's tables and chairs.



Decoration is sparse and consists of exposed joints and chamfering.



SITTING ROOM AT RODMARTON MANOR
This Gloucestershire manor was built and furnished by Ernest Barnsley and the Cotswold craftsmen in the Arts and Crafts style. Work on the house started in 1909 and the project took 20 years to complete.

AN OAK COMPENDIUM

This piece, attributed to the Cotswold School, incorporates a chest of drawers, a bookcase, and a wardrobe, with panelling effect. H:197cm (79in). FRE

The back of the settle swings over on a pivot to form a table.

CONTINUING THE TRADITION

FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE COTSWOLD MASTERS, SOME CRAFTWORKERS REJECTED THE MACHINE AND ADOPTED THE VALUES OF THEIR ARTS AND CRAFTS PREDECESSORS.

Improvements in industrial technology after 1910 made it possible to produce furniture that was both well designed and affordable in novel materials. In contrast, the handmade furniture produced by the Arts and Crafts Movement had become out of reach to all but the very wealthy, so was generally eschewed in favour of mass-produced pieces. Nevertheless, this did not signal the end of handcrafted furniture altogether.

The 1920s witnessed another high-profile crafts revival. Among its champions were Edward Barnsley, son of the Arts and Crafts pioneer Sidney Barnsley, who created simply designed wooden furniture produced largely by hand using traditional 18th- and 19th-century carpentry techniques; and Robert "Mouseman" Thompson, who signed every piece of furniture with his trademark carved mouse. His interest in traditional tools and methods led him to produce handcrafted oak furniture, inspired by 17th-century designs and characterized by uneven, rippled surfaces created with an adze – a cutting tool with an arched blade.

The eventual marriage between handwork and machine was achieved by the English furniture designer and manufacturer, Gordon Russell, who

set up his woodcraft workshops in Broadway in 1919. Initially he continued the handicraft tradition, but with the establishment of Gordon Russell Ltd in 1923 he married the machine with good carpentry and joinery, believing that the two could happily co-exist. He eventually chaired the wartime Utility Design Panel to design and manufacture affordable furniture in a more simple, modern style. Traditional handicraftsmanship continued with designers such as John Makepeace, a British craftsman who pioneered a Craft Revival in the late 1970s (see p.519).



Thompson's trademark mouse

An oak desk chair Designed by Robert Thompson, this piece has carved lattice splats on octagonal baluster supports, and the original uprights. *H:80cm (31in); W:60cm (23in); D:53cm (21in). DP*

Flat cross-stretchers join the octagonal baluster supports.



A light oak dressing table This piece, by Gordon Russell, has five drawers, all of which have walnut handles. *c.1929. H:84cm (33in); W:127cm (50in); D:47cm (18in). DP*

AESTHETICS OVER STYLE

In 1902, the team moved from Pinbury Manor to Daneway House in the nearby village of Sapperton, where they established a more formal commercial furniture workshop. Sidney Barnsley produced austere furniture mainly in oak, only occasionally decorated with a simple gouged ornament or a small amount of inlay. Ernest Gimson and Ernest Barnsley set up a successful, albeit short-lived, company that, at its height, employed ten highly skilled cabinet-makers. These craftsmen included the Dutch immigrant Peter Waals, whose work was distinguished by simple, uncluttered design and attention to the nature of the wood itself.

For the Cotswold School, style was generally less important than the use of traditional techniques and materials. The furniture created by Ernest Gimson shows a detailed understanding of materials and techniques, such as timbers specially treated to highlight the grain. Oak, walnut, and black and brown ebony were favoured by Gimson for his elegant, clean-lined furniture. A number of pieces were decorated with elaborate inlays of holly, fruitwood, ivory, abalone shell, and silver – a favourite decorative motif was chequered banding around drawers and doors – highlighting the Arts and Crafts' love affair with both luxury and austerity.

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

C.R. Ashbee's Guild of Handicraft was established in 1888 in emulation of Ruskin's medieval-style Guild of St. George, in order to train and employ local craftworkers. In 1902, it moved to the village of Chipping Campden in Gloucestershire, where it soon became a local tourist attraction. Gimson's craft studio was equally celebrated, with designers journeying from London to see, at first hand, the craftsmen at work.

Both Ashbee and Gimson were first and foremost architects, for whom furniture was an important part of their interior designs. Both revived long-forgotten often achieving results through a mixture of trial and error, but neither was backward-looking. As Gimson described his involvement with the Arts and Crafts Movement: "I never feel myself apart from my own times by harking back to the past, to be complete we must live in all tenses, past, future as well as present."

This enterprising Cotswold community of designers, craftworkers, and artisans eventually disbanded with the outbreak of World War I in 1914, when the younger members of the School were called up for war service and the older craftsmen turned their attention to producing goods in aid of the war effort. Gimson remained in the Cotswolds and he attempted to rekindle the craft movement towards the end of the war with the formation of the Association of Architecture, Building, and Handicraft in 1917. Ill health, however, prevented him from pursuing this new venture and he died in 1919.

AMERICA: ARTS AND CRAFTS

THE ARTS & CRAFTS MOVEMENT flourished in the United States in the first quarter of the 20th century. The inaugural American Arts and Crafts Exhibition was held in Boston in 1897, and this, along with the establishment of Arts & Crafts societies based on British models, introduced the work of prominent British designers to the Americans. The American Arts and Crafts Movement quickly gained ground, initially in New York, Chicago, and California, before spreading further afield.

Gustav Stickley of Syracuse, New York, was one of the first designers to combine Arts and Crafts design with

American vernacular styles to create the Craftsman or Mission style of sturdy oak furniture (see p.339), named after the simple furniture found in the California missions.

Also based in New York, the Roycroft craftworkers produced basic Mission-style furniture, which they sold by mail order.

Another significant designer was Charles Limbert of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Clearly influenced by the Glasgow School (see pp.366–67) and by Charles Rennie Mackintosh (see pp.364–65), Limbert designed chairs in geometric forms decorated with cut-out squares or heart-shaped patterns.

ARCHITECT-DESIGNERS

By far the most influential designer of this era was the avant-garde architect Frank Lloyd Wright. A founder member of the Chicago Arts and Crafts Society in 1897, Wright designed buildings in which the interiors and furnishings were integral parts of the design, often built into the structure of the building or made using the same, predominantly local, materials. On the West

The dining room at Gamble House, California
The interior of this house was designed by Charles and Henry Greene using simple, sparse furniture. 1908–09.



The overhanging top softens the severity of the rectilinear form.

The case is made of fumed oak.



The hinges and slights are made of copper.

This cut-out shape is typical of Limbert's decoration.

VICE CABINET

This rare Limbert cabinet has two doors and copper hardware. The oak has been fumed with ammonia to give it a rich reddish colour. The cut-out sides are evocative of church furniture. c.1880–1920. H:82.5cm (32½in). DRA



LAMP TABLE

This circular oak table is by the Roycroft community of craftsmen and bears their signature cross and orb. It has a cross-stretcher and Mackmurdo style feet. c.1880–1920. D:76cm (30in). DRA



BOOK TABLE

This oak table was made by L. & J.G. Stickley. It has vertical slats on all sides and still has its original finish, although this has worn away in parts. c.1880–1920. H:74cm (29in). DRA



CUBE SETTLE

This quarter-sawn oak settle has vertical back slats and slatted crosswork under the arms. The uprights are decorated with a floral pattern fruitwood inlay and are capped with hammered metal fittings. W:170cm (67in). DRA

Coast, architects Greene and Greene were working in a similar vein, fulfilling commissions such as the Gamble House (see left), for which they designed the furniture, light fittings, and textiles.

Both architects were also influenced by the Far East, and their designs reveal a synergy with the surrounding landscape, as well as a love of horizontal lines and geometric form.



BARREL CHAIR

One of Frank Lloyd Wright's most important designs, produced until the 1930s, this oak chair has curved arms that are echoed in the supports and vertical back slats. *First made in 1904. H:76cm (30in); D:49.5cm (19½in). CAS*



ROCKING CHAIR

This oak L. & J.G. Stickley open-arm rocking chair has a drop-in seat cushion. It has six vertical back slats and it still has its original finish and maker's label. *c.1907. H:101.5cm (40in). DRA*

USING TECHNOLOGY

In their bid to create affordable, handcrafted, artistic furniture that was also profitable, the American Arts and Crafts designers encountered similar challenges to those faced by their British counterparts.

Unlike the British, however, they found a way to accommodate the modern factory system – for while the Americans aimed to create the appearance of handcraftsmanship, they also succeeded in reducing production costs by taking advantage of available technology – a fundamental difference between the American and British movements.

In his search for a simple, honest, and moderately priced furniture style that would appeal to the middle-class market, the innovative furniture-maker Gustav Stickley used steam-powered or electric woodworking machines to prepare the lumber, which was then handfinished by craftsmen.

Frank Lloyd Wright also championed the machine over handcraftsmanship: in a powerful speech to the Chicago Arts and Crafts Society in 1901 entitled “The Art and Craft of the Machine”, Wright stressed the benefits of using machines to produce affordable furniture for a wider audience.

A STYLE FOR THE MASSES

Across the United States, furniture companies introduced their own lines of Arts and Crafts furniture. The Grand Rapids Bookcase and Chair Co. is one such example: they produced the Lifetime or Cloister style, so-called because it combined craftsmanship in the medieval tradition with modern machine techniques.

Ever since the late 19th century, the Arts and Crafts philosophy and style have remained at the heart of the American consciousness, esteemed by all who value elegance, honest construction, native materials, and practicality.

CHARLES ROHLFS

A KEY PLAYER IN AMERICA'S ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT, THE DESIGNER CHARLES ROHLFS IMAGINATIVELY COMBINED ART NOUVEAU-STYLE DECORATION WITH CLEAN-LINED, RECTILINEAR SHAPES.

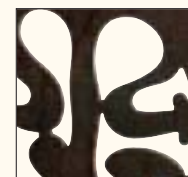
The son of a cabinet-maker, the New York-born Charles Rohlf's trained at Cooper Union before turning to furniture design around 1889. Following a successful period creating elaborately pierced and carved Gothic-style oak furniture, Rohlf's established a small studio in Buffalo. Here, he and his assistants produced a range of custom-built furniture using craftsmen techniques for decorative effect – exposed mortise-and-tenon joints, dovetails, and chamfering, along with metalwork strap hinges and brass nailheads – that all reflected the influence of the British Arts and Crafts Movement.

Rohlf's highly original designs for desks, small tables, chairs, and storage cabinets embraced a number of exotic influences, from the Gothic and Moorish to Scandinavian traditions. Solidly constructed in oak or occasionally mahogany, his elongated, rectilinear pieces typically had a warm, rich patina and were decorated with elaborately carved, cut-out patterns, Gothic ornament and lettering, or sinuous, nature-inspired, whiplash and tendril motifs in the Art Nouveau style.



Double pedestal desk and chair This desk has four drawers to one side and a bookshelf to the other. A high-backed, swivelling desk chair completes the set. *c.1902. W:152cm (60in).*

Rohlf's superbly crafted furniture won him admirers on both sides of the Atlantic – especially following the Turin International Exhibition of Modern Decorative Art in 1902. Before retiring in the mid 1920s, Rohlf's completed many prestigious commissions, including furniture for Buckingham Palace.



Carving detail

A rare Rohlf's oak settee This piece is decorated with unusual carvings and a signature mark on the front. This style foreshadows the curvilinear Art Nouveau style. *c.1900. W:114cm (45in).*

GUSTAV STICKLEY

THE FIGUREHEAD OF AMERICAN ARTS AND CRAFTS, GUSTAV STICKLEY CREATED SOLID, PLEASING, HANDCRAFTED FURNITURE THAT SET NEW STANDARDS IN DESIGN.



Stickley's trademark GUSTAV STICKLEY was the oldest of five brothers, all of whom were involved in the country's burgeoning furniture industry. However, it was ultimately Gustav whose fame rested on his vision as a designer of American Arts and Crafts furniture. Having trained as an architect, he worked in his uncle's chair factory, developing his skills as a craftsman. Making and selling reproduction furniture was followed by a visit to Europe in 1898, where he discovered the writings of John Ruskin and William Morris (see p.332), and the furniture of contemporaries working in the Arts and Crafts style. On his return to the United States, he established the Gustav Stickley Company in Eastwood, New York, producing simple, solid furniture inspired by the designs of William Morris.

FUNCTIONAL FURNITURE

Stickley rejected the extravagant curves and decoration of Victorian furniture in favour of clean, geometric lines and solid forms. This conviction was illustrated by the Craftsman range of functional furniture made in American white oak that he introduced in 1900. His furniture was widely praised at the Michigan trade show in 1900, and further exposure for his designs came from his illustrated catalogue. Stickley renamed his business United Crafts and adopted a joiner's compass as his trademark. However, by 1904 the studio, which was home to a guild of apprentices dedicated to learning cabinet-making, metal-working, and leather-working, was known as The Craftsman Workshops.

Stickley's aim was to create "furniture that shows plainly what it is and in which the design and construction harmonize with the wood". His workshop produced well-made, comfortable furniture by hand from thick pieces of solid, quarter-sawn oak and, later, from mahogany and silver-grey maple. Construction features were amalgamated into the design of the furniture, which was then covered with fumed finishes in a rich, dark patina. Stickley's innovative designs combined craftsmanship with



OAK ARMCHAIR

This dark-stained oak armchair by Harvey Ellis has a stylized plant-form inlay on the slats of the back splat, and a leather-covered drop-in seat pad. The foliate decoration adds a characteristic lightness to this solid and geometrical chair. c.1910. H:112cm (44in). GDG

Inlaid floral patterns on the back slats emphasize the vertical structure of the chair.

OAK DROP-FRONT DESK

Designed by Harvey Ellis, this fruitwood desk has a hinged flap with an inlaid floral design. c.1910. W: 77cm (30¼in). GDG

Inlays in colourful fruitwoods and metals are typical of Ellis's designs.

Leather upholstery covers the seat.

Simple, square legs continue to become the chair's uprights.

The rails and stretchers are light and refined.



CUBE CHAIR This oak chair has a spindled back and sides. c.1905. W:72.5cm (29in). DRA



mechanized techniques. Colonial furniture inspired many shapes, but his adjustable reclining chair was prompted by a Morris original, and the spindle-backed chairs made from 1905 owed much to the designs of Frank Lloyd Wright.

A LIGHTER STYLE

A successful collaboration with the architect and designer, Harvey Ellis, began in 1903. The pair adopted a lighter, more sophisticated style that relied upon small sections of oak covered with a pale brown patina. The collaboration only lasted until Ellis's death in 1904, but Stickley continued his partner's subtle approach, using understated patterns of flowers or *Jugendstil*-type designs (see p.372) inlaid with metals or stained timber.

Stickley's furniture became more widely available in the United States in the next decade and was popular among the middle class, but competition and changing tastes ultimately drove him into bankruptcy. His factory closed in 1916.

THE LOUNGE AT CRAFTSMAN FARMS

The collection of buildings that formed the Craftsman Farms Project in New Jersey illustrates Stickley's philosophy of using natural building materials in harmony with the environment. This ideal was carried through to the interior design, as can be seen in the exposed timber and furniture in this lounge.

THE CRAFTSMAN MAGAZINE

A VEHICLE TO PUBLICIZE BOTH HIS DESIGNS FOR DECORATIVE ARTS AND HIS PHILOSOPHY OF GOOD DESIGN, STICKLEY LAUNCHED THE HIGHLY INFLUENTIAL *THE CRAFTSMAN* MAGAZINE IN 1902.

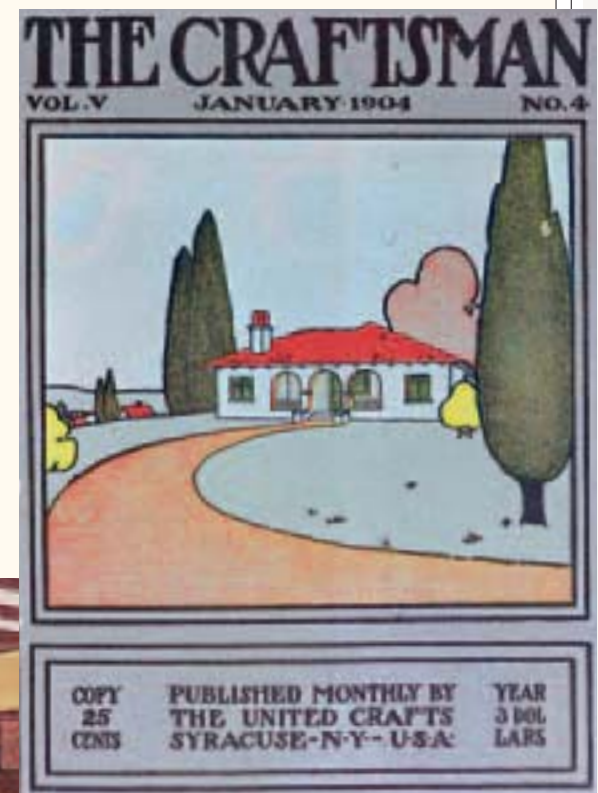
The first issue of Gustav Stickley's *The Craftsman* was priced at 20 cents and was dedicated to the work of William Morris. Throughout his career, Stickley used the journal to promote his own work, through illustrated examples, and advance his design beliefs, which centred on the need for handcrafted furniture made of honest materials and sturdy construction. Stickley's Craftsman, or Mission, furniture – which *The Craftsman* magazine illustrated – was constructed according to his three basic principles of design: that the object affirmed the purpose for which it was intended; that there was sparing use of applied decoration; and that it was perfectly suited to the medium in which it was executed.

Like William Morris, Stickley was a visionary who did not confine his energies and activities to a single field. In 1908, he developed the Craftsman Farms Project in New Jersey, in an effort to establish a utopian guild. Aiming to both inspire and report on new directions in the decorative arts, *The Craftsman* published a detailed account of this project, as well as charting Stickley's design and production of his own dwellings in Syracuse.

The Craftsman proved to have enormous influence, and its advertisements promoting the Arts and Crafts Movement reached a wide, enthusiastic audience across the United States. Stickley's innovative work throughout his long career – including his writings in *The Craftsman* – was largely responsible for a renewed appreciation of handcrafted, high-quality furniture in the United

States, and the elevation of the status of both the craftsman and the designer.

Stickley enjoyed commercial success, mainly as a result of the sale of furniture franchises across the United States. However, his ill-judged decision to open a retail outlet in New York City led to him being declared bankrupt in 1915, and the closure of *The Craftsman* the following year. However, Stickley's financial misfortune failed to overshadow the enormous impact of his achievements in the field of American Arts and Crafts design, which *The Craftsman* had so successfully promoted.



Cover of *The Craftsman* This was the design journal that Stickley published from 1902 to 1916.

Interior room design This sketch is from a rare copy of *Craftsman Homes* by Gustav Stickley.

CHAIRS

SIMPLE FORMS WERE a hallmark of the Arts and Crafts chair, which broke away from the various historical styles that dominated the Victorian era. This period was largely marked by the production of well-proportioned chairs, where function was paramount. They were often based on vernacular designs such as the Sussex chair – with its handwoven rush seat and simple, turned, vertical spindles – and Ernest Gimson's sophisticated version of the rush-seated ladder-back chair, or the sturdy Mission pieces being produced by Gustav Stickley in the United States.

Local woods – predominantly oak – were favoured on both sides of the

Atlantic, with quarter-sawn oak being a particular trademark in the United States: the exquisite tiger-stripe grain of the wood was considered the only necessary decoration. By nature a very light wood, oak pieces were frequently stained, ebonized, or fumed to give them a richer colour.

Rush seating was popular on communal or dining chairs, while leather was often used for armchairs, or fabrics inspired by medieval designs. Decoration was usually limited to cut-outs in heart or geometric shapes, satinwood inlays, or vertical spindles; construction features provided the main decoration.



Upholstery loop detail

The exposed tenons on the flat arms add a decorative element.

The corbel, which helps to support the arm, also serves as a decorative feature.

The quarter-sawn oak has been chemically treated to render a rich, fumed finish.

SLATTED OAK CHAIR

This Gustav Stickley quarter-sawn oak chair is of a typically sturdy and functional design. The flat, open arms have vertical slats and are supported at the front by short corbels. There is no additional decoration, which was in

keeping with the philosophy of the Arts and Crafts Movement, as was the simple, solid design. Quarter-sawn oak was prized for its tiger-stripe grain, and was a distinctive feature of American Arts and Crafts furniture. The chair has a fumed finish. c.1900. H:108cm (42½in). **DRA 3**



DRAWING-ROOM CHAIRS

These chairs are made from ebonized and gilded wood and are upholstered in patterned moquette. Each chair has a stylized fan crest and is raised on fluted, tapering legs. c.1870–80. **MLL 2**



BEECH CHAIRS

These Aesthetic Movement ebonized-beech chairs have rush seats. The corner chair is in the style of E. W. Godwin with a curved top rail and Japanese-style lattice slats. The side chair has a spindle-filled back. 1870–80. **L&T 1**



SUFFOLK CHAIRS

This pair of ebonized-elm Suffolk chairs is by Morris & Co. The backs have spindles and horizontal rails, and each chair has open armrests above a rush seat. The turned legs are linked by stretchers. c.1870. **L&T 2**

**PIERCED CHAIR**

This oak chair, one of six, is by Stickley Bros. The three vertical slats on the chair back have heart-shaped piercing. The square legs are joined by stretchers and end in Mackmurdo feet. *H:100.5cm (39½in).* GS 5

**ENGLISH SIDE CHAIR**

This walnut chair, which is attributed to Heal's, has a curved top rail, a shaped and heart-pierced splat, tapering uprights, and a rush seat, raised on tapering supports. *c.1890. H:106cm (41¾in).* DN 1

**ENGLISH ARMCHAIR**

This oak Arts and Crafts armchair has scrolled ears, high, downswept arms, a tall, woven, cane back, and a trapezoidal caned slipseat. The turned legs are joined by an arched stretcher. *H:73.5cm (29in).* FRE 1

**TALL-BACK CHAIR**

This chair, one of a pair of Arts and Crafts chairs, has cube-topped posts and a cross-spindled back. The upholstery is in leather, and is decorated with a winged griffin. *H:146cm (57½in).* DRA 2

**AMERICAN DINING CHAIR**

This chair is one of a set of six Limbert side chairs. The chair has two vertical back slats and an inset seat. The finish is original, but the chair has been re-upholstered in green vinyl. *H:92cm (36¼in).* DRA 3

**SIDE CHAIR**

This chair is one of a harlequin set of four Arts and Crafts chairs by William Birch of High Wycombe. The chair is made of oak and has a solid shaped back, turned uprights, and a rush seat. *DN 1*

**PADDED CHAIR**

This Arts and Crafts oak open armchair was possibly retailed by Heal's in London. It has a padded back and seat and a pierced splat. The chair is raised on square legs with turned feet. *DN 1*

**ENGLISH ARMCHAIR**

This armchair, one of a pair of Arts and Crafts armchairs, is made of elm and has a slatted back. The open arms have upholstered rests and the drop-in seat is raised on square, tapered legs. *L&T 1*

TABLES

TABLES PRODUCED BY Arts and Crafts designers in the late 19th century tended to be of heavy, solid construction and were frequently based on traditional vernacular forms, sometimes dating as far back as the 16th and 17th centuries.

Plain and simple shapes, straight lines, and the emphasis on the natural grain of fine timber – usually oak – formed the cornerstone of Arts and Crafts designs. Quarter-sawn oak was particularly favoured in the United States for its remarkably striking, tiger-stripe grain.

The designs for the table tops were often inspired by those found on medieval pieces and tended to be geometric in shape. The legs were usually square or square-tapering, and were usually joined by stretchers, an undertier, or both. Sometimes the legs terminated in wide, square feet, which are often referred to as Mackmurdo feet.

Decoration was sparing and was usually restricted to exposed joints, geometric cut-out patterns, or restrained inlaid designs in metal, ivory, or occasionally in high-coloured exotic woods. In line with the medieval and rural sources of inspiration, designers often stained or fumed pieces to make them look old. Popular forms included joined side tables, trestle dining tables, card tables, and library tables.

Although tables produced by the Aesthetic Movement's designers were also often based on popular geometric shapes, they tended to be more delicate than the solid Arts and Crafts tables. Simple table tops were raised on elegant turned or tapering legs. There also tended to be more decoration including partial gilding, mother-of-pearl inlay, and spindled stretchers. Many had a Japanese influence, seen in the ebonized wood, delicately turned supports and octagonal table tops.

The table top is circular and overhangs the frame.

The gently arched apron is typical of tables produced in Charles Limbert's studio.



Oak was favoured by Limbert for his furniture designs.

A cross-panel shelf and splayed legs are characteristic of Limbert's work.

LIMBERT LIBRARY TABLE

This oval oak library table with cut-out, flaring, plank sides was made by Charles Limbert. It has a circular, overhanging table top and a gently arched apron, which softens the straight lines on this superbly made table. Construction

features, such as the corbels set under the table top, serve as one of the only decorative elements. The solid legs are splayed, and are joined by a cross-panel shelf towards the base of the table. The piece bears a branded mark of a craftsman at his worktable. *W:76cm (30in).* DRA 3



LIMBERT CHALET TABLE

This solid-looking octagonal oak chalet table was made using simple, traditional construction methods. The four sturdy legs are united by cross-stretchers, which are held in place by exposed, keyed through-tenons. Limbert pieces

bearing heart- or spade-shaped cut-outs – as can be seen on the legs of this table – have become particularly popular with collectors. The finish is original. *c.1910. D:114cm (45in).* DRA 3



EBONIZED TABLE

This Aesthetic Movement table has an octagonal top, which has a centre of thuyawood and a broad, black, ebonized border. The turned supports are slightly splayed and are joined by stretchers. *c.1870–80. W:101cm (39½in).* DN 1



OCTAGONAL TABLE

This ebonized Aesthetic Movement table has a top inlaid with calamander and a moulded edge. The legs are curved and are joined by wheel-like stretchers with a central wreathed column. *c.1870–80. H:72.5cm (28½in).* DN 5

**OAK CENTRE TABLE**

This table, designed by Sir Robert Lorimer, has a paneled octagonal top with exposed peg joints and an uneven surface created with an adze. The table rests on four written columns linked to a plain apron above, rising from curved stretchers and stepped, block feet. *c.1900. W:86cm (33½in). L&T 4*

**LAMP TABLE**

This lamp table by the American company, Lifetime, has a circular overhanging top and a small lower shelf. The four legs are joined by over-arched cross-stretchers. Simple and functional, this piece is unmarked and has been refinished. *H:74cm (29¼in). DRA 2*

**EBONIZED TABLE**

This small Aesthetic Movement table has a square top, in the manner of the architect and designer, E.W. Godwin, for the famous shop, Liberty & Co. of London. The undertier is supported by turned supports and fine rods extending from the stretchers. *H:65.5cm (25½in). DN 1*

**LIBRARY TABLE**

This solid Arts and Crafts single-drawer library table, designed by Limbert, is made of brown oak. The corbelled top has serpentine ends and the flared sides have square cut-outs. The table also has an under-shelf. *c.1880–1920. W:76cm (30in). DRA 4*

**PAGODA TABLE**

This rare Limbert table has flaring sides, typical arched aprons, and corbels set under the square top. Its name and stylized form suggest an Oriental influence. The base has decorative geometrical cut-outs and the top bears the company's paper label. *W:86.5cm (34in). DRA 5*

**AESTHETIC CARD TABLE**

This ebonized card table, attributed to Gillows of Lancaster, has a hinged, rectangular top, which opens on to an interior lined with green baize. The delicate spindled apron has quarter-rounds at each end and spindled stretchers. *c.1870–80. H:91cm (35¼in). DN 1*

**CIRCULAR TABOURET**

This Arts and Crafts-style tabouret table is made of oak. It has a plain, circular top and it is supported by four rectangular legs. The legs are raised on a cross-shaped base and are joined by cross-stretchers positioned towards the base of the legs. *D:61cm (24in). GAL 1*

**DINING TABLE**

This Limbert extension dining table has a circular top and a pedestal base with shoe feet. Two leaves can be added to the table to increase the size. The piece has been refinished and restored and is branded with the Limbert mark. *D:137cm (54in). DRA 3*

**OCTAGONAL EBONIZED TABLE**

This small Aesthetic Movement table is in the style of E.W. Godwin. The influence of Oriental design is shown in the delicate turned supports and the octagonal top. The design is further enriched with gilded detailing. *c.1870–80. H:68cm (26¼in). DN 1*

CABINETS

THE CABINET WAS ONE of the most important pieces of furniture in the Arts and Crafts home. With its large, solid shape, the cabinet offered a challenge to the skills and imagination of the craftsman.

In line with William Morris's ideal of formal furniture, cabinets were often based on the massive, Gothic style of the 13th century. Oak, mahogany, and ebonized wood were favoured for large buffets, dressers, and sideboards, and deliberately exposed joinery and copper hinges were used to decorative effect, along with painted plaques featuring medieval themes, inset panels of glass, copper, brass or embossed leather, gesso work, or inlaid marquetry.

The taste for Art Furniture, derived from both Japanese and medieval design, led to cabinets with clean, straight lines, display shelves, and slender, turned supports. Carved decoration was eschewed in favour of medieval-inspired coved tops, galleries of turned spindles, and painted panels featuring either human figures or floral motifs.

In the United States, cabinets were produced in a sturdy, undecorated, rectilinear form in oak and mahogany. Others produced by commercial factories were "Eastlaked", and combined Gothic shapes with more intricate detailing. It was not unusual, at this time, for pieces to combine elements from more than one style.

A broken pediment tops the cabinet.

Decorative wood carving was a distinctive feature of Eastlake furniture.

Open shelves for display are a popular feature of large cabinets.

Marquetry using colourful, exotic woods or metals was a popular form of decoration.



EASTLAKE CABINET

This solid rosewood and marquetry side cabinet is in the Eastlake style, named after the architect, Charles Locke Eastlake. The upper section of the cabinet features a carved broken pediment set above mirrored panels and open

shelves. The side shelves are decorated with marquetry, using exotic wood inlays. The lower section of the cabinet has two astragals and glazed central doors, flanked by rounded, carved, open shelves, and is similarly decorated with marquetry. *Late 19th century. H:237cm (95in). S&K 2*



WALNUT SIDEBOARD

This buffet sideboard is by Maple & Co. of London, and incorporates Arts and Crafts, Aesthetic, and Renaissance Revival elements. The spindles at the back of the galleried top are a recurring feature of Arts and Crafts

furniture. The central panel is carved with pomegranates and there is an arched panel of sunbursts and sunflowers below – typical of Renaissance Revival. The lower section has twin-panelled, carved doors, and is raised on turned feet with brass caps and casters. *H:151cm (59½in); W:153cm (60¼in). L&T 2*



DISPLAY CABINET

This Arts and Crafts satinwood cabinet is in the style of George Walton, an interior designer and architect who collaborated with Charles Rennie Mackintosh. The structure is solid with straight lines and it has little in the way of additional

decoration. The twin glazed doors have applied astragals and enclose a glass shelf flanked by two further bowed glazed doors. There is a drawer and additional display space below. The cabinet is set on slender legs, joined by a lower shelf located near ground level. *W:168cm (66¼in). L&T 4*

MAHOGANY BUFFET

Flower motifs feature on the top carved panel, cupboard doors, and metal drawer pulls of this Arts and Crafts mahogany buffet. The mirror is flanked by panels pierced with hearts – a typical Arts and Crafts motif. *H:181cm (71¼in).* DN 2

**OAK SIDEBOARD**

This oak sideboard is made in the style of Bruce Talbot. The central roundel is carved with a songbird in holly and the cupboard doors are carved with sunflower motifs. *W:183cm (72in).* DN 1

**SIDE CABINET**

The Glasgow company, Frances and James Smith, manufactured this Aesthetic Movement walnut side cabinet. It is designed in the style of Daniel Cottier and is decorated with gilded panels painted with flowering plants. *c.1870–80. W:183cm (72in).* L&T 3



Gilded and painted panels

**MIRRORED SIDEBOARD**

This large Limbert sideboard has a mirrored backsplash and two drawers above three shorter drawers that are flanked by cupboards. There is also a large linen drawer with brass drop pulls near the base. *H:152.5cm (60in).* DRA 4

**OAK SIDEBOARD**

The upper section of this Arts & Crafts sideboard has astragal-glazed doors and an open shelf, while the lower section has a rectangular tip above two drawers and three doors. *H:194cm (76¼in); W:171cm (67¼in).* L&T 3

**RECTANGULAR SIDEBOARD**

The decorative iron hinges on this oak sideboard are unmistakably Arts and Crafts in style. The tongue-and-groove doors reflect earlier rustic forms. *H:183cm (72in).* L&T 3



Decorative iron hinges





ART NOUVEAU

1880-1915



AGE OF TRANSITION

THE TURN OF THE 19TH CENTURY WAS A PERIOD OF CHANGE AND UNCERTAINTY. TRADITIONAL VALUES WERE IN A STATE OF FLUX AS PEOPLE LOOKED FORWARD TO THE CHALLENGES OF A NEW CENTURY.

THE FINAL DECADE of the 19th century was marked by political turbulence on the one hand and modernization on the other. France was rocked by political scandal in 1894 and its latest form of government, the Third Republic, continued to expand its colonial empire in Africa and Asia, whilst dealing with poverty, industrial unrest, and political discontent at home. Britain vied with France in building up her empire, whereas the Habsburg Empire, which covered much of Central and Eastern Europe, was declining in power and had to

contend with mounting domestic pressure for change. A newly united Germany, however, was growing in stature and influence, as were the affluent United States.

This was a time of great industrial progress, and cities and towns were expanding rapidly. Scientific and medical discoveries were opening up new opportunities and psychologists such as Freud and Jung published influential new theories about dreams and the role of the subconscious mind.

The upper and middle classes were enjoying a period of relative peace and prosperity, but there was increased poverty amongst the working classes, particularly in the cities. As the century drew towards its close, there was a certain atmosphere of malaise and uncertainty about the future which was reflected in art, literature, and music.

STYLE OF THE AGE

The sentiments that gave birth to the Arts and Crafts Movement in Britain in the 1880s – essentially a backlash against revivalism and the poor-quality, mass-produced goods produced as a result of the Industrial Revolution – were also responsible for kick-starting a new form of artistic expression that began to emerge in Europe in the 1890s – Art Nouveau.

Cast-iron gate. Designed by the architect and furniture designer, Hector Guimard, this sinuous gate stands at the entrance to the Castel Béanger, a block of flats for which Guimard designed both the exterior and interior, allowing his imagination free reign. c.1890.

Taking its name from the shop opened by Siegfried Bing in Paris in 1895, what lay at the heart of this style was the determination to break with the tired historicism of the past and forge a new form of art in keeping with the spirit of the age – hence the term *Art Nouveau*, meaning “new art”. All over Europe, artists and craftsmen founded groups and workshops to provide a forum for young artists to show their work. Unlike previous artists, they drew no distinction between the fine arts and the decorative arts, believing that all the arts should be integrated.

THE NEW ART

By the end of the century Art Nouveau had become a recognizable style and was evident in every form of the arts, from architecture and interiors to posters, glasswork, ceramics, jewellery, and sculpture, as well as in furniture. Unlike the art of previous periods, Art Nouveau could literally be seen on the streets. Buildings in Brussels, Paris, Budapest, and Vienna were a visual expression of this modern form of art, providing a striking contrast to the heavy grandeur of most revivalist 19th-century buildings, and billboards in Paris were covered in the latest Art Nouveau posters.



WMF pewter dressing table mirror
This mirror is decorated with floral and foliate motifs, and a reclining, garlanded maiden in a flowing robe. c.1905. H:52cm (20½in). AN



TIMELINE 1880–1915



Oscar Wilde

1890 Vincent Van Gogh paints his last masterpiece, *Cornfields with Flight of Birds*.

1891 Oscar Wilde publishes his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

1894 The Dreyfus Affair in France. Aubrey Beardsley's

Yellow Book magazine is published.

1895 The Lumière Brothers open a cinema in Paris. Siegfried Bing opens his gallery *L'Art Nouveau* in Paris. Guglielmo Marconi invents the wireless telegraph or radio.

1896 The first modern Olympic Games are held in Athens. Giacomo Puccini's opera *La*



Guglielmo Marconi radio

Bohème premieres.

1897 The Vienna Secession is established in Vienna, Austria.

1898 Marie and Pierre Curie discover polonium and radium.

1899 Scott Joplin's *Maple Leaf Rag* launches a craze for ragtime music in America. A peace conference at The Hague establishes an International Court of Arbitration.

1900 The *Exposition Universelle* opens in Paris, and the Secessionist Exhibition in Vienna. Giacomo Puccini's opera *Tosca* premieres in Rome. Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* is published in Vienna, causing a sensation.

1901 Queen Victoria dies, and is succeeded by Edward VII.



Queen Victoria

Victor Horta staircase. The sinuous contours of Horta's wrought-iron staircase complement the dramatic wall decorations and mosaic floor in the entrance of the Hotel Tassel in Brussels, an outstanding example of Art Nouveau architecture. Horta designed the house and its interiors for Tassel, a professor at Brussels University and a connoisseur of Japanese art. 1893–95.



Louis Majorelle lady's desk Made from mahogany and oak in Nancy, France, this lady's desk is typical of Art Nouveau, with its kidney-shaped writing plate and top with graceful, curving, wing-shaped ends. It is decorated with floral marquetry of different tropical woods. c.1905. H:44in (110cm). QU



Wilbur and Orville Wright's plane

1902 Turin hosts the *Prima Esposizione d'Arte Decorativa Moderna*.

1903 Wilbur and Orville Wright complete

the first manned airplane flight.

1903-11 The Municipal House, an iconic Art Nouveau building is built in Prague by Osvald Polívka and Antonín Balsánek.

1905 Work begins on Josef Hoffmann's Palais Stoclet in Brussels. The Simplon tunnel in Switzerland is completed.

1907 A landmark exhibition of Cubist paintings by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque opens in Paris. Josef Hoffmann designs the *Fledermaus* cabaret in Vienna.

1909 Futurism is launched by the Italian artist, Filippo Marinetti.

1911 The first nonstop flight from London to Paris.

1912 *The Titanic* sinks on its maiden voyage.

1913 *The Rite of Spring* by Igor Stravinsky debuts.

1914 World War I begins. Charlie Chaplin makes his first silent movie.

1915 Albert Einstein publishes his *General Theory of Relativity*.



The Titanic

ART NOUVEAU FURNITURE

A TRULY EUROPEAN STYLE, there is no single artist or designer whose work embodies Art Nouveau. The style itself was known by a variety of names across Europe – *Le Style Moderne* in France, *Jugendstil* in Germany, *Secession* in Austria, *La Stile Liberty* in Italy, and *Modernista* in Spain – and the style embraced all of the decorative arts in equal measure.

A COHESIVE STYLE

Art Nouveau was a movement born of the desire of a number of brilliant artists and designers to make something beautiful, functional, and above all, new.

Interiors in the 19th century were often made up of various styles and historical revivals, sometimes in the same room. Art Nouveau was a reaction against this confusion, and a rejection of the mass-produced furniture born of industrialisation. Taking the lead from William Morris (see pp.332–33), architects, artists, and designers placed more emphasis on craftsmanship and artistic inspiration. Rooms were designed to work as a whole, from the architecture to the furniture, and even the smallest decorative details.

DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS

The most striking feature of Art Nouveau style was its diversity. Each country had its own interpretation of the new style. In France and Belgium, designers created sinuous, fluid shapes based on flowers, foliage, and marine life, and it is this interpretation that is generally thought of today as Art Nouveau.

In Britain, Germany, and Austria, more linear designs used geometric shapes. Designers also experimented with materials such as bentwood and aluminium. In Spain, Antoni Gaudi worked with dazzling vitality, using organic shapes and an extravagant use of plant-inspired motifs. Much of his furniture was made for his extraordinary, sculptural buildings such as Guel Palace in Barcelona.

NEW INSPIRATIONS

Art Nouveau designers didn't entirely reject the styles of the past. French designers in particular were heavily influenced by the asymmetry and fine craftsmanship of the the Rococo style (see pp.68–121). Many designers drew on the decorative vocabulary



Curving bentwood chaise longue This piece was made by German designer Michael Thonet. It is made from beechwood that has been steamed and bent into shape, which is a hallmark of Thonet's pioneering furniture. The seat and back are made of cane work. c.1890. W:146cm (57½in). DRA

of the natural world. The sensuous female form, so beloved of the poetic Symbolist movement, was another popular motif. Designers also looked east for inspiration to Japan. Simple, elegant designs inspired by nature were enthusiastically adopted by many Art Nouveau designers, and motifs including cherry blossom, waterlilies, and dragonflies were often used.

THE END OF AN ERA

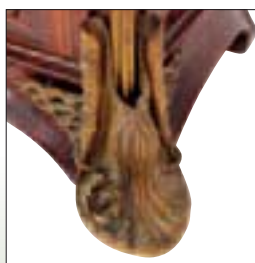
The individuality of Art Nouveau was ultimately its undoing. It was a movement that burned brightly, fuelled by the creativity of a few brilliant designers creating their own artistic expressions. Such intensity could not be sustained, and after 15 years Art Nouveau floundered as innovation turned to cliché and the onset of World War I killed the creative and decadent spirit that gave birth to the movement.



Scottish School cabinet This cabinet, in the style of Alexander Ritchie, was made on the Island of Iona. The simple wooden case is decorated with brass repoussé panels depicting stylized birds holding brambles. The hinges and escutcheon feature entwined foliage. H:45.5cm (18in); D:25cm (10in). L&T

GILT-BRONZE MOUNTS

Art Nouveau furniture designers often looked for inspiration to the reign of Louis XV (see pp.78–79) and the work of the celebrated *ébénistes* working in the Rococo style. The mid-18th century fashion for furniture rendered in luxurious timbers and decorated with finely-crafted mounts of gilt bronze was embraced by cabinet-makers including Louis Majorelle. Majorelle embellished the legs, feet, handles, and keyholes of tables and case furniture with nature-inspired motifs, from flower blossoms and waterlilies to leaves and berries.



Lily-pad feet



Lily buds

Louis Majorelle mahogany cabinet This cabinet has finely carved gilt-bronze decorative mounts at the top, sides, and on the feet modelled as delicate waterlily stems, buds, flowers, and leaves. The embellishments are reminiscent of Rococo gilt decorations. H:200cm (79in). CSB



VITRINE BY EMILE GALLÉ

This vitrine is a stunning example of the marquetry decoration favoured by Emile Gallé of the *École de Nancy* (see pp.356–57) and his contemporaries. Made of walnut, the piece is lavishly veneered with marquetry comprised of bird's eye maple and other exotic woods in an asymmetrical pattern of leaves and foliage. The Art Nouveau taste for organic, nature-inspired motifs is also epitomized by the Japanese-style cherry flowers carved in relief on the cresting and apron, and the delicate leaf-shaped mounts in gilt bronze decorating the slender legs of the vitrine. Motifs drawn from nature, including scrolling plants and flower blossoms, such as water lilies, fruits and vegetables, and insects, were captured in breathtaking detail.

The pierced gallery and apron detailing are asymmetrical – a feature popular on 18th-century Rococo furniture. The unusual arrangement of the interior shelves also takes up the asymmetrical theme.

The gallery is pierced with a foliate motif.

The asymmetrical arrangement of shelves is supported on stylized branch elements.

The back of the vitrine is lavishly decorated with a marquetry pattern of leaves rendered in bird's-eye maple and other exotic woods.

Gallé's marquetry is of the highest quality and echoes the finest work of the 18th-century French ébénistes.

The legs of the vitrine are embellished with leaf-shaped mounts of gilt-bronze.

Organic designs feature on Gallé's furniture, such as these carved cherry flowers.

Emile Gallé walnut vitrine This fine vitrine has carved and pierced cresting and an apron of Japanese cherry flowers. The glazed single door and sides enclose an asymmetrically-stepped, two-tier interior, and bird's-eye maple and exotic wood leaf marquetry. c.1900. H:148cm (59¼in); W:64.5cm (25¼in); D:46cm (18¼in). MACK



ELEMENTS OF STYLE

Art Nouveau designers sought inspiration from the natural world. From Nancy to Glasgow, nature was interpreted in a host of different and distinctive ways. Sensuous, flamboyant designs with scrolling shapes and whiplash curves were popular, as were more abstract shapes and motifs. Across the genre, embellishments based on natural motifs – foliage, flowers, and insects – were rendered in an array of rich materials: expensive timbers such as walnut, rosewood, and mahogany for relief carving; exotic woods, ivory, and precious metals for marquetry and inlays; and mounts of gilt bronze for decoration.



Walnut selette stand

Hand-carved wood

A desire to reintroduce traditional skills to furniture-making was central to Art Nouveau. Many designers shunned machine processes in favour of traditional hand-carving. Elegant shapes emerged, made from woods such as walnut and embellished with natural motifs.



Rear of an inlaid cabinet

Louis XV influences

A number of designers took inspiration from the Rococo style, which flourished in 18th-century France under Louis XV (see pp.78–79). Art Nouveau designers reinterpreted its asymmetry, swirling, curving lines, and stylized plant and floral decorations. This cabinet epitomizes the style, with its sinuous shapes, exotic inlay, and bronze mounts.



Cupboard door detail

Fittings and detailing

This detail of a Patriz Huber lemon-mahogany, polished cupboard has characteristic Art Nouveau fittings and detailing. The understated copper key fitting is gently curved with simple, embossed foliate detailing. The cupboard is partly carved with gently curving lines and also decorated with geometric flower-bud and foliate motifs.



Detail of a fireplace

Female figures

The motif that remains most closely associated with Art Nouveau is that of the beautiful maiden with long, flowing hair. This cast-iron design is typical of the Glasgow School and Margaret MacDonald Mackintosh style (see pp.366–67). The maiden's head is cast in high relief, has flowing hair, stylized floral details, and is part of a geometrically balanced design.



Duck head arm support

Stylized nature

In France, the two main centres of Art Nouveau furniture production – the Nancy and Paris Schools – pioneered the fashion for curvilinear furniture designs that looked to nature for inspiration. This stylized duck head is a good example of how natural motifs were cleverly incorporated into furniture design.



Marquetry on an oak cabinet

Art Nouveau marquetry

Although marquetry was widely used, designs varied tremendously. This rose-tree example is closely associated with Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Glasgow style (see pp.364–67). The design is both stylized and symmetrical, combining long, straight lines with gentle curves. It is more minimal and restrained than the French marquetry style.



Carved walnut bed-end

Relief carving

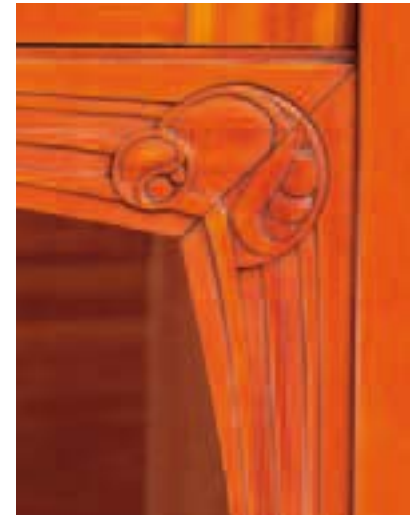
This type of carved decoration rises above the surface background. This detail of a carved walnut bed-end, designed by Louis Majorelle (see p.357), shows an intricately carved daffodil motif flanked by graceful, gently curving fielded panels. It is typical of the French style of Art Nouveau, which often applied organic motifs to furniture.



Detail of a chair back

Sinuuous lines

The curved splats on the back of this chair and the curving arms on the unusual, cantilevered supports are typical of the Paris School, which favoured distinctive, curved, and sculptural chair backs and minimal applied decorations. This style of curved wood is carved from a single piece, as opposed to using the bentwood technique (see p.375).



Carved detail of a cupboard

Abstract motifs

The Art Nouveau credo that architecture, decoration, and furniture should be united into a cohesive whole inspired some designers to develop a spare, linear style that moved away from the sensuous interpretation of nature towards simple, elegant shapes and geometric patterns. This carved detail is curved but simple in design and moving towards abstraction.



Detail of a two-tier table

Whiplash curves

The scrolling design of the supports of this two-tiered, rosewood table by Emile Gallé is typical of the whiplash curves favoured by French and Belgian designers, and is exemplified in the architecture of Victor Horta (see p.360). Inspired by nature, the sinuous curves are, in fact, stylized renditions of plant tendrils.



Detail of an inlaid sideboard

Exotic materials

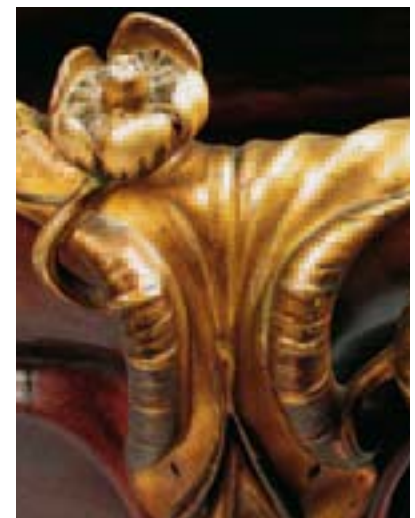
This roundel is a tour de force of embossed and inlaid metalware by Italian designer, Carlo Bugatti (see p.362). Influenced by Japanese, Moorish, and Egyptian design, the banding in embossed brass encloses a geometric pattern resembling winged insects in a pale wood, ebony, silver, ivory, and brass inlay.



Repoussé clockface

Repoussé metalwork

This technique was common in Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau. Relief decoration was produced by hammering from the underside, causing the decoration to project outwards. This design is influenced by natural motifs, Liberty's Celtic revival, and Charles Rennie Mackintosh's heraldic designs (see p.364).



Floral and foliate gilt-bronze mount

Gilt-bronze mounts

Many French furniture-makers, designed finely wrought, decorative mounts of gilt-bronze or wrought iron. This decorative detail echoes the Rococo preference for warm, lustrous woods enhanced by nature-inspired mounts in gilt-bronze. Popular natural motifs were flower-buds, waterlilies, and orchids.

PARIS EXPOSITION

THE LAVISH INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS WERE IMPORTANT PROMOTIONAL VEHICLES FOR THE ART NOUVEAU MOVEMENT.

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS, known as *Expositions Universelles*, World Fairs, or Great Exhibitions, were lavish forums that sought to present, in specially constructed pavilions, the diversity of human civilization. Following the first major exhibition in 1851 at Crystal Palace in London (see pp.268–69), these events were acknowledged as important tools for showcasing cultures and ideas. International exhibitions helped to influence the development of Art Nouveau, for in addition to having their work presented on the international stage, designers were affected by what they saw at the exhibitions, including art from around the world.

The vast repertoire of ideas and designs displayed at exhibitions from around 1889 culminated in the year 1900, when Art Nouveau reached its pinnacle and enjoyed its greatest success at the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris.

THE EXPOSITION UNIVERSELLE
This view looks across the River Seine towards the Eiffel Tower and the Globe Céleste. The Eiffel Tower was designed in 1889 by the structural engineer Alexandre Gustave Eiffel, and was the winning proposal in a building design competition to commemorate the French Revolution's 100th anniversary. Eiffel's radical creation was the central focus of the Paris Exhibition site in both 1889 and 1900.



SILVER-PLATED WALL MIRROR
This mirror by Georges De Feure was exhibited at the 1900 Paris Exposition. The relief-moulded scene depicts a woman in profile wearing a long, flowing dress, in an elaborately stylized landscape setting within a moulded oak frame. 1900. H:36cm (14½in); W:45cm (17½in). MACK

Carved crest



MAHOGANY-FRAME ARMCHAIR
This rare chair by Edouard Colonna has a scroll-carved, crested, padded back above moulded arms with knuckle-scroll terminals, cabriole legs, and a low, upholstered back. The chair was part of a suite, including a settee and side chair, exhibited at the Siegfried Bing stand at the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle. c.1900. MACK

Knuckle-scroll terminals

Cabriole legs

SIEGFRIED BING

PERSONIFYING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT OF ART NOUVEAU, SIEGFRIED BING, AND HIS SHOP, *L'ART NOUVEAU*, PLAYED A PIVOTAL ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STYLE.

Born in Hamburg in 1838, the art collector and dealer Siegfried Bing moved to Paris in 1871. Following travels to the Far East a few years later, he opened a shop called *La Porte Chinoise* specializing in the sale of Oriental objects. After a visit to the United States to report on architecture and design for the French government, Bing opened the doors of his new Paris emporium in December 1895. Named *L'Art Nouveau*, it sold the works of leading Art Nouveau craftsmen, including Emile Gallé, Henry van de Velde, and Louis Comfort Tiffany.

It was in France that Art Nouveau became most firmly established. Paris was highly influential and Bing's shop became the focus of attraction. The inaugural exhibition at the gallery and shop caused a sensation – not all of it favourable – but the success of the venture was ensured. *L'Art Nouveau* eventually expanded to include workshops and studios. The master cabinet-maker was Léon Jallot, who worked



Siegfried Bing

designs created by Eugène Gaillard, Edouard Colonna, and Georges De Feure. However, Bing personally selected the designs that were made into finished pieces.

La Maison de L'Art Nouveau had a brief life, remaining open for a mere nine years before finally closing in 1904, but Bing's imaginative displays, in both his shop and at international exhibitions, became renowned among artists, designers, and manufacturers, and also achieved notoriety with politicians, collectors, and museums.

Bing dealt in modern works of art, but he promoted the idea of amalgamating all aspects of the arts. At *L'Art Nouveau*, he sold a wide range of goods, from textiles and ceramics to glass and silverware – all showcasing the best that the new style had to offer. The international style of Art Nouveau thus amounted to more than simple a group of enthusiastic artists and designers creating works of art in a single, identifiable idiom.

FRENCH INFLUENCE

It was the French who held sway, as neither the Belgian Henry van de Velde (see p.360), nor the Scottish contingent led by Charles Rennie Mackintosh (see pp.364–67), were represented, and the Germans gave a weak showing. Art Nouveau was generally seen as a French movement, an expression of French refinement and extravagance.

While the Exhibition was largely monopolized by neo-Rococo, neo-Baroque, and exotic styles, there was nonetheless a celebrated array of Art Nouveau buildings, including the *Pavillon Bleu* Restaurant by Gustave Serrurier-Bovy, the *Loie Fuller Pavilion* by Henri Sauvage, and the *Pavillon Bing*. Hector Guimard's spectacular station entrances greeted visitors who arrived at the site on the new Metropolitan railway. Imaginative international displays, such as the Finnish Pavilion, showed that other countries were accomplished promoters of their versions of the Art Nouveau. The *Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs*, the *Pavillon Bing*, and the spaces dedicated to the department stores *Le Louvre*, *Le Bon Marché*, and *Le Printemps*, were all private initiatives at the *Exposition*. Along the *Esplanade des Invalides*, the Decorative Arts Pavilions exhibited hundreds of different interpretations of Art Nouveau.

INTERIOR STYLE

At Siegfried Bing's Pavilion at the 1900 *Exposition*, Art Nouveau enjoyed its greatest success. Bing's exhibits demonstrated how great his influence on interior design had become.

Immediately apparent in the six rooms of Bing's Pavilion was the sense of a consistent, unified look. Instead of an eclectic collection of furniture, textiles, and ornaments inspired by a host of different historic styles, as preferred in the Victorian era, these rooms promoted a single, cohesive design theme that was reflected in wall colours, floor surfaces, furniture, and fittings in equal measure. Georges De Feure designed the dressing room and boudoir, Edouard Colonna the drawing room, and the vestibule, bedroom, and dining room were created by Eugène Gaillard. Although Bing's Pavilion was scarcely mentioned in the Parisian papers, it became a benchmark against which designers and collectors outside France judged the unified approach to interior design.

On the heels of the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris came the 1902 *Prima Esposizione d'Arte Decorativa Moderna* held in Turin, which saw Art Nouveau at its final peak of international influence.

By the end of the decade Art Nouveau was no longer an exhibition sensation. Its role as a modern global style had diminished considerably, and its commercial viability had been lost. However, the *Exposition Universelle* brought a new era of art and design to the world, and for the 51 million people who passed through its doors, it must have been a truly remarkable experience.



The Siegfried Bing Pavilion at the Paris Exposition In an attempt to create a *Gesamtkunstwerk* (a complete artwork), Bing enlisted three promising, although relatively unknown, designers to collaborate on the design: Georges De Feure, Edouard Colonna, and Eugène Gaillard. The dining room was designed by Gaillard.

Walnut dining chair Designed by Gaillard, this chair was exhibited at the Siegfried Bing Pavilion at the 1900 Paris *Exposition*. The original leather seat and back of this dining chair are decorated with sinuous forms, an example of his success in flat pattern design. Gaillard's design is inspired by nature, and, like the branches of a tree, the carved walnut frame appears to grow. The sculptural form of this chair was an excitingly novel design at the exhibition. 1899–1900. H:94cm (37in); W:47.5cm (18½in).



FRANCE: THE NANCY SCHOOL

MANY OF THE FINEST WORKS of French Art Nouveau were created at the *Alliance Provinciale des Industries d'Art*, or *École de Nancy*, in the province of Lorraine. It was founded in 1901 by the innovative furniture and glass designer Emile Gallé, and was based on the example set by the English Arts and Crafts guilds. A design school and workshop that was profoundly influenced by the Symbolist movement in art and literature, the goal of the enterprise was to modernize technical training in both the decorative and applied arts.

The natural world inspired and informed the artists and craftsmen

who gathered around the brilliant Gallé at the *École de Nancy*, and the school gave a coherent identity to the diverse craftsmen working there.

Among those who ran the Nancy school with Gallé were some of the finest craftsmen and designers of the day, including Louis Majorelle, Eugène Vallin, Victor Prouvé, and the Daum brothers, Auguste and Antonin.

BOTANICAL INSPIRATION

In addition to history of art and Symbolist poetry and literature, Gallé's rich influences included the study of local flora and fauna – cow parsley, thistles, insects, and so on – which

was to furnish him with creative inspiration for shapes as well as decoration. His romantic vision of nature, a delight in plants, animals, and other living creatures, and a passionate faith in the mystery of creation lay at the heart of his most inspired designs.

FURNITURE STYLES

Gallé's emotional connection with the vitality of nature and his love of symbolism resulted in highly original, imaginative furniture that seemed to breathe with life.

Tables and cabinets were made from richly coloured or exotic woods,

including rosewood, maple, walnut, or fruitwoods such as apple or pear. The pieces stood on carved supports in the shape of dragonfly wings, or boasted cornices featuring carved creatures such as snails, moths, and bats. Decorative bronze mounts resembled insects, and fruitwood inlays in extravagant compositions depicted natural motifs, including flower blossoms, leaves, fruit, ears of corn, snails, and butterflies.



ROSEWOOD AND WALNUT VITRINE

This rosewood and walnut vitrine by Emile Gallé is inspired by organic motifs. The upper section has glazed doors with carved foliage surrounds extending to a central support to form a heart motif. The back is decorated with fruitwood leaf-form marquetry. c.1900. H:158cm (62in); W:80cm (31½in); D:49cm (19in). MACK



ARMCHAIRS

These mahogany chairs by Louis Majorelle have rectangular padded splats, stuff-over arms on unusual, sweeping, reverse-curved supports, and stuff-over seats on moulded legs. This is a graceful variation on the traditional chair style with gently curving lines. c.1900. H:103cm (40½in). MACK



TABLE LAMPS

This is an unusual pair of glass and bronze lamps made in Nancy by Daum Frères and Louis Majorelle. The tapering, gilded, bronze shaft has a flower motif in high relief and three raised supports for the domed, mushroom-shaped shades. The lamp shades are made of clear flashed glass with powder inclusions in rose, greenish-yellow, and dark violet. They are signed "Daum Nancy" and have a Cross of Lorraine on the rim of the shade. c.1904. H:63cm (25¼in). VZ



Many of Gallé's pieces were unique, and were signed and frequently engraved with verses by Victor Hugo, Paul Verlaine, or Charles Baudelaire.

LOUIS MAJORELLE

The other great furniture designer working at Nancy – Louis Majorelle – turned his back on the Louis XV taste, which had been the staple of many established workshops, and created some of the finest pieces of Art

Giltwood *Aubépine* table by Louis Majorelle

This occasional table has a circular marble top above a moulded gilt frieze. The tapering moulded legs are decorated with foliate carving. c.1900. H:81cm (32in). L&T

Nouveau furniture. Although his desks, tables, chairs, and bedroom suites lack the symbolic poetry found in the works of Gallé, his finely crafted furniture is beautiful in its own right.

Majorelle established several workshops so that he could increase his output. He was a trained cabinet-maker, and although much of his furniture incorporated some machine-made parts, the quality was superb. Majorelle's furniture was usually made

of dark hardwoods such as mahogany and rosewood, with fluid outlines and massive, sculptural gilt-bronze mounts shaped as orchids or water lilies, alongside delicately carved, inlaid, or marquetry decoration in fruitwoods, pewter, or mother-of-pearl. He also collaborated with the Daum brothers, who were famous for their glassware, to produce a wide variety of decorative lamps with glass shades and elegant bronze or iron mounts.



NEST OF TABLES

These Emile Gallé tables *Aux Magnolias* are made of fruit- and rootwoods and decorated with magnolia and butterfly design inlays, and carved branch patterns on the legs of the largest tables. c.1900. H:71cm (28½in). GK



ARMCHAIRS

This pair of *Marrons d'Inde* armchairs by Louis Majorelle have splats with exotic wood marquetry, bent and curved arms, tapering legs, and stuffed-upholstered seats. 1905–10. H:105cm (41½in); W:55cm (22in). QU



DISPLAY CASE

Made from mahogany and makasar, this display case by Louis Majorelle rests on curved diagonal legs. The doors have distinctive blossom ornaments. c.1920. H:125cm (50in); W:83.75cm (33½in); D:45cm (18in). QU



TWO-TIER TABLE

This rosewood occasional table by Emile Gallé has three out-splayed supports and scroll legs with carved hoof feet. The table is decorated with floral marquetry. c.1900. H:77cm (30in); W:53cm (21in). MACK



The marquetrie is made of exotic hardwoods.

The mirrored back is decorated with inlaid geometric patterns.

Pierced side panels are decorated with repeated scrolling motifs.

Bronze drawer pulls are in the shape of goose heads.

The goose motif is continued on the front doors.

GOOSE DESIGN CABINET

This sumptuous, blonde mahogany, goose-design cabinet by Louis Majorelle is decorated with marquetrie, pierced wood, and exotic timbers. The piece has pierced side panels, a frieze drawer with bronze goose-head

pulls, and cupboards inlaid with exotic wood showing a gaggle of geese. A superb designer and highly skilled technician, Majorelle created flamboyantly luxurious pieces of unrivalled quality. c.1900. H:246.5cm (97in); W:155cm (61in). CALD

FRANCE: THE PARIS SCHOOL

THE DEVELOPMENT OF the Parisian thread of French Art Nouveau is distinguished by a group of forward-looking individuals who formed artistic groups to experiment with new forms, and who were supported by a circle of entrepreneurs. The most important patron was the influential dealer, Siegfried Bing (*see p.355*). An enthusiastic collector with a special interest in Oriental art, Bing played a crucial role in *Le Japon Artistique*, a publication that was instrumental in popularizing Far Eastern Art in 19th-century Europe, before he moved on to promote Art Nouveau.

AN ENTERPRISING ENDEAVOUR Key to the success of the “new art” in Paris was Bing’s transformation of his antiques shop in Paris into the gallery *L’Art Nouveau* in 1895. He dedicated this to exhibiting a host of decorative objects, which embodied the new directions in art while also being inspired by French tradition. He assembled a group of innovative artists – not only from France but also Henry van de Velde of Belgium and the American, Louis Comfort Tiffany – and showcased their latest works. Bing succeeded in bringing Art Nouveau to a wealthy, fashion-conscious clientele and was joined in this endeavour by the German art critic, Julius Meier-Graefe who established *La Maison Moderne* in 1898. His aim was to offer more affordable decorative wares in the Art Nouveau style, made using industrial methods.

THE PARIS AND NANCY STYLES Although both the Paris and Nancy Schools pioneered the new, curvilinear, organic furniture style, the leading designers of both schools – Hector Guimard in Paris and Louis Majorelle and Emille Gallé in Nancy – each drew inspiration from nature in a very different way. At the *École de Nancy*, the style was much more exuberant and florid: the finely crafted pieces had sculptural shapes and were richly veneered in exotic woods, with mother-of-peal inlays, marquetry, and gilt-bronze mounts.

The Parisian strand of Art Nouveau was lighter and more restrained, and owed much to the work of the architect and furniture designer, Hector Guimard.

One of a talented group of cabinet-makers, Guimard – who was a disciple of Victor Horta in Belgium and is best remembered for his Paris Metro entrances – was one of the most innovative and progressive. His bold and energetic three-dimensional furniture designs were imaginative, sculptural evocations of the natural world. At first these were made in solid mahogany, but later he used a soft pearwood that was easier to model.

DECORATIVE INSPIRATION Although the decoration favoured by the Paris School took its inspiration from nature, it was stylized. Other furniture designers who were part of Siegfried Bing’s influential gallery and retail shop, and who formed the core of the Paris School of Art Nouveau, included Eugène Gaillard, the Dutchman Georges De Feure, and German-born Edouard Colonna.

ROCOCO INFLUENCE Gaillard’s robust, dynamic furniture looked back to the 18th-century Rococo style of Louis XV for inspiration, and included pieces such as the magnificent display cupboard in walnut that was shown at the 1900 International Exhibition in Paris (*see pp.354–55*), as well as light and airy tables and chairs with sinuous decoration in aquatic plant patterns.

The slender and refined gilded wood furniture created by De Feure was delicately carved with plant motifs and combined with silk fabrics. His sophisticated designs drew inspiration from the 18th-century French tradition of furniture-making, especially the Louis XVI style.

Colonna’s furniture was a quieter version of Art Nouveau. Its simple forms and scrolling, decorative patterns were carved with a light and delicate hand.

The top rail carving is inspired by asymmetric Louis XV furniture designs.

The leather upholstery is embossed with a floral pattern.



Brass studs fix the leather upholstery to the frame.

The carved legs terminate in flared, square-section feet.

WALNUT-FRAMED CHAIR

This carved walnut chair was designed by Eugène Gaillard. The chair has a distinctive pierced, asymmetric floral and foliate carved frame decorated with sinuous curves and plant tendrils. The chair seat and back are upholstered with the original floral embossed brown leather, which is fixed in place with brass studs. The chair stands on flared feet. This style was influenced by leading Paris School artist-craftsmen such as Hector Guimard. *c.1905. H:107.5cm (42in). MACK*

**OAK SERVER**

A more restrained Art Nouveau style is shown in this oak and purple-heart server designed by Léon Jallot. The piece has an arched, raised back with pierced, stylized leaf motifs above two frieze drawers and open shelves. *c.1910. H:125cm (49¼in); W:122.5cm (48¼in). CAL*

**DESK CHAIR**

This Tony Selmersheim desk chair is made from padouk, a type of rosewood. The chair has a wavy top rail above a cartouche-shaped padded back with inscrolled arms and a padded seat. The piece stands on gently splayed tapering legs. *c.1902. H:76cm (30in); W:58.5cm (23in). CAL*

**MAHOGANY SIDE TABLE**

Designed by Camille Gauthier and Paul Poinson, this table has a concave-shaped rectangular top with delicate, floral-motif fruitwood marquetry. It sits above an arched frieze with daffodil-design marquetry, on spiral-carved, tapering legs. *c.1900. H:74cm (29in); W:81cm (32in); D:60.5cm (24in). MACK*

**LIBRARY SELETTE**

This mahogany selette by Tony Selmersheim has a square top and moulded edge, with a bookshelf compartment above an off-set square-shaped lower tier. The piece stands on out-splayed moulded legs united by a cross-stretcher. *c.1910. H:135cm (53in); W:90cm (35in). MACK*

**WALNUT SELETTE**

This two-tier walnut selette stand was designed by Edouard Diot. Beneath a flat top, distinctive, delicately curved supports decorated with carved, twisting floral motifs extend from the upper tier via open supports. The piece rests on out-splayed carved feet. *1902. H:136cm (53½in). CAL*

LINKS WITH ARCHITECTURE

ARCHITECTURE PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARIS SCHOOL, ESPECIALLY THE DESIGNS OF HECTOR GUIMARD.

In the 1890s, public and private interiors in France underwent a period of radical change, reflecting a burgeoning interest in modern materials, nature-inspired decorative motifs, and imaginative forms of Art Nouveau. One of the most original French Art Nouveau architects, Hector Guimard, was celebrated for his sinuous, decorative, wrought-iron entrances for the Metro stations in Paris.

Guimard made his mark as an architect with a distinctive block of flats he built in Paris from 1894 to 1904, which was known as *Le Castel Béanger*, located at

16 rue de la Fontaine. Both the exterior and interior of the flats boast bold, abstract ornament. He used variegated colour on the façade, and built an interior courtyard to allow more light into the apartments.

Guimard understood the need to create brightly coloured living spaces that were open and full of light. With the *Castel Béanger*, he demonstrated how the decorative arts, in a wide range of materials, could successfully work together with architecture to create a unified, modern scheme.



Entrance to Boissière Metro station This is one of the curvaceous cast-iron Paris Metro entrances designed by Hector Guimard. *1899–1904.*



Le Castel Béanger flats in Paris Designed by Hector Guimard, both the exterior and interior of the flats feature his fanciful designs. *1894–98.*

**GLASS-FRONTED CABINET**

This cabinet is made of lemonwood and satinwood and carved with foliate motifs. The stained glass cabinet doors contain simple, swirling foliate designs in coloured glass. The piece was designed by Edouard Colonna for Siegfried Bing. *1900. H:211cm (83in); W:145cm (57in). CAL*

BELGIUM

IN LATE 19TH-CENTURY Europe, Art Nouveau reached its creative peak in Belgium. Its success there was largely due to the fact that people were encouraged to explore fresh, exciting ways of looking at the arts.

The same, spirited Art Nouveau message that called for a cohesive, unified interior – so successfully accomplished elsewhere in Europe – took root in Belgium in the work of a number of innovative artist-architects, such as Victor Horta, Henry van de Velde, and Gustave Serrurier-Bovy.

The Belgian version of Art Nouveau had much in common with its French counterpart. Both embraced free-flowing, sinuous, sculptural furniture, and had a rich vocabulary of decorative motifs in organic shapes – plants, flower blossoms, trees, butterflies, and insects – all drawn from the natural world.

HENRY VAN DE VELDE

Henry van de Velde won universal acclaim for the design of his own home near Brussels – Bloemenwerf – where furniture, carpets, and wall coverings combined to create a harmonious whole. He forged strong links with France by showcasing and selling his furniture at prestigious retail shops in Paris, including Siegfried Bing's *L'Art Nouveau* and *La Maison Moderne* owned by Julius Meier-Graefe. Widely celebrated

throughout Europe, van de Velde was influenced by the writings of William Morris and believed that art should always follow organic form – a theory that underlined his furniture designs. Echoing nature's subtle curves and lines, they were rendered in light-coloured, native timbers such as walnut, beech, and oak, and had minimal decoration. Despite van de Velde's theories, function was key to his sturdy yet elegantly simple cabinets, tables, and writing desks.

VICTOR HORTA

Another Belgian pioneer of the Art Nouveau style was the architect and designer, Victor Horta, who designed spectacular buildings such as the splendid Hotel Tassel in Brussels. His interiors coalesced into harmonious and integrated ensembles: from wall panelling, ceilings, and door frames to furniture and metalwork fixtures, using an exciting range of new materials, such as iron and glass.

The cross-fertilization between French and Belgian Art Nouveau resulted in Horta's energetic, curving style – with its signature whiplash curves – influencing Parisian designers such as Hector Guimard. His expensive furniture was skilfully crafted in luxurious timbers such as maple, mahogany, and fruitwoods, and lavishly upholstered in fabrics such as velvet and silk.

GUSTAVE SERRURIER-BOVY

Like van de Velde and Horta, Gustave Serrurier-Bovy adopted many familiar Art Nouveau decorative motifs to complement his furniture, including plants and flowers, sinuous curves, and high-wrought mounts of pewter or brass. Determined to produce well-designed furniture for everyone, Serrurier-Bovy was also inspired by the English Arts and Crafts Movement, as seen in his robust, rectilinear furniture and in his preference for oak.

The influence of these highly original Belgian designers reached beyond their national borders to set the cultural standard for Art Nouveau furniture throughout much of Europe.

The Musée Horta This building was originally built by Victor Horta as his own studio and residence. This view shows the integrated interior, with both the staircase and glass dome featuring his characteristic whiplash curves. 1898.



COIFFEUSE

This mahogany *coiffeuse* was designed by the artist-architect, Gustave Serrurier-Bovy, as a piece of bedroom furniture. The mirror is comprised of three panels, contained within a gently curving frame. The table section has

two pairs of drawers above and two drawers below. The elegant, curved lines of the top of the piece are echoed in the arched stretchers joining the legs, and the arch at the front of the table, which creates the knee-hole. 1899. H:188cm (74in); W:137cm (54in); D:57cm (22½in).



BED FRAME

This bed frame has a bold, curvilinear shape and is made from stained oak. It was designed by Henry van de Velde. The head and footboards have bowed and arched profiles and pairs of raised and fielded, shield-shaped

panels. The piece terminates in splayed feet, which form part of the overall curved shape, and rests on brass casters. Henry van de Velde believed that art should follow an organic form and this influenced the shape and decoration of his furniture. c.1897–98. W:203.5cm (80in). QU



SIDE CHAIR

This mahogany chair was designed by Victor Horta and illustrates his use of sumptuous materials and curving style, as shown in the design of the chair back, legs, and stretchers. The seat is covered with a generously upholstered cushion. *c.1901. H:95.2cm (37½in).*

**WALNUT TABLE**

This walnut occasional table has an overhanging circular top, arched apron, and curving, cabriole legs that terminate in stylized feet. The piece was designed by Henry van de Velde. *c.1916. H:69.25cm (27¼in). QU*

**MAHOGANY SCREEN**

This mahogany screen, designed by Gustave Serrurier-Bovy, has three glass panels that create strong vertical lines. In contrast, the top of the piece is sinuous in shape. While the glass in the lower half of the screen is original, the upper pieces are replacements. *1899. H:159.8cm (63in).*

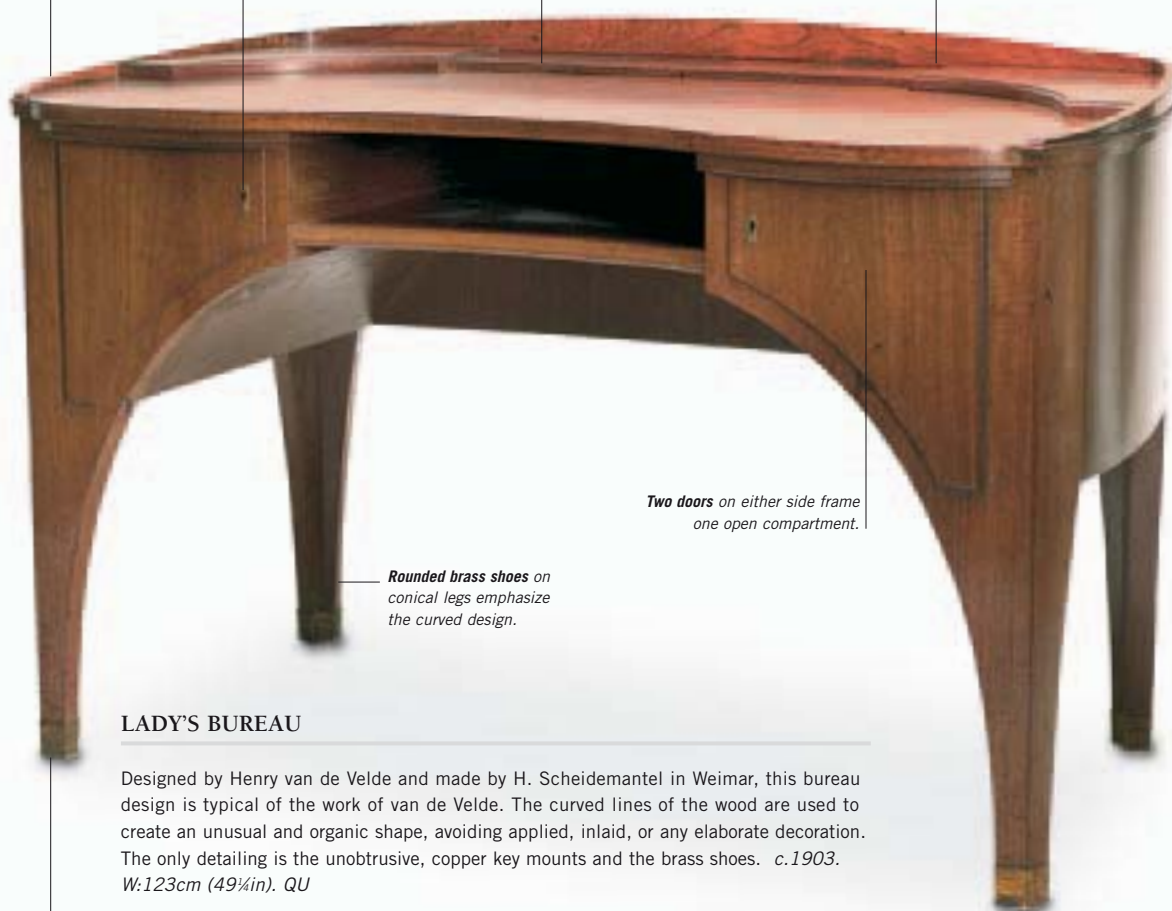
**MAHOGANY VITRINE**

The rectangular, tiled top of this mahogany vitrine has a sinuous, carved surround, above an open recess and cupboard with glazed door. The side has small shelves and carved brackets. The piece is in the style of the work of Victor Horta. *c.1900. W:90cm (35in).*

The copper key mounts are simple and unobtrusive.

The table top has a distinctive kidney shape.

The three raised shelves emphasize the curved form of the bureau.



Two doors on either side frame one open compartment.

Rounded brass shoes on conical legs emphasize the curved design.

LADY'S BUREAU

Designed by Henry van de Velde and made by H. Scheidemantel in Weimar, this bureau design is typical of the work of van de Velde. The curved lines of the wood are used to create an unusual and organic shape, avoiding applied, inlaid, or any elaborate decoration. The only detailing is the unobtrusive, copper key mounts and the brass shoes. *c.1903. W:123cm (49¼in). QU*

**MAHOGANY AND MIXED-WOOD TABLE**

This side table is made of mahogany decorated with marquetry. The top is inlaid with a floral decoration above a short drawer, and the cupboard is inlaid with a daffodil design. The supports are embellished with sinuous tendrils and brass fittings. *c.1902. W:63.5cm (25in). CAL*

ITALY AND SPAIN

LAVISH, HIGHLY ORIGINAL furniture created by designers working in Spain and Italy represented the most exotic form of Art Nouveau.

Italy called the style *Stile Liberty*, after the London shop at the forefront of the movement, or *Stile Floreale*, due to the nature-inspired decoration that characterized the movement. Italy had a rich tradition of decoration based on nature, from Roman mosaics to the grandiose style of Baroque (see pp.40–41). The new style – on show at the 1902 International Exhibition of Modern Decorative Arts at Turin – was taken up by artisans such as Ernesto Basile, a master of *Stile Floreale*; the prolific designer and cabinet-maker, Carlo Zen; and Eugenio Quarto. Quarto's exquisitely carved pieces were praised for appealing to Italian tastes and modern living needs, rather than replicating northern European Art Nouveau designs.

CARLO BUGATTI

However, it was Carlo Bugatti who held pride of place as a designer of extraordinary originality. Bugatti established workshops in Milan in 1888, where he created an eclectic interpretation of Art Nouveau, based upon flowers, animals, and plants, Egyptian, Byzantine, and Moorish influences, Japanese art, and fantasy.

The handcrafted furniture produced in Bugatti's workshop – desks,

cabinets, chairs, and settees – was not well constructed but had a rustic, imaginative charm. The furniture often combined useful features, such as tables with built-in cabinets, and chairs that incorporated lamps. Pieces used a wide range of sumptuous materials including silk, leather, and vellum for upholstering chairs and covering boxes and tabletops, and ebony, bone, mother-of-pearl, and metals, which were used as inlays.

The range of Bugatti's influences can be seen in his use of soft, warm colours, textiles, and strips of beaten or pierced metal evocative of North Africa, and the distinctive shield backs, crescent legs, and pinnacle and minaret-shapes inspired by Islamic motifs. Bugatti caused a sensation with the furniture he designed for particular settings, such as the prize-winning Moorish interior he created for the Italian Pavilion at the 1902 Turin International Exhibition of Modern Decorative Arts.

While Bugatti's early furniture was robust, with lively, complex patterns, he later developed a more restrained style that depended on a palette of pale colours and serpentine curves, influenced by the Parisian Art Nouveau designers.

SPAIN AND GAUDI

A band of Catalan architects, led by Antoni Gaudi in Barcelona, brought the Art Nouveau style to Spain. A daringly original designer, Gaudi created idiosyncratic furniture that embraced nature with its sinuous shapes and lavish use of decorative flower and plant motifs. Gaudi's furniture featured several practical elements, such as cupboards that incorporated small tables. He often worked in oak, and much of his furniture was created for his sculptural buildings, such as Casa Mila and the Guell Palace. Other Spanish champions of Art Nouveau included cabinet-makers Gaspar Homar and Juan Busquet, who were known for their fantastic furniture.

Parlour, designed by Agostino Lauro True to the concept that the room should be designed as a unified whole, all the elements of this parlour follow the same sinuous styling. The built-in bookcases are an integral part of the wall design and the furniture echoes the curves of the panelling.



ITALIAN CHAIR

This Italian side chair was designed by Giacomo Cometti and is made of carved oak. The sinuous carving on the back of the chair is confined to the splat, and the basic shape of the chair is uncluttered by ornate decoration. The upholstery is attached to the seat with small brass studs. c.1902.



SPANISH CABINET

This corner cabinet is made of oak. It has a round top with two curved glazed doors at the front. The doors are divided into six panels of glass by sinuous wooden partitions. The interior of the cabinet has two shelves and the piece stands on three legs. 1904–05. H:230cm (90½in).



ITALIAN SIDEBOARD

This Italian carved oak sideboard was designed by Giacomo Cometti. The sideboard is decorated with sinuous brass mounts carved with floral and foliate motifs, which are typical of the low-relief metalwork favoured by Cometti. The

upper section consists of a central cupboard and drawers flanked by open storage. The lower section contains a marble-topped cupboard. Cometti was an artist-turned craftsman who originally trained as a sculptor. He was heavily influenced by the English Arts and Crafts Movement. c.1902.





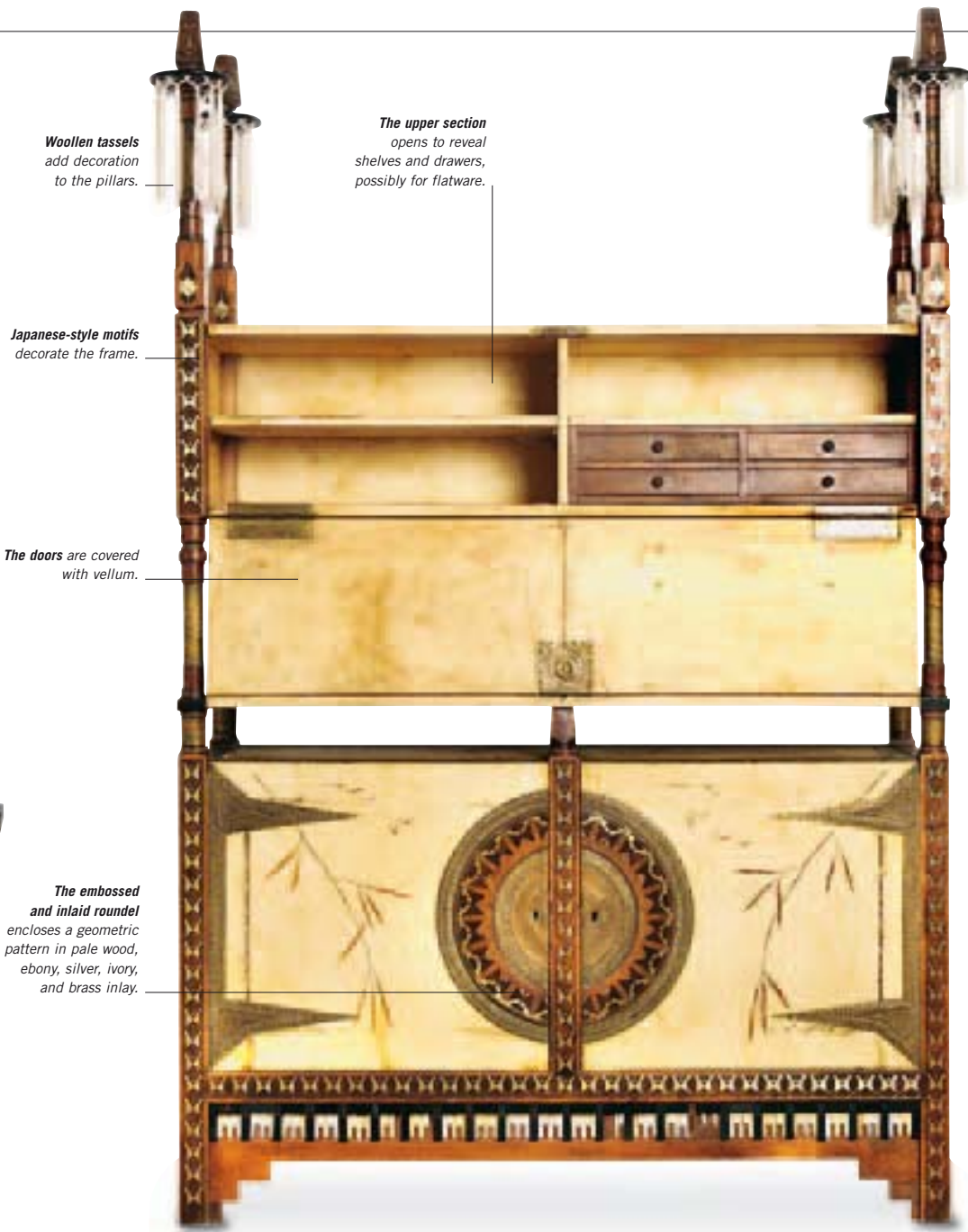
MEDITERRANEAN ARMCHAIR

This striking "Calvet" armchair is made entirely of oak. The piece was designed by Antoni Gaudi and has a heart-shaped back. The rounded seat rests on gently curving cabriole legs. *c.1900. H:95cm (37½in).*



NUT-WOOD ARMCHAIRS

This pair of dark stained armchairs was designed by Carlo Bugatti. Each chair is decorated with inlaid pewter and embossed copper banding. The seat and back are upholstered in natural leather and further embellished with woollen tassels. *c.1900. H:118.7cm (46¾in). DOR*



Woollen tassels add decoration to the pillars.

The upper section opens to reveal shelves and drawers, possibly for flatware.

Japanese-style motifs decorate the frame.

The doors are covered with vellum.

The embossed and inlaid roundel encloses a geometric pattern in pale wood, ebony, silver, ivory, and brass inlay.

ITALIAN INLAID SIDEBOARD

Made by Carlo Bugatti, this sideboard shows Japanese, Moorish, and Egyptian influences. The doors are covered with vellum, and the upper door is hinged and drops down to reveal shelving and small drawers. The whole piece is contained within a four-pillar construction; the frame is made of brown stained and

polished nut-wood with tops and inlays, and the boxes are made of soft-wood, covered with parchment and Japanese-style painted motifs. The piece is also decorated with lavish inlay materials, including brass, silver, ebony, and ivory. This imaginative combination of wood, metal, parchment, and vellum results in an idiosyncratic style. *c.1900. W:154.4cm (60in). VZ*

PRAYER BENCH

This prayer bench, designed by Antoni Gaudi, has a curved back, with flat armrests and a slightly bowed seat. The bench is supported on slender and elegant curving legs, which are linked by stretchers. *Early 20th century.*



OCCASIONAL TABLE

This mahogany occasional table by Carlo Bugatti has a top inlaid with pewter and bone and circular marquetry, and sides with stylized florets and roundels. The legs feature embossed bronzed coverings. *Early 20th century. H:40cm (15½in). L&T*



CHARLES RENNIE MACKINTOSH

STRAIGHT LINES WITH GENTLE CURVES AND GEOMETRIC DECORATION TYPIFY THE ELEGANTLY ATTENUATED FURNITURE OF ONE OF SCOTLAND'S MOST RESPECTED DESIGNERS.

BORN AND EDUCATED in Glasgow, Charles Rennie Mackintosh won many prizes as a student, including the prestigious Alexander Thomson Travelling Scholarship, which took him to France, Belgium, and Italy. His career as an architect began in 1889 when he joined the firm of John Honeyman and Keppie, rising to partner 12 years later, and remaining there until 1914. Mackintosh turned his back on the widespread preference for the Classical tradition, cultivating instead an interest in Gothic architecture as well as that of his native Scotland.

Whereas furniture design in most parts of Britain was dominated by the Arts and Crafts style, a new design movement flourished in Glasgow. Mackintosh was heavily influenced by the journal *The Studio*, which illustrated the work of innovative artists and designers, and he started to design furniture, textiles, and interiors. Encouraged by Francis Newbury, the progressive director of the Glasgow School of Art, Mackintosh teamed up with the artist, Herbert MacNair, and the sisters, Frances and Margaret Macdonald, known as "The Glasgow Four". Together they created distinctive designs for furniture, textiles, metalwork, and posters that became known as the Glasgow Style (see p.366).

ARCHITECT AND FURNITURE DESIGNER

Among Mackintosh's architectural achievements were the design and furnishing of the Glasgow School of Art in 1897; a number of Glasgow tearooms for Miss Kate Cranston in collaboration with the decorator George Walton; and several private houses. Furniture was minimal, emphasizing spatial effects and giving the rooms an almost poetic atmosphere.

Mackintosh designed furniture in his own name and also provided designs for the Glasgow furniture-makers, Guthrie and Wells. Chairs particularly caught his imagination, and he designed a variety of original styles in which the back was the main focus of attention. The furniture for Miss Cranston's tearooms included the first of his signature high-backed chairs, in this case with an oval-shaped top rail.

OAK TABLE

This table is of characteristic rectilinear design with bold, straight lines and a cut-out heart motif on each of the supporting legs. The table was designed for the Billiard Room at Miss Cranston's Argyle Tearooms. 1897.
H:71cm (28in); W:61cm (24in); D:61cm (24in).



EBONIZED SYCAMORE CHAIR

This chair has a distinctive geometric trellis back resembling a stylized tree extending to the lower stretcher. The drop-in seat is upholstered in a plain fabric. The piece was designed for Miss Cranston's 'Hous'hill'. 1904. H:72cm (28½in). L&T



BIOGRAPHY



Charles Rennie Mackintosh

1868 Charles Rennie Mackintosh is born in Glasgow, the son of a police superintendent.

1889 Joins the Glasgow firm of architects, John Honeyman and Keppie.

1893 Teams up with Herbert J. MacNair and the Macdonald sisters – Margaret and Frances – to form the "Glasgow Four".

1896 Wins competition to design the Glasgow School of Art.

1897 Commissioned by Miss Kate Cranston to design her chain of Glasgow tearooms.

1900 Mackintosh causes an international sensation with his interior and furniture designs for the 8th Secessionist Exhibition in Vienna.

1902 Designs integrated interiors for Hill House near Glasgow and a music room in Vienna for the Wiener Werkstätte's chief financial backer, Fritz Warndorfer.

1909 Completes Glasgow's School of Art library, his final architectural masterpiece.

1914 Leaves Honeyman and Keppie and settles in London.

1928 Mackintosh dies of cancer in London.



OAK CABINET

This cabinet makes use of light, feminine colours, with its white paint and pink detail. The design features two figures holding a two-dimensional rose, an emblem that was used extensively in Mackintosh's furniture and architecture. The piece was made for 14 Kingsborough Gardens, Glasgow. 1902.
H:154.3cm (60½in); W:99.3cm (39in); D:39.7cm (15½in).

MACKINTOSH INTERIORS

AMONG HIS MANY ACHIEVEMENTS, CHARLES RENNIE MACKINTOSH IS BEST REMEMBERED FOR DESIGNING BUILDINGS WITH DECORATIVE INTERIORS THAT WERE CREATED AS PART OF A SINGLE, COHESIVE THEME.

In 1896, Mackintosh won the competition to design the new Glasgow School of Art. Mackintosh not only produced the architectural design for the school but also designed the interiors, in collaboration with Margaret Macdonald. The design, which successfully blended clean, rectangular shapes with the languid, delicate curves of Art Nouveau, covered everything



from mantelpieces, lighting fixtures, and carpets to furniture and crockery.

In 1897, Mackintosh received the first in a series of commissions from Kate Cranston to decorate her chain of Glasgow tearooms, a collaboration that continued until 1917. For the Buchanan Street rooms, Mackintosh's input was restricted to the production of wall murals – the interiors and furnishings were designed by George Walton. However, for the next commission – the Argyle Street Tearooms – these responsibilities were reversed and Mackintosh produced his innovative, rectilinear chair designs. Mackintosh went on to create unified decorative schemes for tearooms in Ingram Street and at The Willow in Sauchiehall Street, where the architecture and interior design combined to create serene atmospheres. Furniture was restrained in both shape and decoration and exhibited his signature “light feminine” and “dark masculine” colour schemes. The importance that Mackintosh placed on total design meant that he even designed the teaspoons and waitresses' dresses for The Willow's *Room de Luxe*.

While Kate Cranston was Mackintosh's most consistent patron, others who bought into his ideal of integrated interiors included the Wiener Werkstätte's primary financial backer, Fritz Warndorfer, for whom he designed a music room, and the publisher, Walter Blackie, who commissioned Hill House near Glasgow.

The House of an Art Lover, Glasgow Mackintosh's geometric interior features a suite of white high-backed chairs and a square dining table. The geometric shapes of the furniture are echoed in the wall panelling.

A SOPHISTICATED STYLE

The principles that lay at the heart of the Arts and Crafts movement, such as careful attention to fine craftsmanship and using the nature, beauty, and colour of wood for decorative effect, mattered little to Mackintosh. Instead, his sophisticated furniture designs, which were sometimes even structurally unsound, were inspired by E.W. Godwin's work and were based on bold, straight lines combined with gentle curves. Mackintosh's favourite timbers included oak and beech, and while rich “dark masculine” tones of grey, brown, and olive were used, he favoured a palette of “light feminine” white and pastel shades, similar to the colours found in the paintings of American artist James McNeill Whistler.

Decoration was sparing and featured geometric shapes such as rectangles and squares; curved, rounded inlays in metal, pink or amethyst-coloured glass, mother-of-pearl, or enamel; and intricate flower motifs such as the rose, derived from Japanese patterns and Celtic art. Elegant chairs had attenuated backs, cupboards were crowned with broad projecting cornices, and tables had long, tapered supports. Mackintosh's interpretation of Art Nouveau was in marked contrast to both the luxurious sensuality of the French and Belgian Art Nouveau and the robust, masculine style found in English Arts and Crafts furniture.

GAINING RECOGNITION

Although Mackintosh's pure, rectilinear style was largely ignored in the rest of Britain, it was widely admired throughout Europe and had a great influence on artists in Germany and Austria. When Mackintosh exhibited his furniture at the 8th Secessionist Exhibition in 1900 in Vienna, his work made a lasting impression on contemporary Austrian designers: Koloman Moser and Josef Hoffmann, in particular, appreciated his confident, rational style, and decorative schemes.

Mackintosh left Glasgow for London in 1914, and his last years were devoted to a few modest architectural projects, painting, and textile designs. A memorial exhibition, after his death, in Glasgow in 1933 stimulated interest in Mackintosh's designs for buildings, interiors, and furniture, and finally gave him the recognition he deserved. In the 1950s, a revival of interest in the Art Nouveau sparked a reappraisal of Mackintosh's furniture designs, and today he is acknowledged as an influential forerunner of the Modern movement (see pp.416–47).



STAINED PINE CABINET.

This cabinet has three drawers with pierced, crescent-shaped handles set above panelled doors. W:155cm (61in). L&T



CABINET ON STAND

This oak rectilinear cabinet has two doors with central glazed panels, and the frame has three square-section vertical supports at either end, joined by two stretchers at floor level. Mid-way is a shelf with a raised edge on three sides. 1900. H:141cm (55½in). QU

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL

AT THE HEART OF the Art Nouveau movement in Scotland, the Glasgow School of Art sowed the seeds of an artistic revolution.

The enterprising director, Francis Newbery, and his wife Jessie, were instrumental in taking the Glasgow School of Art beyond its traditional role as an institution for formal instruction in painting. A great admirer and champion of the teachings of William Morris, Newbery urged his students to learn as much as they could from the Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau movements. He set up art studios where artist-craftsmen provided a “technical artistic education” in a

broad range of commercial crafts, including bookbinding, woodcarving, ceramics, stained glass, and metalwork.

KEY DESIGNERS

An influential team of designers and architects closely associated with the Glasgow School included Charles Rennie Mackintosh, J. Herbert MacNair, and the sisters Margaret and Frances MacDonald. Known as “The Glasgow Four” or “Four Macs”, they created furniture and interior decoration inspired by Arts and Crafts ideology, but which developed as a movement in its own right and was celebrated around the world as the

“Glasgow Style”. This style incorporated natural imagery together with a strong, psychological identification with the city – then booming economically and culturally – powered by its engineering and industrial skills.

It was a decidedly Scottish and occasionally modest interpretation of the Art Nouveau. Simple, geometric furniture designs were decorated with stylized patterns of flowers, plants, animals, figural patterns, and Celtic-style decoration. These were shown in unusual colours drawn from local scenery, such as



A Glasgow School hammered brass mirror This piece has a repoussé, stylized, floral motif design with long, flowing tendrils ending in a swirl, and a circular bud design with striking blue enamel centres. c.1900–10. H:23¼in (59cm). GDG



STANDING CLOCK

The stained beech case has foliate piercings. The brass dial, designed by Margaret Thomson Wilson, depicts two female figures – one holding a galleon – touching a stylized hour glass above sinuous plant forms. c.1900. H:206cm (80½in). L&T



HALLSTAND

This arched rectangular mirror is set in a shaped and pierced oval frame fitted with coat pegs above a shelf. The piece is made of ebonized wood. It has a glove drawer and a shaped, foliate upright supporting a stick stand. H:192cm (75½in). L&T



ARMCHAIR

This stained beech chair has an elongated splat inlaid with stylized plant forms, a U-shaped top rail and arms, an upholstered panel seat, and square, tapering, stretched legs. H:147.25cm (58in). L&T



TABLE CABINET

This *Bijouterie* table and cabinet by James Herbert MacNair is made of stained beech. The glazed, hinged top, is flanked by sliding *demi-lune* display boxes. It has square, tapering legs. c.1901. H:77cm (30½in). L&T



SETTLE

This stained beech settle by Sir Robert Lorimer has a rectangular solid seat and back. The back is carved with five roundels enclosing leafy plant forms and bears the inscription: “*Blessit be simple life without end Reid.*” W:152cm (59¼in). L&T



heathery purple, misty greys, and soft green. The Glasgow style won international acclaim, especially at the 8th Secessionist Exhibition in 1900 in Vienna, and exercised a potent influence on the architects of industrial design in Germany and Austria. The rooms furnished by the group for the 1902 Turin International Exhibition of Modern Decorative Arts focused on controlled line, eschewing serpentine curves, and favouring symmetrical flowers,

The Glasgow School of Art This building was designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh in 1896 and is regarded as one of his most notable architectural achievements.

elongated figures, and intricate linear designs in glass, metal, and enamel.

THE ROSE EMBLEM

Nature always inspired the Glasgow Four and was occasionally approached from a scientific perspective. Even the group's emblem – the two-dimensional rose, which was designed by Mackintosh and featured frequently on its architecture and furniture – was

inspired by a cabbage cut in half. Other talents associated with the Glasgow School were Ernest Archibald Taylor, lauded for his clean, elegant, and highly refined designs in the style of Charles Rennie Mackintosh; George Walton, with his delicate and subtle designs for furniture, textiles, and glass; and Talwin Morris, who worked in a variety of media, from furniture to textiles, metalwork, and glass.



HALLSTAND

This hallstand is made of stained oak. It was designed by Wylie and Lochhead and shows the influence of Mackintosh. The moulded cornice above a central bevelled plate is flanked by repoussé copper panels showing stylized briar roses. Decorative supports in the form of flower stems add to the overall design. *H:197cm (79in); W:186cm (73in); D:32cm (12½in).* L&T



Geometric floral design

Moulded hinges and handles display intricate foliate designs.

Elaborate wooden inlays depict stylized geometric floral designs.

Rectangular and arched fielded panels decorate the front.

The pierced wooden plinth has a curved geometric pattern.



MAHOGANY CUPBOARD

This inlaid cupboard is made from mahogany and consists of elegant, vertical lines embellished with a projecting and moulded cornice. It is raised on a plinth. In contrast to the simple lines of the piece, the fielded, panelled door is inlaid with florid, geometric, stylized flowers, plant forms, foliage, and stems, and is flanked by similarly inlaid panels.

The moulded hinges and handles are elaborately decorated with foliate motifs. The plinth is pierced at the front and sides with a repeating heart-shaped pattern that echoes the inlaid design. The cupboard was possibly designed by J.S. Henry, a Glasgow wholesale company that often supplied furniture to Liberty and Co. and worked with leading designers such as George Walton. *H:210cm (82¾in); W:150cm (59in).* L&T

BRITAIN

BRITISH FURNITURE DESIGNERS took the basic themes of Art Nouveau and interpreted them in two different ways: some experimented with a more understated version of the flowing, feminine lines popular in France and Belgium; others, most famously Scotland's Charles Rennie Mackintosh (see pp.364–65), favoured the restrained, rectilinear style seen in Germany and Austria. In fact, the Viennese Secessionists later drew inspiration themselves from the bold, architectural furniture that Mackintosh designed. Interestingly, the Art Nouveau movement in Britain also evolved from the stylized forms of Aesthetic period furniture (see p.326).

WELL-CRAFTED FURNITURE

Towards the end of the 19th century, the quality of British furniture had started to decline, as mass-production enabled manufacturers to churn out hundreds of identical pieces at affordable prices for the growing middle classes.

The work of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement had started to reverse this by championing furniture handmade by craftsmen. The trend was continued by designers and craftsmen working in the Art Nouveau style, who, despite using machines to produce their furniture, also put a premium on quality.

Many British Art Nouveau furniture-makers used satinwood or walnut as well as mahogany for their designs. Some of the most spectacular examples of their work are display cabinets or cupboards that feature intricately cut and inlaid designs.

SHAPLAND AND PETTER

Although perhaps best known for their work in the Arts and Crafts tradition, the firm of Shapland and Petter produced elaborate, high-quality furniture in exotic woods such as mahogany. Based in Barnstaple, Devon, they also made oak pieces decorated with good-quality carving, colour-stained panels, or stylized copper panels, as well as ceramic roundels made locally by the Brannam pottery works.

Their team of designers remained anonymous, but Shapland and Petter supplied stores across Britain,

including Marsh Jones and Cribbs in Leeds, and Wylie and Lochhead in Glasgow. Their work also sold abroad. Although their furniture was mass-produced, it was very high quality.

DECORATIVE INLAYS AND MOTIFS Shapland and Petter, together with the architect and designer, Ernest Gimson, used inlays of ivory, silver, abalone shell, mother-of-pearl, and fruitwoods to decorate their designs.

As in France and Belgium, motifs from the natural world – stylized peacock feathers, snowdrops, and lilies – were worked in marquetry or metal inlays; designs for decorative hinges and door pulls were often inspired by the sinuous, whiplash lines that were favoured by Continental makers.

The Glasgow firm of Wylie and Lochhead also made pieces in this style, sometimes combining elements with the angular look favoured by Mackintosh and the Glasgow School.

ARTS AND CRAFTS HYBRID

Some of the designers and craftsmen who had been working in the Arts and Crafts style – including Charles Frances Annesley Voysey and Charles Robert Ashbee – were influenced by Art Nouveau motifs, and combined them with a more sturdy Arts and Crafts form to create a hybrid look.

Voysey, for example, used decoration sparingly, preferring to let the grain and beauty of the woods he used speak for themselves. However, when he occasionally used metal mounts or panels, these were often in a flowing style inspired by Art Nouveau.

The London store Liberty & Co. (see right) helped to popularize Art Nouveau by championing the work of the most innovative designers, such as Voysey and Mackintosh, and also by commissioning commercial imitations. Much of Liberty's furniture was made in oak and mahogany, and the designs they commissioned from Leonard F. Wyburd and E.G. Punnett for oak cupboards, tables, and chairs are among the store's most widely recognized items of furniture. Liberty furniture was known for its simple construction, symmetrical design, and the restrained use of decorative motifs, and it was often marked "Liberty & Co." on a rectangular plaque.



UPHOLSTERED ARMCHAIR

This mahogany armchair has distinctive, horizontal, slatted arms and a drop-in seat. The top rail is inlaid with a band of five stylized seedpods. The seat and back are upholstered in a floral fabric. L&T



OCCASIONAL TABLE

This table has a shaped lower tier beneath the hexagonal lobed top. There are three elaborately pierced supports, each terminating in a pair of slender, curved legs. H:70.5cm (28¼in). L&T

LIBERTY & CO.

THIS EMPORIUM ON LONDON'S REGENT STREET WAS FOUNDED IN 1875, AND WAS AT THE VANGUARD OF THE NEW STYLE.

In 1883, Liberty & Co., already famous for its Oriental wares and Art Nouveau fabrics, opened a Furnishing and Decorating Studio under the direction of Leonard F. Wyburd. The Studio's aim was to meet the growing demand for fashionable, decorative, and affordable furniture that incorporated the design vocabulary of Art Nouveau. The furniture borrowed freely from pioneering designers such as C.F.A. Voysey and Charles Rennie Mackintosh, who also contributed designs. By 1887, Liberty was selling a highly successful range of simple chairs and country-style oak furniture embellished with inlaid decoration, elaborate strap hinges, leaded glass panels, and tiles, bringing Art Nouveau furniture to a wider audience.



A signature Liberty & Co. ivory plaque



Copper mirror This piece is decorated with embossed repoussé stems, each supporting a blue bud-shaped "roundel", or pottery disc. c.1900. W:64.5cm (25in). PUR



Walnut dressing table The table has original hinged copper handles. The simple construction and restrained decoration are typical of Liberty & Co. H:180cm (71in). L&T



CORNER CHAIR

Specifically designed to stand in a corner, and a direct descendant of the corner chairs of the late 18th century, this chair has backs on two sides of the square rush seat. The moulded top rail is supported by shaped splats. The chair is raised on turned legs, linked by parallel stretchers, and ending in bulbous feet. *L&T*



WRITING DESK

The pierced gallery at the back of this mahogany desk, and the embossed copper panels depicting owls and stylized plants, place this piece firmly in the Art Nouveau period. The desk is thought to be the work of either Shapland & Petter or Wylie & Lochhead – both highly regarded furniture manufacturers. *H:118cm (46½in); W:106cm (41¾in). L&T*



DISPLAY CABINET

This ornate and curvaceous mahogany cabinet features marquetry decoration of flowers and whiplash tendrils. This fashionable technique was used extensively on expensive furniture during the period. The cabinet doors, positioned below the oval mirror, are made of leaded glass decorated with a tulip pattern. *H:177cm (70¾in). L&T*



The door and drawer fittings are handmade.

A central tabernacle provides open storage.

The marquetry panel has a stylized and geometric floral design.

The door hinges, handles, and escutcheon are decorated with bold geometric motifs.

The wooden case was made by machine.

WARDROBE

This mahogany wardrobe is a high-quality combination of traditional craftsmanship and machine technology typical of its maker, Shapland & Petter. A decorative feature is made of the plated metal-hammered door and drawer fittings, and the central cupboard door is inlaid with distinctive foliate motifs. *H:210cm (82¾in). DN*

EDWARDIAN BRITAIN

WHILE SOME EDWARDIAN households embraced the latest Art Nouveau forms, many returned to the furniture styles of the past and the latest Classical revivals. Designs from various historical periods were dusted off and reworked by companies throughout Britain. Inspiration ranged from the distant past – Renaissance, Elizabethan, Jacobean, and even Gothic – to the more recent Neoclassical work of Sheraton, Hepplewhite, and Robert Adam. The result was comfortable rather than cutting-edge, and less cluttered than the Victorian ideal.

Art Nouveau and Revival furniture were made in parallel to satisfy the needs of the less adventurous Edwardians as well as those who subscribed to the latest fashions.

REVIVAL FURNITURE

The Revival trend had started in the late 19th century after a new series of interior design books, aimed at the middle classes, reignited the fashion for the three great names of British Neoclassical furniture. Then, in 1897, Sheraton's *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Drawing Book* and Hepplewhite's *The Cabinet-Maker and*

Upholsterer's Guide were reprinted and the Revival was confirmed. The result was a fusion of the work of these three designers, adapted to suit smaller Edwardian rooms and a desire for comfort. It was also a rejection of the heavy, sombre furniture popular in Victorian times.

Revival furniture was often made from light mahogany, satinwood, or satin-birch, and decorated with stringing, crossbanding, and wooden inlays of fans or shells, set with bone, or painted with flowers and foliate scrolls. Decoration was often elaborate. Sometimes pieces were made from less exotic and expensive wood and

painted to resemble satinwood.

Some designers slimmed down Sheraton's designs to make them more delicate. This occasionally went too far and resulted in pieces that were spindly and out of proportion.

Others took the path of true imitation and aimed to recreate Sheraton and other Neoclassical designers exactly.

Some of these pieces are so faithful to

the original that

it takes an expert to tell them apart.

Gillow of Lancaster and Edwards



Glass shelves reflect the light and emphasize the objects inside.

Glass panels allow treasured objects to be displayed.

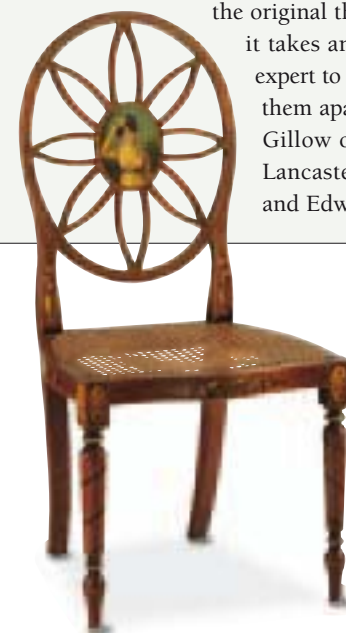
Painted swags and medallions are Classically inspired.

The casing and legs are slender and delicate.

SATINWOOD VITRINE

The elegant proportions of this cabinet are characteristic of the Edwardian era, when furniture became more slender and delicate. Influences were diverse, but the painted swag decoration, medallions, and motifs typical of

the period, are Classical in style. The cornice and pediment are decorated with portrait-style paintings. Vitrines did not become common until the second half of the 19th century. This one bears a label from Maple & Co. *Early 20th century. H:73cm (29¼in); W:136.5cm (53½in). MLL*



SIDE CHAIR

This is one of a pair of Sheraton Revival satinwood side chairs. The pierced, oval back is centred by a portrait of a young girl, and the seat is covered with caning. The front legs are turned. *Early 20th century. DN*



OCCASIONAL TABLE

This circular table is made from mahogany and has satinwood banding and floral marquetry. The square tapered supports are united by stretchers. *Early 20th century. D:66cm (26in). GorL*

and Roberts of London are among the best of these furniture-makers, but many other firms made inexpensive copies for the mass-market. Many pieces were not marked by the makers, so attributing them can be difficult.

A STEADY DEMAND

Despite the volume of furniture made, much Edwardian furniture was of

good quality. However, veneers were sometimes used to disguise poor construction. There was a great demand for desks; bookcases; chests-of-drawers; display cabinets; commodes; side, dining, and other chairs; tables including dining, occasional, and dressing; marble-topped washstands; bedside cupboards; and wardrobes that were frequently part of a bedroom suite.

Sofas were often based on Sheraton and Hepplewhite styles, but were less overblown than Victorian examples. Manufacturers made suites of chairs with matching sofas, usually from mahogany, but sometimes walnut or satinwood. Seats were often upholstered in silk or damask, while the backs and sides were caned.

PRINCIPAL MAKERS

Important names in Edwardian furniture included Waring and Gillow and Maple and Co. Maples was based in Tottenham Court Road, London, and was the largest furniture store in the world. It made its own furniture

for sale at home and abroad, and drew its customers from both the middle and upper classes and even royalty – Tsar Nicholas of Russia furnished his Winter Palace with furniture from its workrooms. Maples also furnished British Embassies, even going so far as to arrange for a grand piano to be carried up the Khyber Pass on packhorses.

For those whose taste did not fit in with either the Revival or Art Nouveau movements, there was an opportunity to furnish their homes in an exotic manner using the new bamboo and wicker furniture, or pieces with a Moorish or Japanese influence.



LADY'S WRITING DESK

Probably made by Maple & Co, this rosewood and marquetry compact lady's writing desk, or *bonheur-du-jour*, has a raised, galleried back with lidded interior compartments. The inset-leather writing surface sits above three frieze drawers and the piece is raised on slender legs. c.1905. W:100cm (40in). FRE



Elaborate drop handle



Classical inlay motif



DISPLAY CABINET I

This impressive mahogany cabinet has fine crossbanded decoration and an astragal-glazed door and panels. The cornice is centred with an architectural pediment and the base is decorated with fiddleback mahogany and satinwood lozenges on the central door and canted sides. The cabinet is supported on slender legs. Early 20th century. W:95cm (37½in). DN



ROLLTOP DESK

The lid of this satinwood marquetry-decorated piece opens to reveal a mechanical interior. Initially introduced in the 18th century, the rolltop desk was reinterpreted during the Art Nouveau period to meet changing tastes. Early 20th century. W:95cm (37½in). DN



TWO-TIER ÉTAGÈRE

This *étagère* is made of inlaid mahogany and satinwood banding. The top is formed from a later glass-based tray, and the piece stands on square, swept supports. *Étagères* were used for displaying objects or serving food. Early 20th century. W:91.5cm (36in). GorL

GERMANY

GERMANY TOOK LONGER to embrace the changes in decorative arts seen elsewhere in Europe. This was largely because it was still preoccupied with the prevailing *Historismus* style, where design was centred on an interpretation of historic elements.

However, through the influence of the Belgian designer Henry van de Velde – who worked on a number of high-profile projects in Germany – and the innovative work of gifted German artists such as Richard Riemerschmid, Peter Behrens, and Franz von Stuck, the Art Nouveau style became popular. This style was known in Germany as *Jugendstil*

(Youth Style) – a name associated with the popular review *Die Jugend* (Youth) – and it subsequently flourished throughout Germany during the last decades of the 19th century.

Jugendstil embraced both Symbolism and a preoccupation with nature and natural shapes. It was applied to everything from architecture to furniture and simple household objects. Each element had to work as part of a whole in terms of form and design: a concept called *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The aim was to make the home a unified, total work of art: practical, simple, dignified, and beautiful.

Many of the exponents of *Jugendstil*

were painters who turned to the decorative arts as part of a reaction against the stifling historicism of the fine arts. Munich was home to some of these designers, and came to be the city at the heart of the movement.

INNOVATIVE DESIGNERS

Early advocates of *Jugendstil* included Hermann Obrist, who was inspired by the Symbolists' emotions and the plant world, and architect August Endell, who played a pivotal role throughout the development of Munich's Secessionist movement by seeking to echo the spirit of his Austrian

contemporaries. Endell designed boldly proportioned, clean-lined furniture in materials such as elm or forged steel, and paid considerable attention to decorative detail.

Among the furniture designers in the Munich group were Richard Riemerschmid, Bruno Paul, and the architect, Peter Behrens.

Behrens was also one of the founding members of the *Vereinigte Werkstätten für Kunst im Handwerk* (United Workshops for Applied Art). His furniture combined traditional rectilinear shapes with restrained curves. Richard Riemerschmid, a talented designer, painter, and

The six-panel circular top is repeated in the six C-scroll supports underneath the table.

The six veneered fields bring out the decorative quality of the wood surface.

The pedestal is urn-shaped.

Six C-scroll supports stand on a plain circular foot plate.



CIRCULAR DINING TABLE

This oak pedestal dining table was designed by Peter Behrens and made by the *Vereinigte Werkstätten für Kunst im Handwerk*, Munich. It has a panelled top above an urn-shaped pedestal. The six C-scroll supports underneath the table repeat the symmetry of the six-panel circular top. The circular foot plate also

repeats the shape of the circular table top. With Richard Riemerschmid, Behrens was the first industrial designer, designing specifically for mass production. With this piece, Behrens moved away from his earlier elaborate and curvilinear Art Nouveau style towards a simpler style that depended on the quality of the wood, and simple shapes and proportions. c.1900. W:102cm (40½in). QU



SIDE CHAIR

This chair by Peter Behrens was designed for the poet Richard Dehmel's house in Hamburg. Made of white painted wood, the chair is geometric in design, with bold cut-out shapes on the back and has straight legs. c.1903. H:95cm (37½in).



YELLOW LACQUERED CUPBOARD

This pinewood cupboard was designed by Gertrud Kleinhempel and made by Dresdner Werkstätten. Two of its four doors are pierced with heart motifs, and it is divided horizontally with three rows of rectangular, black and white scenic panels. c.1900. H:185cm (73in). QU

architect, was also linked to the workshops. His furniture followed Behrens' example but was also influenced by Celtic origins, which played a role in Germany's decorative traditions. His simply shaped furniture used wood in its natural state and colour, with the grain its most distinctive decorative feature. Bruno Paul, another protagonist of *Jugendstil*, developed comfortable, rectilinear designs called *Typenmöbel* which he was able to mass produce. They were a forerunner of the industrial furniture production of the 1930s and 40s.

Germany also spawned a host of artists' guilds, established in an effort to realise the ideals of the British Arts and Crafts movement.

THE DARMSTADT COLONY

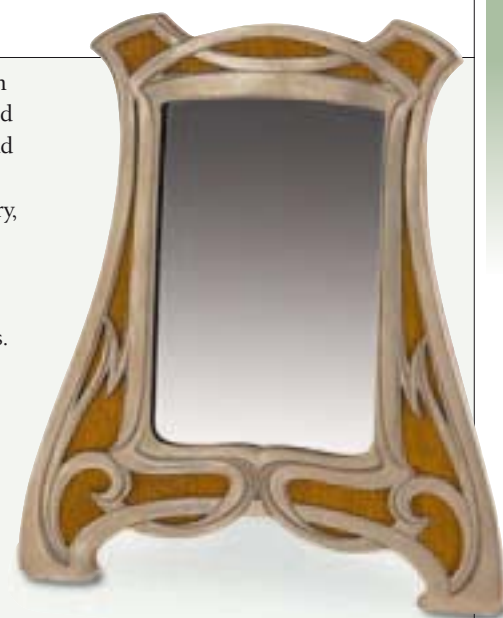
The most notable of these guilds was founded in 1899 by Ernst Ludwig, Grand Duke of Hesse, and was based at Darmstadt. Largely the vision of the Austrian architect and designer, Josef Maria Olbrich, the Darmstadt colony included public buildings and residences that were designed, built, and furnished for various artists.

Some of the most celebrated examples of the German "new

art" could be found at Darmstadt in the house that Peter Behrens designed for himself. The interior, furniture, and decoration created a unified whole.

By the beginning of the 20th century, Germany had embraced industrial production and increasingly turned its attention to improving the quality of mass-produced, industrial products. This signalled the death knell for Art Nouveau, with its ideals of hand-craftsmanship, freedom of artistic creation, and refined decoration.

Pewter picture frame The frame has a curvaceous, waisted shape with sinuous and interlaced stylized plant motifs rising from the feet. c.1905. H:24cm (9½in). TO



DINING CHAIR

This is a poplar dining chair which comes from a set of nine, designed by Peter Behrens. It is lacquered and has a leather seat. c.1901.



BEECH FRAME ARMCHAIR

This beech chair was designed by Marcel Kammerer and made by Thonet of Vienna (see p.375). The bentwood frame is stained mahogany, and the stuffed seat and buttoned back are covered in brown leather. c.1910. H:81.5cm (32in). DOR



SIX-DRAWER COMMODE

This stained pine commode, designed by Richard Riemerschmid, has a rectangular top with a three-sided splashback. The six drawers have nickel-plated pulls. c.1905. H:130.5cm (51½in). QU



LEMON MAHOGANY CUPBOARD

This Patriz Huber cupboard is polished and partly carved. It has inlays of different exotic woods and copper mountings. The top has faceted glazing and shelves on either side. c.1900. H:200cm (80in). QU



COUCH TABLE

This mahogany table, designed by Richard Riemerschmid and made by Dresdner Werkstätten, has a hexagonal top, a round second tier, and curved legs. 1905. H:69cm (27in); W:51cm (20in); D:51cm (20in). QU



OAK FRAME ARMCHAIR

This oak chair by Otto Eckmann has square-section arms, rails, legs, supports, and stretchers, with the latter two bowed. It has a brass-riveted, leather-upholstered back and seat pads. c.1900. H:95cm (37½in). QU

AUSTRIA

VIENNA WAS PARTICULARLY receptive to the desire for innovation that swept across Europe in the last 25 years of the 19th century. This recognition of the need for change signalled the approaching demise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which collapsed at the end of World War I. Austria founded her own distinctive version of Art Nouveau, and established a new set of stylistic ideals.

The Vienna art establishment was challenged by a group of artists, architects, and designers, who, in 1897, founded the “Secession” under

the chairmanship of Gustav Klimt. This movement protested against the conservative teachings of its masters and campaigned for modernity, heralding the beginning of one of Austria’s most creative periods.

BOLD DESIGNS

Sculptors and artists were active in the Secession, as were the architects and interior designers Otto Wagner, Adolf Loos, and Josef Maria Olbrich, and furniture designers Josef Hoffmann and Koloman Moser. This enterprising group created bold furniture designs

for the new century. The Secessionists rejected the flamboyant naturalism of French Art Nouveau, preferring the linear furniture designs created by the Scottish architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh (see pp.364–65), who was widely admired in Vienna. Austrian designers were more influenced by the British Arts and Crafts movement of the late 19th century than by French or Belgian Art Nouveau.

NATURAL INSPIRATION

The Secessionists were inspired by the geometry of nature. The curving,

sinuous plant forms popular with the French and Belgian Schools were rejected in favour of rectangles and squares. The Secessionists based their designs on a spare, geometric style,



The case is oak, furnished and polished, with maple inlays.

The panels of the glazed door form a geometric pattern with the low shelf.

The embossed panels with harpist and knight motifs were inspired by Klimt.

DISPLAY CABINET

This oak cabinet was made in Vienna. It is almost square in shape and rests on a framed plinth. The glazed central door is flanked by flat-panel doors with geometric-pattern oak figuring and maple inlays. The open shelf in

the centre is flanked by brass panels embossed with a scene depicting a harpist and a knight. The design of these panels was influenced by Gustav Klimt’s *Beethoven Frieze*. The embossed panels were probably created for this piece by Klimt’s brother, Georg. c.1905–10. H:183cm (72in). QU



DISPLAY CABINET

This mahogany display cabinet is part of a dining-room set designed by Otto Wytrlik of Vienna. Note the straight lines of the design and the simple veneered walnut finish and brass fittings. c.1901. WKA



BLACK-PAINTED CUPBOARD

Designed by Adolf Loos, this functional cupboard is made from softwood, painted black and then varnished. It has distinctive twin two-over-three glazed doors and brass hardware. c.1908. H:142.25cm (56in). WKA



VIENNESE SERVING TABLE

This serving table is made of stained oak with brass handles. It has a removable top with glass inlay, and hinged sides with faceted glass panels to allow access to the shelves. c.1905. H:77.5cm (31in). DOR



CIRCULAR TABLE

This small, circular-topped, beech bentwood table is of a very simple design with no additional decoration. It has two circular undertiers, and the piece stands on slightly splayed supports. H:75cm (29½in). DN

using simple shapes and linear patterns and new materials such as plywood, aluminium, and bent beechwood. Their furniture was designed for uncluttered interiors.

KEY FIGURES

The most distinguished Secessionists were Josef Hoffmann and Koloman

Moser, co-founders of the Wiener Werkstätte in 1903. Hoffmann created a purer, more linear version of the Art Nouveau style producing furniture in a simple, geometric form that was elegant and restrained, thereby forging a link between Art Nouveau and Modernism. Hoffmann was a designer for the firm established by the German,

Michael Thonet (*see below*).

More colourful than most Viennese furniture of the time, Kolomon Moser's tables, cabinets, and chairs were linear but lavishly embellished. In fact, decoration often took precedence over form, with luxurious woods, such as rosewood, used for veneers and decorative inlays.

ADOLF LOOS

The architect Adolf Loos was a key member of the Secessionist movement. Better known for his philosophical writings than his buildings, Loos wrote an essay, "Ornament and Crime", in which he opposed the highly decorative style of Art Nouveau. Instead, he advocated that reason, not passion, should determine the way that people designed.

The Secessionist's linear, geometric interpretation of Art Nouveau paved the way for the geometric shapes and spare style later favoured by the Bauhaus and the Modern movement of the 1930s.



LARCHWOOD TABLE AND CHAIRS

This round table and chairs were designed and made by the company of Portois & Fix in Vienna. The chairs are made of larch wood and the backs are carved in an elaborate floral pattern. The seats are upholstered in a floral

fabric. The table is made of nut wood, with a red-brown leather skiver on the top. The profiled legs are decorated with floral carving, and there is a shelf about halfway down the legs. All of the pieces bear the manufacturer's stamp. c.1900–05. H:106.5cm (42in) (table). DOR



BENTWOOD CHAIR

Armchair "No.25", made by Mundus of Vienna, is made of dark-brown stained beech, with an open backslat decorated with stylized, scrolling plant stems and a canework seat. c.1910. H:91.5cm (36in). DOR



FOOTSTAND

This three-legged footstand was designed by Adolf Loos. It has a mahogany-stained, beech top, which is carved into a bowl shape. The piece stands on splayed mahogany legs. c.1905. H:44cm (17½in). DOR

GEBRÜDER THONET

IN AUSTRIA, THE EVOLUTION OF ART NOUVEAU FURNITURE OWES MUCH TO THE TRAILBLAZING DESIGNS OF CRAFTSMAN MICHAEL THONET.

In his small furniture workshop, Michael Thonet perfected the bentwood technique – marrying forward-looking, elegant design with industrial production – that ultimately exploded on the international stage. In 1849, Thonet established the Gebrüder Thonet company, setting up a host of factories across Eastern Europe. In the following decades the company achieved tremendous growth and success as it paved the way for the industrial mass production of functional, inexpensive and robust furniture that contributed to the fashion for minimal ornamentation.

Towards the end of the 19th century, Thonet's signature bentwood furniture

with its sinuous, elegant curves inspired a number of celebrated Art Nouveau architects and designers, including Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Henry van de Velde. The reputation of the Thonet Brothers attracted a collection of visionary talents who designed furniture for the firm, among them one of the pioneering founders of the Wiener Werkstätte Josef Hoffmann, along with Otto Wagner, Adolf Loos, Koloman Moser, and Otto Prutscher.

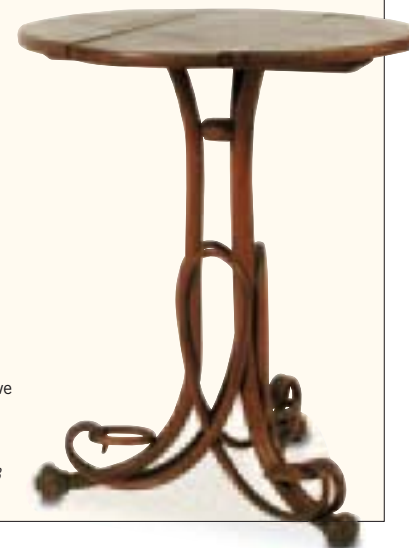


Wall mirror This piece is made from carved bentwood to create a simple, elegant effect. The wood has been steamed and then bent into shape, and this technique is a hallmark of Thonet's furniture. H:53cm (21in); W:100cm (39½in). CSB



Gebrüder Thonet catalogue
The catalogue for *L'industrie Thonet* bears the subtitle "From craftsmanship to mass production: bentwood furniture."

Guéridon This small table is made of beech wood and consists of a plain top above an ornate bentwood base, decorated with oval motifs. H:75cm (30in); W:80cm (32in); D:60cm (24in). CSB



WIENER WERKSTÄTTE

THE DESIRE TO MAKE SIMPLE, FUNCTIONAL OBJECTS THAT WERE ALSO WELL DESIGNED, MOTIVATED A TRIO OF DESIGNERS TO CREATE THE WIENER WERKSTÄTTE IN 1903.

THE PAINTER, DESIGNER, and book illustrator, Koloman Moser, the architect and designer, Josef Hoffmann, and the painter and designer, Carl Otto Czeschka established the Wiener Werkstätte (Viennese Workshops) for the applied and decorative arts. The Wiener Werkstätte rejected the sweeping curves and floral motifs of Art Nouveau and, instead, followed the example set by similar workshops in Germany and Britain. These aimed to elevate the role of the artist-craftsman by integrating the skills of the artisan with those of the designer. It is a measure of the Wiener Werkstätte's considerable commercial success that it influenced taste throughout the decorative and applied arts until it closed in 1932.

Initially, the Wiener Werkstätte was sponsored by the enlightened industrialist and financier, Fritz Warndorfer, who took the title of commercial director, with Moser and Hoffmann in artistic charge. A skilled team of craftsmen worked across a broad spectrum of the decorative arts, including handmade metalwork, furniture, textiles, the graphic arts, fashion, jewellery, leatherwork, and the theatre.

PROGRESSIVE DESIGN

By 1905, after Hoffmann and Moser had deserted the Secessionists, the Wiener Werkstätte became the centre of progressive design, employing a host of talented artists and designers, including Otto Prutscher and Michael Powolny. Over 100 people worked there, including 37 *Meister*, skilled craftsmen, and artisans who were given their own individual marks. The company brochure claimed that all of its products were designed by Hoffmann and Moser, and the distinctive objects were celebrated for their level of technical expertise in periodicals such as *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* and the special summer edition of *Studio* in 1906.

The different interests and skills of the architects and designers produced a style that was constantly evolving. Contemporary trends in architecture, such as the work of founding member, Josef Hoffmann, who designed the *Palais Stoclet* in Brussels and the *Purkersdorf Sanatorium*, were reflected in furnishings made at the Wiener Werkstätte. Furniture had rigorous, well-defined, vertical and horizontal outlines, smooth surfaces, and linear patterns. Geometric shapes, such as open-centred rectangles, spheres, circles, and the "Hoffmann square" were used on ceramics, furniture, cutlery, and graphic ornament, and were combined with rich, colourful materials for a luxurious look.

SECESSION HOUSE, VIENNA *The Secession House was designed by Josef Maria Olbrich and used by Secession artists. The building's spare, geometric style is typical of the Secession movement, which pioneered striking, linear designs. 1897–98.*



J. & J. KOHN

JACOB AND JOSEF KOHN BECAME RECOGNIZED ACROSS EUROPE AS LEADING MANUFACTURERS OF SIMPLE, WELL-DESIGNED, AND WELL-MADE FURNITURE AIMED AT A MIDDLE-CLASS CLIENTELE.



Josef Hoffmann chair This *Cabaret Fledermaus* chair is made of stained beechwood, with turned legs, ebony ball brackets under the curved top rail and seat rails, and an upholstered, drop-in seat. c.1905. H:75cm (29½in). DOR

The company that the brothers Jacob and Josef Kohn established in Vienna in the late 19th century had an extensive output. Amongst the goods manufactured was unpretentious furniture inspired by an artistic tradition based on the modest, Neoclassical Biedermeier style of the early 19th century (see pp.216–17), which according to Josef Hoffmann was "the last period...to offer a valid expression of art". The artists of the Wiener Werkstätte tried to emulate the achievement of the Biedermeier movement by energizing middle-class taste and liberating homes from mass-produced revivalist styles, and they were aided in this mission by J. & J. Kohn.

Kohn's reputation was enhanced by its collaboration with Josef Hoffmann, and it manufactured a number of his furniture designs, including his adjustable armchair in 1901, and the chairs for the bar of the *Cabaret Fledermaus* in 1907. The company also specialized in light, durable, and functional bentwood furniture that was perfected and popularized by Michael Thonet (see p.375). Kohn carried out the prestigious commission for the bentwood dining chairs made of laminated beechwood and decorated with circular motifs, which were designed by Hoffmann in 1904–05 for the Purkersdorf Sanatorium, Austria's most fashionable retreat for wealthy Viennese.



Dark-brown stained beech settle This piece by J. & J. Kohn is made in the style of Josef Hoffmann. Its three splats are each pierced with a rectangular panel of circles, and rise within a triple-arch framework. c.1906. W:125.5cm (49in). VZ



Dark-stained beech table This table was made by Thonet for the *Cabaret Fledermaus*. Its circular top and base are joined by pairs of turned posts, which are united top and bottom with ball brackets. c.1905. H:101.5cm (40in). QU

CABINET BY KOLOMAN MOSER *This Die Verwunschenen Prinzessinnen cabinet shows a strong geometric influence and is almost triangular in section, with doors centred by circular lockplates.* c.1900. H:171.25cm (67½in); W:53.25cm (21in); 32.75cm (12¾in).



BEECHWOOD CHAIR. *Designed by Koloman Moser for the Purkersdorf Sanatorium's entry hall, the frame of this geometric chair has bold, vertical rungs, with a chequerboard woven seat.* c.1901. H:72cm (28¼in); W:66.25cm (26in).

HOFFMANN'S FURNITURE

Josef Hoffmann attempted to champion art for the people, with function, quality, and artistic merit his overriding concerns. The furniture he created for the Wiener Werkstätte was primarily made in mahogany, limed oak, and beechwood.

His style was characterized by rectilinear lines and smooth surfaces stained by rubbing dye into the wood, a technique that highlighted the grain. Hoffmann's sophisticated designs for chairs, tables, and cabinets, had a formal purity and simplicity, and they were carried out with great craftsmanship.

The influence of Charles Rennie Mackintosh (*see pp.364-65*), whose work was highly valued in Vienna, is clear. However, although he was influenced by the elegant, linear style of Mackintosh, Hoffmann emphasized volume in his work more than the

line preferred by Mackintosh. His furniture often featured the square and the cube. The simple classicism of the early 19th-century Austrian Biedermeier style also influenced Hoffmann's designs (*see pp.214-17*).

THE IMPORTANCE OF AESTHETICS

In spurning what they considered to be second-rate, mass-produced wares, in rejecting the flamboyant, sensuous spirit of the French and Belgian Art Nouveau movements, and by turning their backs on historicism, the Wiener Werkstätte movement allied itself with the aims of the English Arts and Crafts designers (*see p.330-33*), who sought to produce simple, well-made household objects.

However, unlike their English counterparts, the aims of the Wiener Werkstätte designers were primarily aesthetic rather than social, and they designed luxurious goods for a wealthy and discerning clientele. They tried to liberate middle-class taste from mediocrity by bringing fine craftsmanship to the modern interior, and in the process established Vienna as a sophisticated and cosmopolitan European capital that was at the forefront of the Art Nouveau movement.

MAHOGANY ARMOIRE *This impressive piece has two wide doors that are inlaid with exotic woods and mother-of-pearl in an elegant geometric design. It belongs to a bedroom suite, which also includes a bed and two nightstands.* c.1900. W:122cm (48in). FRE



NEST OF BENTWOOD TABLES *These four tables are attributed to Josef Hoffman. The sides of the largest table are decorated with a cut-out square design called the Hoffman square.* c.1905. H:74cm (29in); W:55.5cm (22in); D:42.5cm (16¾in).



TABLES

ART NOUVEAU DESIGNERS transformed the functional table into works of art, with motifs inspired by the natural world. A table embellished with dragonflies or sculpted leaves, for example, might take on the form of a tree, with its support shaped like a trunk, and feet resembling roots.

Those working in the French and Belgian style of Art Nouveau, such as Louis Majorelle and Emile Gallé, created tables with tapering, sinuous legs; serpentine-shaped tops; and carved decoration or marquetry patterns of flower blossoms, trees, or fruit. These were rendered in veneers of precious and exotic woods.

The Glasgow School led by Charles Rennie Mackintosh and other like-minded designers, including Josef Hoffmann and Koloman Moser, offered a radical contrast. They favoured tables with rectangular, geometric proportions, narrow,

elongated lines, and decorative cut-out motifs such as squares and spheres.

In England, tables mirrored historic styles, exotic Japanese or Moorish designs, or favoured simple construction and functional, aesthetic design, as seen in the work of C.F.A. Voysey and Charles Ashbee.

In Spain and Italy, tables were often incorporated into sofas or other pieces of furniture, or had practical features such as built-in cabinets.

The Japanese style was popular with its simple designs, asymmetric forms, undulating lines, use of lacquer or lacquer-look-alikes, and a love of nature, often appearing as typical Japanese motifs such as dragonflies.

Many innovative types of table appeared, such as the tripod, tier, and the nest of tables, while decorative features such as the arched stretcher showed how new techniques pushed wood to limits never seen before.

Raised edges prevent items from falling off.

Brass handles enable the table to be easily moved around the room.

The second tier has a moulded edge.

Sculptural design with W-shaped table sides

MARQUETRY TWO-TIER TABLE

This two-tier nutwood and mahogany occasional table by Louis Majorelle is of double-framed construction. It has decorative carving, and each of the two tiers is embellished with floral marquetry. The top tier also has applied brass handles. 1900.

H:86.5cm (34in); W:59.5cm (23½in). VZ 5



NEST OF TABLES

This nest of four Secessionist, black-lacquered tables is attributed to Josef Hoffmann. Each table has a rectangular top with rounded edges supported by turned, spindle-filled supports leading to platform stretchers. The largest of the four carries two sphere-turned carving handles. The Japanese influence is displayed in both the materials used and the form of this nest.

H:77cm (30¼in). L&T 2



Floral marquetry table top

MARQUETRY TABLE NEST

This nest of four occasional tables was designed by Emile Gallé. They are constructed from mahogany and various other hardwoods with high-grade veneer. The tops and side mouldings of the tables are supported by

frames with elegant scroll curves at the bases. Each of the rectangular table tops is decorated in marquetry using various fruitwoods with a different floral scene. The largest of the tables bears the signature "Gallé" within the marquetry. c.1900.

H:72.5cm (28½in). VZ 3

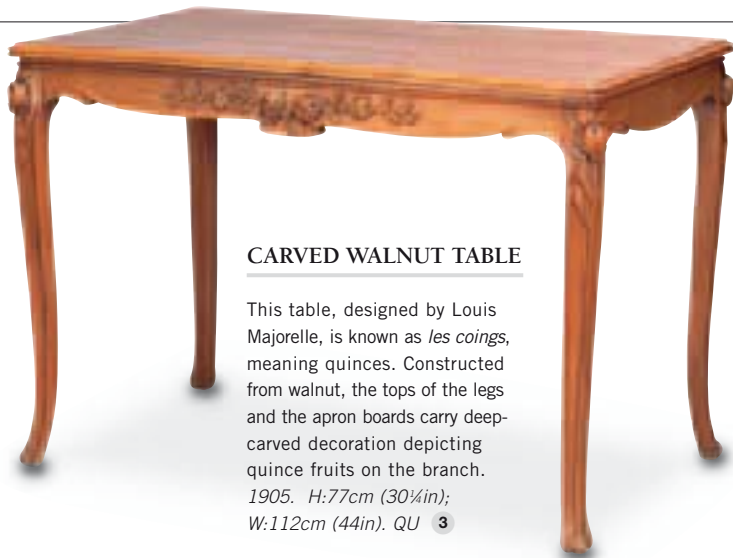


BEECH TABLE NEST

This nest of four "968" tables is made of beech. They were designed by Josef Hoffmann and produced by J. & J. Kohn of Vienna (see p.376). The tables are raised on slender, tapering legs, joined on three sides by stretchers. The

largest of the tables has handles and trellis splats on the sides. Each of the smaller units slides into place on runners, which store the tables in a hanging position. The table nest has a mahogany stain and the remains of an original paper label underneath. 1905.

H:75.5cm (29½in). QU 3



CARVED WALNUT TABLE

This table, designed by Louis Majorelle, is known as *les coings*, meaning quinces. Constructed from walnut, the tops of the legs and the apron boards carry deep-carved decoration depicting quince fruits on the branch. 1905. H:77cm (30¼in); W:112cm (44in). QU 3



GLASS-TOPPED TEA TABLE

This French tea table, from the *École de Nancy*, is constructed from walnut, brass, and glass. It has a tray top with a raised edge to prevent items falling off. Below the tray top is an additional shelf with fold-down sides. These offer more table space but can be folded away when not in use. c.1900. W:79cm (31½in). FRE 2



THREE-TIER TABLE

This small Austrian bentwood three-tier table is designed in the manner of Josef Hoffmann. It has a rounded square top supported on splayed legs. Two undertiers with wooden balls at the joints provide additional storage. H:75cm (29¼in). DN 1



FRETWORK OCCASIONAL TABLE

This J.S. Henry occasional table has a shaped top above an elaborate fretwork frieze. It is supported on slender, tapering, cabriole legs with pad feet that are linked by a lower tier. The maker's label is still attached. H:72cm (28¼in); W:53cm (20¼in). L&T 2



PINE WORKBOX

This stained pine artist's workbox is from the Scottish School. The rectangular top has a twin-hinged lid, which opens to reveal an interior fitted with compartments for materials. The pegs used for joining are visible at the sides. H:78cm (30¼in). L&T 2



ROSEWOOD STAND

This rare rosewood and marquetry stand was designed by Emile Gallé. The lobed top is inlaid with floral decoration and butterfly motifs. The four moulded legs are united by an elegant arched stretcher. H:105cm (41½in). CSB 5



HEXAGONAL TABLE

Originally sold by Liberty & Co., this hexagonal table has a moulded top raised above square, tapering legs, which are linked by distinctive pierced stretchers halfway up the legs. The piece terminates in simple, pad feet. H:73cm (28¼in). L&T 2



GILT SIDE TABLE

This opulent, giltwood side table with relief-moulded decoration was designed by Louis Majorelle. A mottled-orange marble top is set within a leaf-and-berry carved slip, with a wavy frieze below. Arched stretchers link the legs. H:78cm (30¼in). MACK 6



BRASS FRAMED TABLE

The elegant brass tripod of this Richard Müller-designed table bends towards the centre at the top. The plain, circular table top is made from mahogany. Two triangular mahogany tiers provide additional storage. 1902. H:76cm (30in). VZ 3



TILED OCCASIONAL TABLE

This occasional table is made of oak. The circular top features a red and green tiled insert in a geometric pattern. The three tapered supports are pierced with decoration in the manner of the Glasgow School. H:61cm (24in). L&T 1

CASE PIECES

THE CABINET CONTINUED to be one of the most expensive and impressive pieces of useful furniture in European houses. Both decorative and functional, cabinets were used as writing chests, for locking away precious jewels, for storing important papers, and for the display of small, treasured collectables.

Art Nouveau cabinets were made in a variety of styles. The Anglo-Japanese cabinets, such as those designed by E.W. Godwin, were embellished with brass mounts and painted decorations.

Charles Rennie Mackintosh, C.F.A. Voysey, and E.W. Gimson combined simple designs and an attention to the details of fine craftsmanship with the use of rich timbers, such as oak, walnut, satinwood, and mahogany.

These designers influenced the design of cabinets in the Art Nouveau style in Europe, especially the austere, geometric style favoured in Germany and Austria.

In contrast, French cabinets were more sensuous in their design, with Rococo and Oriental elements combined to produce asymmetrically shaped pieces, decorated with curvilinear plant, flower, and vegetable motifs. Louis Majorelle created superbly crafted cabinets of extraordinary luxury, in fine-quality woods. These pieces were often embellished with finely wrought gilt-bronze or wrought-iron mounts, or included decorative inlays of mother-of-pearl or metal.



Carved circular supports are decorated with a twisting tendril and root-like design.

The cabinet body is made from walnut with marquetrie in exotic hardwoods.

The marquetrie incorporates floral motifs.

FRENCH CABINET

This elegant cabinet is made of walnut. It is decorated with a marquetrie design depicting a clematis and a bird, executed in exotic hardwoods. The top section provides open storage, which is accessed via a rounded

opening, surrounded by relief carving. The piece was made by Louis Majorelle. His sinuous and fluid style, evident here, was inspired by 18th-century Rococo furniture. *c.1900. H:170cm (67in); W:71cm (28in). CALD*



ENGLISH HALLROBE

The top of this hallrobe supports Classical carved panels. The panelled front is adorned with stylized copper hinges and handles and the interior is fitted. This piece was made by the prominent commercial furniture manufacturer, Shapland and Petter. *c.1905. H:209cm (82in). PUR 4*



SCOTTISH BOOKCASE

This oak bookcase by leading furniture-maker, Wylie and Lochhead of Glasgow, is in the style of the Scottish school. The intricate floral panels are in stained glass and flanked by angular, stylized, copper, repoussé panels, all above a long drawer and a bottom cabinet. *c.1900. H:183cm (72in). PUR 5*



VIENNESE SIDEBOARD

This impressive walnut veneer sideboard is by the school of Josef Hoffmann. The piece is decorated with intarsia. The symmetrical, clean design is typical of Hoffman and the linear style reveals the influence of Charles Rennie

Mackintosh. The upper section is enclosed behind glazed doors that form a geometric pattern. The mirrored central section is supported by rounded columns. The base has a marble top and contains cupboards and a drawer. The plinth and the handles are made of brass. *c.1902. H:178.5cm (70in). DOR 5*

**STAINED-GLASS CABINET**

The straight lines and gentle curves of this cabinet are typical of the Glasgow School, as is the stained-glass window depicting a pastel-coloured flower design. The piece has a broad, projecting cornice, which was a feature of many Glasgow School cabinets. *W:107cm (42½in).* GDG 5

**DINING ROOM CABINET**

This walnut veneer and brass dining room cabinet is part of a set by Otto Wytliik. The matching table, stool, pair of commodes, four armchairs, and two further chairs are solid, dark pieces with strongly geometric lines, and would have given the room a masculine look. *c.1901.* WKA 5

**VENEERED CUPBOARD**

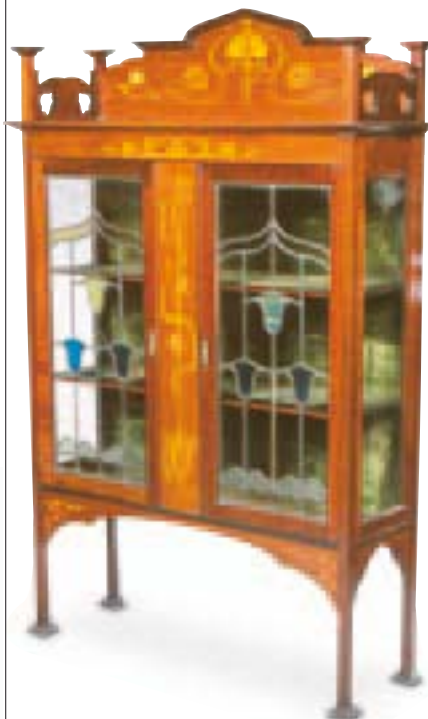
This small, mahogany-veneered cupboard from Austria is raised on four slender legs. The two cupboards, two drawers, and shelves all have nickel fittings. The distinctive top cupboard has three sides of panelled glass with ornamental silver decoration. *c.1900.* *H:164.5cm (64½in); W:83.5cm (32¾in).* DOR 3

**MUSIC CABINET**

Anglo-Japanese influences are evident in this mahogany music cabinet decorated with stylized, floral, stained-glass panels. The fine, string ebony and boxwood inlay is enriched with delicate floral carvings. The arched apron is reflected in the curved pediment. *c.1895.* *W:125cm (49in).* PUR 4

**INLAID CABINET**

This ornate mahogany display cabinet is elaborately inlaid in copper, pewter, and specimen woods with decoration of stylized flower-heads and leafy tendrils. The central panel is mirrored and flanked by two glass doors opening onto glass shelves. *H:207cm (81½in).* L&T 4

**MAHOGANY CABINET**

The shaped, raised back, and moulded finials of this highly decorative display cabinet have whiplash-style foliate and floral marquetry inlays. The leaded and stained-glass panel doors are decorated with a floral design, and are enclosed by marquetry panels. *H:164cm (64in); W:107cm (42in).* L&T 3

**FLORAL CABINET**

This mahogany display cabinet, attributed to the Scottish designer Ernest Archibald Taylor, has silver-plated repoussé decoration on the glass. The architectural form is decorated with a butterfly centrepiece and floral designs in sycamore and tulipwood inlay. *c.1903.* *H:175cm (69in).* PUR 5

**OAK BOOKCASE**

This bookcase cabinet has a projecting dentil cornice above three open compartments, flanked by pierced decorative brackets. The twin doors, enclosing adjustable shelves, have leaded clear glass panels with stained-glass decoration on the top. *H:195cm (76½in); W:143cm (56in).* L&T 3

CHAIRS

WHEN IT CAME TO the chair, Art Nouveau designers let their imaginations run wild. Designers from Glasgow to Nancy used the chair to illustrate and promote the Art Nouveau ideal.

Breaking free from traditional methods of design and construction, designers experimented with flowing, abstract shapes influenced by nature, and bending or elongating wood into sculptural pieces.

The Scottish architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh left an indelible mark on Art Nouveau furniture, especially with his ground-breaking chair designs. Well proportioned with attenuated backs imparting an almost ecclesiastical appearance, his cube-based chairs decorated with geometric cut-out patterns were enormously influential, especially on designers

working in Germany and Austria, who embraced this more linear approach.

The French strand of Art Nouveau produced a contrasting style, with its sinuous, organic, fluid chair designs which were made by Louis Majorelle and Hector Guimard in exotic woods. These were often lavishly decorated with intricate inlays, marquetry, and carved botanical motifs on top rails, legs, and aprons.

A taste for the exotic also provided another decorative and extremely influential outlet in chairs – from Japanese and Moorish-inspired designs to bizarre seat furniture created by Carlo Bugatti and Antoni Gaudi using a variety of materials. Bugatti and Gaudi used imaginative combinations of wood and metals, embellished with materials such as leather, vellum, and silk.

The curves on this piece were achieved using the bentwood technique.

Aluminium nails decorate the replaced leather seat and back.

The beech frame is stained the colour of mahogany.

UPHOLSTERED ARMCHAIR

This chair is constructed from bent beechwood stained the colour of mahogany. The curved shape was achieved by steaming the wood, then applying even pressure. The prolific architect and founder of the Vienna Secession, J.M. Olbrich, designed this armchair for Thonet of Vienna. c.1902. H:76cm (30½in). DOR 2



BENTWOOD CHAIR

This beech chair, made and signed by Austrian manufacturer Thonet, has a flowing bentwood frame made of bent rods, which curves without the use of carving and joints. It has a shaped seat rail and a reversed, heart-shaped back that sweeps below the seat to form stretchers. The triangular seat is made of cane, although it is not original. The chair terminates in three legs. c.1900. H:81.5cm (32in); W:62.5cm (24in); D:60cm (23in). Qu 3



ARMCHAIR

This mahogany armchair has an upholstered crest, a slat back and carved arms. The seat and back panel are upholstered in velvet. The slat back forms a back leg and the piece terminates in bun feet. c.1900. H:94cm (37in). FRE 1



LAYERED WOOD CHAIR

This is one of a set of four chairs made in the style of the early Vienna Secession. The chair is made of cut beechwood and layered wood which is stained in two shades. The seat is covered in black leather, but is not original. c.1900. H:99cm (39½in). DOR 3



ARMCHAIR

This stained beech and elm chair was probably made by Wylie & Lochhead of Glasgow. The curved top rail sits above three splats. The seat is inlaid with boxwood lining. The legs are joined by double stretchers that terminate in upholstered, panelled feet. L&T 1



SLAT-BACK ARMCHAIR

This Viennese slat-back armchair is constructed from veneered and polished nut wood massif. The design is accredited to Josef Hoffmann. A low, D-shaped stretcher unites the straight legs near to the base of the chair. c.1905. H:86.5cm (34in). DOR 3

BENTWOOD SIDE CHAIR

This early J. & J. Kohn side chair was designed by Josef Hoffmann. It has a bentwood back and tapering legs, and there are four wooden spheres under the seat rail. The brown leather upholstery is tacked on to the seat and back, obscuring the stamped mark.

H:98.5cm (38 $\frac{3}{4}$ in). SDR 3

**ARMCHAIR**

This is one of a pair of mahogany armchairs designed by J.S. Henry. The tall, upholstered back has sinuous leaf finials, curving open arms, and an upholstered pad seat. The seat is supported on turned and tapering legs linked by an arched stretcher at the front and straight side stretchers.

L&T 3

**SIDE CHAIR**

This is one of a pair of side chairs made of oak. The back of the chair has curvilinear rails linking tapering uprights above a drop-in seat. Square-section, tapering legs terminate in pad feet.

L&T 1

**MARQUETRY ARMCHAIR**

Designed by Louis Majorelle, the back splat of this mahogany armchair is decorated in marquetry depicting branch and leaf designs. The chair has moulded "U"-shaped crinoline arms that have distinctive duck's-head terminals. The seat is upholstered in velvet.

MACK 6

**UPHOLSTERED ARMCHAIR**

This mahogany armchair, designed by G.M. Ellwood, has a tapering back containing an oval upholstered panel and elegant vertical splats. The piece has open upholstered arms and an upholstered seat. The legs terminate in tassle-carved feet.

L&T 3

**ARMCHAIR**

This stained mahogany armchair features distinctive, wavy, horizontal splats positioned above and below the rectangular panelled back. The downswept, open arms and upholstered panel seat are raised on turned, tapered legs.

L&T 1

**CANED-SEAT ARMCHAIR**

This is one of a pair of "Model 511" chairs by Thonet, constructed from bent beech. The splat is pierced with holes, with parallel slats below. The back continues in a curve down to the feet. The seat is made of woven caning.

c.1904. 104.5cm (41 $\frac{1}{4}$ in). HERR 3

**DESK CHAIR**

This mahogany desk chair by Louis Majorelle has open arms featuring galleries of tapered spindles. Red-leather upholstery on the back and seat is fixed to the frame with studs. The twisted form of the legs emphasizes the sinuous, feminine design.

MACK 7

**OPEN ARMCHAIR**

This carved walnut armchair designed by Henri Rapin has a wing back and bold scrolling terminals. The tapering legs lead to splayed spade feet. The heavily patterned upholstery is not original.

1910. H:77.5cm (30 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); W:56cm (22in). CAL 5

**CURVED DESK CHAIR**

This Louis Majorelle carved mahogany desk chair (part of a desk set) has moulded arms leading into sweeping, reverse-curved supports. The chair has a distinctive, low upholstered back. The front legs are cabriole in shape.

c.1903. H:80cm (31in). CSB 8

**ARMCHAIR**

This armchair was designed by Josef Maria Olbrich and made by Josef Niedermoser of Vienna. The frame is black-varnished maple, the chair is upholstered with yellow leather covers, and the feet are metal.

1898-99. H:81.5cm (32in); W: 58cm (22 $\frac{1}{2}$ in). QU 3



ART DECO
1919-1940



FROM BOOM TO BUST

ORIGINATING IN FRANCE, THE ART DECO STYLE BLOSSOMED IN THE UNITED STATES, MIRRORING THE MOOD OF LIBERATION AND FANTASY THAT PERMEATED A FRAGILE BUT BRAVE NEW WORLD.

AS THE WORLD EMERGED from the shadow of World War I, the rhythms of jazz and the fantasy world of Hollywood captured the imagination of people eager to celebrate liberation. A colourful cocktail of wit, fantasy, new materials, and luxury, Art Deco in both its “high” French style and its “streamlined” American mode fitted the mood. Alongside Bauhaus, it was the prevailing decorative style for furniture, sculpture, ceramics, metalwork, and glass, as well as architecture and interior design, throughout the 1920s and 30s.

NEW LUXURY

Producing luxuries for the masses now became the central activity of the economy, especially in the United States. The number of cars on

American roads rose from half a million in 1914 to 26 million in 1929, one for every five of the population. By 1929, two-thirds of Americans had electricity, and sales of electrical goods rocketed. Movie palaces, dancehalls, sports stadiums, and luxury hotels sprang up as the leisure industries flourished. Both the artefacts and the architecture exhibited the Art Deco style: geometric shapes inspired by the Cubist movement together with a range of exotic, stylized floral, and folk motifs.

STREAMLINED TRAVEL

Travel became faster and more luxurious, whether on ocean liners such as the *Normandie*, airships such as the *Graf Zeppelin*, or trains drawn by streamlined engines such as the *Mallard*. Not only was Art Deco the style for luxury transport interiors, but the principles of aerodynamic design were reflected in the Art Deco taste for streamlined forms. New, light-reflecting materials, such as tubular steel, chrome, and mirror glass were adopted, especially in the bars, dance halls, and cinemas.

In economics and politics, the year 1929 marked a fault line dividing the interwar years in two. The 1920s were boom years for the American economy. Skyscrapers, such as the Chrysler building and the Empire State building

in New York, were the most striking embodiment of growing prosperity. But the 1920s’ boom was fuelled by easy credit and speculation. By 1929 share prices had lost any relationship to real values. When the Wall Street crash came in October 1929 thousands of investors lost their shirts. The United States entered the Great Depression with unemployment shooting up to 14 million over the next three years. The New Deal, introduced by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933, restored a little optimism, but the climate was turbulent.

The American economic slump brought mass unemployment and financial crisis to Europe in the early 1930s. Germany’s fragile democracy disintegrated and in 1933 Adolf Hitler was appointed German chancellor. This, and aggressive regimes in Japan and Italy, led to a second global conflict.

Yet progress did not end just because boom turned to bust, and Art Deco held its own well into the 1930s. The movement encapsulated both the period’s technological progress and a form of escapism from the mounting political and economic troubles. Eventually, however, Art Deco was superseded by Modernism with its focus on functionalism and the machine.



English two-tier table This Art Deco occasional table is constructed from chrome and laminate, and mounted on a circular walnut base. c.1928. H:75cm (29½in); W:36cm (14¼in); D:36cm (14¼in). JK



Office and factory for the Hoover company This 1933 landmark London building by architects Wallis, Gilbert, and Partners has an American-style glazed Art Deco façade and a striking, brightly coloured, Egyptian-style faience over its entrance.

TIMELINE 1919–1940

The Bauhaus School was founded at Weimar in 1919 by Walter Gropius. He promoted a new functional style of architecture. The Nazi regime closed the School in 1933.



1919 The Treaty of Versailles is imposed on Germany by the Allied Powers.

1920 Cecil B. De Mille brings French designer Paul Iribé to Hollywood to design the sets and costumes for the historical film drama *The Affairs of Anatol*.

1922 Tutankhamen’s tomb and treasures are discovered by Howard Carter in the Valley of the Kings, Luxor, Egypt.

1923 The first UK to US wireless broadcast takes place between London and New York.



The Charleston dance The flapper-girl style epitomized the hedonistic jazz age. Independent and irreverent, flapper girls wore make-up, dispensed with corsets, and delighted in risqué behaviour.

Hyperinflation in Germany brings about the collapse of the German economy.

1924 The fashion illustrator Erté becomes head of the Art Department at Hollywood’s MGM studio.

1925 The *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes*, which was originally planned for 1915, is held in Paris. *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Trial* by Franz Kafka, and *Mein Kampf* by Adolf Hitler are published.

This Art Deco torchère has a twisted wooden shaft painted a creamy yellow, and topped with a stepped brass lamp shade. H:107cm (67in). FRE

The interior of the entrance hall of Eltham Palace The interior was commissioned from Swedish designer Rolf Engströmer. It is completely lined with Australian blackbean veneer with marquetry panels by the Swedish artist Jerk Werkmäster. The colours of the large circular rug by Marion Dorn reflect the tones of the marquetry panels. The hall is bathed in light, which floods through the concrete, glass-domed roof. 1930s.



1926 John Logie Baird invents television.

1928 The *Graf Zeppelin* makes the first transatlantic flight.

1929 The New York Stock Market on Wall

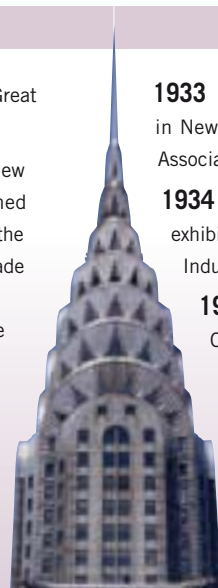


Blacked-up actor Al Jolson starred in the first movie with sound – *The Jazz Singer* – which premiered in 1927.

Street crashes, precipitating the Great Depression of the 1930s.

1930 The Chrysler Building, in New York is completed in May. Designed by William Van Alen, it is the world's tallest man-made structure until the completion of the Empire State Building a year later.

1932 *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley is published.



1933 Radio City Music Hall is built in New York by Donald Deskey and Associated Architects.

1934 MOMA holds the Machine Age exhibition, marking the mid-point of the Industrial Design movement in the US.

1935 *Bluebird*, driven by Malcolm Campbell, reaches 480kmh (300mph). The film *Top Hat* with

The Chrysler Building The dramatic use of stainless-steel sunbursts symbolized the march of progress.

The Normandie This French luxury ocean liner was launched in 1932. Its interiors were designed in the "high-style" Art Deco.

Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire, is released, together with the Marx Brothers' *A Night at the Opera*.

1939 Hitler invades Poland on 1 September, starting World War II in Europe.



ART DECO FURNITURE

IN THE YEARS FOLLOWING World War I, furniture designers followed two distinct courses – one was founded on tradition – Art Deco – and the other's driving force was functionalism – Modernism.

Much of the most sophisticated Art Deco furniture created was shown at the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes*, which opened in Paris in the spring of 1925. Originally planned for 1915, but postponed because of World War I, the Exhibition reflected a pre-war aesthetic and embodied the desire of France to reestablish itself as the centre for the production of stylish luxury goods. Although the term “Art Deco” is derived from the title of this Exhibition, it was not actually used to identify a style until 1968 when Bevis Hillier's book *Art Deco of the*

Skyscraper vanity unit

The thick dark lines on this vanity unit emphasize the stylized geometric forms that characterize Art Deco style. The mirror towers over the wooden structure, recalling the silhouettes of Manhattan's tallest buildings. 1930s. H:155cm (61in).



20s and 30s was published. He defined two main strands of Art Deco: “The feminine, somewhat conservative style of 1925, chic, elegant, depending on exquisite craftsmanship and harking back to the 18th century; and the masculine reaction of the 30s, with its machine-age symbolism and use of new materials like chrome and plastics.”

TRADITIONAL ART DECO

Traditional Art Deco evolved out of Art Nouveau and was born in France. Designers following this path subdued the flowing lines and naturalistic decoration characteristic of Art Nouveau to create a more restrained, geometric style of furniture with graceful proportions and stylized motifs.

Furniture-makers, such as Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann (see p.393) and Paul Follot (1877–1941), favoured the use of luxurious materials to enhance simple, stylized, and abstract forms. Exotic woods with distinctive markings and decorative grains – macassar ebony, burr walnut, and sycamore – created rich, lustrous veneers. Unusual materials, including lacquer, ivory, and shagreen (imitation sharkskin), were used for marquetry and inlays. Decorative motifs employed included baskets of stylized flowers and geometric sunbursts. The hard surfaces of highly polished woods were often juxtaposed with brightly coloured and richly decorated upholstery.

MODERNIST ART DECO

Many American designers were inspired by the flamboyance of French Art Deco. Using new materials, such as Bakelite and aluminium, designers, such as Donald Deskey, who designed the interior of Radio City Music Hall in New York, mixed the French Art Deco style with elements of the more functional, rectilinear Bauhaus style, to create a Modernist form of Art Deco. Paul Fuller's iconic Wurlitzer jukebox designs, with their use of brightly coloured plastic, geometric grille, chromium-plate, and dramatic lighting, also combined French style with new-found technology. Specifically American references, such as the skyscraper motif, appeared in the Deco-inspired furniture of the Viennese-born New York designer Paul T. Frankl and the German-



Folding screen This French, four-panelled folding screen is an exquisite example of Art Deco design. Either side of each panel has rosewood and fruitwood marquetry surfaces in different geometric designs. H:185cm (73in). CSB

born Californian designer K.E.M. Weber. In the land of the automobile, the influence of car styling became increasingly strong in American Art Deco furniture designs. Known as Streamlined Moderne, slick torpedo-style curving was used on a huge range of objects, from radios to desks.

The Art Deco fountain and chevron motifs were seen repeatedly in the escapist Hollywood movies of the 1930s, with their backdrops of luxury Art Deco-styled hotels, night clubs, skyscrapers, and ocean liners. Such films did much to advertise the American Art Deco style to the world, and to link it forever with ideas of fantasy, glamour, and sexual liberation.

COCKTAIL CABINETS

With the introduction, in the 1920s, of a new social pastime – the cocktail party – a new piece of furniture was created, inspired by the 18th-century sideboard with its ice drawers and fitted decanter cabinets. Intended for storing all the accoutrements associated with the making of cocktails, the cocktail cabinet contained fitted shelves and bottle holders. It often took the external form of a traditional writing desk, while its modern interior was frequently a flamboyant, conversation-making piece of furniture veneered with a host of exotic woods,

fitted with lights, and lined with mirror glass. Far from its original intention as a piece of furniture designed for writing, the cocktail cabinet added a more frivolous and decadent note to the fashionable interior that chimed with the contemporary taste for luxury and glamour, which persisted throughout the Jazz Age and the Great Depression.

Cocktail cabinet This semi-circular cabinet in walnut, supported by tapering legs, was designed by H&L Epstein. The cabinet opens to reveal a mirrored, shelved bar. Manufacturers at the upper end of the market concentrated on these high-quality veneered pieces. 1930s. H:162.5cm (64in). JAZ



TRADITION AND LUXURY

Designers working in the traditional, sophisticated Art Deco style that developed in Paris and became fashionable during the 1920s and 30s frequently looked back to the 18th century for inspiration. This basis for their work can be seen in the design of the chairs below, which boast curving, wooden frames that recall the serpentine shapes often found in Rococo furniture. With outlines reminiscent of 18th-century French *bergères*, these chairs form part of a three-piece parlour suite.

Suites of matching furniture, such as a sofa, two chairs, and a cabinet, created to fit in with the overall interior decorative scheme of a room, were favoured

by designers of the Art Deco period. The form of these Art Deco suites often echoed the architectural structure and panelling of a room, as had been the case in the 18th century.

The purity of shape, harmonious proportions, refined decoration, and use of lavish materials that characterized the furniture created by the celebrated French *ébénistes* of the late 18th century, such as Jean-Henri Riesener and Jean-François Leleu, also characterized the furniture of the craftsmen creating pieces in the fashionable “high style” of French Art Deco. These sumptuous armchairs reflect the 18th-

century tradition and the taste for luxury. The rich colour of the burr wood with its distinctive markings is enhanced by the sumptuous, cream-coloured leather upholstery, while the Art Deco desire for comfort and simplicity is underscored by the generous proportions and graceful form of the “Cloud” design.

Parlour suite This three-piece parlour suite consists of a sofa and two armchairs. The sofa and armchairs are encased in a bentwood shell terminating in moulded feet set on casters. The pieces are all upholstered in cream leather in the curvaceous “Cloud” design. *W:76cm (30in). FRE*

The ample proportions and harmonious lines underscore the simple beauty and emphasis on comfort that were hallmarks of the Art Deco style.

The curving bentwood shell recalls the shape of an 18th-century French bergère.

The richness of the wood is heightened by the contrasting, luxurious, cream-coloured leather upholstery.



The shape of the chair embodies the luxury of the period, implied by the idea of lounging on a cloud.

The undulating wooden frame looks back to the serpentine shapes of the 18th-century French Rococo style.

The feet of the chairs have casters so the chairs can be easily moved about the room.

Burr wood of maple or ash were among the woods favoured by Art Deco furniture-makers.

ELEMENTS OF STYLE

There is a host of distinctive features associated today with the Art Deco style. Every branch of the decorative arts – from furniture and textiles to ceramics and metalware – was affected by the fashion for exotic materials and handcrafted techniques, a continuation of the sumptuous Art Nouveau style of the late 19th century. Designers drew on a wide range of ornamental motifs, from folk art and stylized baskets of fruit to Egyptian-style motifs and patterns inspired by the treasures discovered in 1922 in Tutankhamen's tomb.

Rectilinear shapes and geometric designs reminiscent of African tribal art and Cubist paintings were also a key element of Art Deco. This aspect of the style recalled the work of the Wiener Werkstätte (see pp.376–77).



Walnut continental headboard

Multi-purpose designs

For designers and decorators working in the Art Deco style, the objective was to create simple, uncluttered interiors. This aim was realized with built-in furniture, such as wardrobes and washstands, and with multi-purpose pieces, such as a sofa that incorporated a table, or a headboard with side cupboards and a lampstand.



Geometric design on a wool rug

Geometric textiles

The decorative designs featured on carpets, fabrics, and tapestries were frequently inspired by the flat exotic patterns and geometric motifs drawn from Africa, the Orient, Cubism, and folk art. Dynamic geometric schemes for upholstery, curtains, and rugs were often made up of overlapping blocks of colour or abstract patterns of squares, zigzags, chevrons, and triangles.



Close-up of bird's-eye maple surface

Bird's-eye maple

A timber native to northern Europe, Canada, and the United States, bird's-eye maple is a variety of maple. Its light brown markings consist of rings that resemble the eyes of a bird. It was a fashionable veneer for furniture during the late 18th century, and found favour once again in the 1920s with furniture designers working in the French Art Deco style.



Table edge with geometric ivory banding

Ivory inlay

Ivory inlays were frequently used to embellish cabinets, tables, and chairs. The pure white colour formed a rich contrast to the warm, lustrous tones of mahogany and macassar ebony wood veneers. Ivory was often used to enhance the drawer pulls of a cabinet, the elegant outlines of a chair leg, or the edge of a table top with delicate geometric banding.



Armrest carved with leaves

Low-relief carving

Following on from Art Nouveau, designers used hand carving to create sumptuous, richly decorated furniture. The crests of cabinets, the rails or arms of chairs, and the aprons of tables were often carved in shallow, low relief with stylized patterns of berries, leaves, flower bouquets, or garlands of fruits and plants, or curving spirals, tassels, sunbursts, and beading.



Dressing table with floral marquetry design

Floral marquetry

Of all the decorative motifs found on Art Deco furniture, it is flowers that dominate. Stylized flower designs reminiscent of the pre-World War I Art Nouveau style were adopted for marquetry veneers by artisans working with both luxurious and more modest materials. The motifs were often less flamboyant than those used previously, or even severely geometric in taste.



Etched, glazed cupboard doors

Decorative glass

Glass played a key part in Art Deco furniture. Massive, architectural cabinets made from rare and lustrous woods were often lightened by fitted panels made of plain or coloured glass. These were frequently pressed or etched with designs featuring stylized geometric patterns of sunbursts, triangles, chevrons, or flower baskets, garlands, and foliage.

Table top featuring *verre églomisé*

Verre églomisé

The technique known as *verre églomisé* is one in which the back of a glass panel is painted with a layer of gold or silver leaf, which is then engraved and covered with a protective film of varnish or glass. Furniture designers of the 1920s and 30s often embellished their pieces by setting glass panels enriched with *verre églomisé* into tables, cabinets, and cupboards.



Veneered table top in geometric design

Veneering

The fashion for veneered furniture especially favoured by cabinet-makers working in the Art Nouveau style before World War I, was also widely employed by Art Deco furniture designers. Thin layers of colourful and precious woods were arranged in a broad range of decorative patterns, from naturalistic flower sprays to abstract, geometric designs.



Rosewood crossbanding

Rosewood inlays

Rosewood was widely used for decorative crossbanding on Art Deco furniture. An evenly grained hardwood, ranging in colour from light hazel to reddish-brown, it forms a subtle but decorative counterpoint to contrasting timbers when thin strips are cut across the grain and inlaid along the edge of a drawer, table top, panel, or cabinet door.



Lacquered table with stylized design

Lacquerware

Jean Dunand, Eileen Gray, and Maurice Jallot made their furniture more opulent with inlaid lacquer panels. Screens, chairs, tables, and cabinets were also sometimes made entirely of glossy black or brightly coloured lacquer, featuring stylized flowers, exotic animals, and abstract geometric motifs recalling sumptuous 18th-century French designs.



Base of a side table

Geometric forms

Many Art Deco designers favoured geometric forms. Emile-Jacques Ruhlmann was influenced by the rectilinear, Neoclassical shapes of the late 18th century in the design of his cabinets, cupboards, and writing desks. American designers, such as Donald Deskey, were inspired by the geometric forms of the Industrial age and the designers associated with Bauhaus.



Stylized acorn back splat

Decorative splats

The central vertical panel of an open-backed chair has traditionally been used as a canvas for decorative designs. Many Art Deco chairs were made from rich timbers and boasted splats featuring carved motifs of stylized arrangements of foliage, fountains, baskets of flowers or fruit, drapery, or, alternatively, patterns of geometric shapes.

1925 PARIS EXHIBITION

THE PARIS *EXPOSITION INTERNATIONALE DES ARTS DÉCORATIFS ET INDUSTRIELS MODERNES* OF 1925 MARKED A DEFINING MOMENT FOR WHAT WAS IDENTIFIED IN THE 1960S AS ART DECO STYLE.

ORIGINALLY PLANNED FOR 1915 in response to Germany's growing international commercial success, the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* was postponed when World War I broke out in 1914. When the Exhibition finally opened its doors in April 1925, its main aim was to reassert France's position as the world's arbiter of taste and the unrivalled centre for the production of luxury goods. It also hoped to persuade French manufacturers to embrace the "modern", and work with decorative artists to produce artefacts of "real originality". As a result, the Exhibition gave a new generation of decorative artists, as well as those already well established, an opportunity to exhibit their work.

LUXURIOUS "GOOD TASTE"

Most European countries took part in the exhibition, although Germany was conspicuously absent, and the French section took up two-thirds of the 23-hectare (55-acre) site. The United States also declined to participate, as its Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover, believed that it would be impossible to meet the entry requirements laid out in the Exhibition's charter, which stated that displays should make no reference to past styles and called for examples of "new and original inspiration" that personified the modern lifestyle. In fact, this prerequisite was not fulfilled by the majority of the exhibits, which reflected a pre-war aesthetic and a continuation of the Art Nouveau style. None the less, the Exhibition was considered by most to be a resounding success, drawing 16 million visitors from around the globe.

A large part of the French section was composed of pavilions exhibiting the work of eminent, established French designers, such as the furniture designer Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann and the glass-maker René Lalique. Whole interiors and room sets were also on display, showing furniture, textiles, carpets, and other household wares in harmonizing styles. These were presented by the design studios of the major Parisian department stores – Primavera at *Printemps*, La Maîtrise at *Galleries Lafayette*, directed by Maurice Dufrene (1876–1955), and Pomone at *Au Bon Marché*. These extravagant displays were set against the backdrop of the Eiffel Tower, which was transformed into an ultra-modern advertisement



BERGÈRE

This rare Paul Follot armchair, one of a pair, has an arched, ribbed, upholstered back above a U-shaped seat rail, and scroll arm terminals. The tapering feet are ebonized and fluted. c.1920.

H:81.25cm (32in); W:51cm (20in). CAL



COFFEE TABLE

This mahogany table by Rosel has carved, semicircular legs and feet, which support a glass top. The racks within the construction of the crossbar and post are made of ebony with mother-of-pearl applications. c.1925. H:65cm (25½in); W:76cm (30in); D:76cm (30in). QU



ROBERT BONFILS'S POSTER FOR THE PARIS EXHIBITION

This poster shows some of the key characteristics of Art Deco. The stylized basket of flowers is reminiscent of much Art Deco inlay work and the female figure and antelope were often used in metalwork as a symbol of speed.



ROSEWOOD AND MAHOGANY SECRÉTAIRE

This secretaire by Léon Jallot has a bow-fronted case with a fall front and a sycamore interior. It has mirror-cut, mahogany crotch veneers, slightly splayed legs, and a hand-incised signature on the back. H:114cm (45in); W:88cm (34½in). CAL

ÉMILE-JACQUES RUHLMANN (1879-1933)

RUHLMANN'S WORK REPRESENTS THE FINEST EXPRESSION OF ART DECO, AND THE MOST SUMPTUOUS AND ACCOMPLISHED PIECES PRODUCED IN FRANCE DURING THE 1920S AND EARLY 1930S.



Ruhlmann

Born in Paris in 1879 to Alsatian parents, Ruhlmann first exhibited his work at the 1913 *Salon d'Automne*, and continued to produce lavish designs throughout the war before establishing a partnership in 1919 with Pierre Laurent in Paris: *Les Établissements Ruhlmann et Laurent*. Ruhlmann's reputation as a furniture-maker *par excellence* was sealed by his extravagant display at the 1925 Paris Exhibition. His deluxe furniture – which was aimed at a sophisticated and very wealthy clientele – was inspired by the work of the finest 18th-century French *ébénistes*, such as Jean-Henri Riesener. Ruhlmann insisted upon the highest standards of craftsmanship

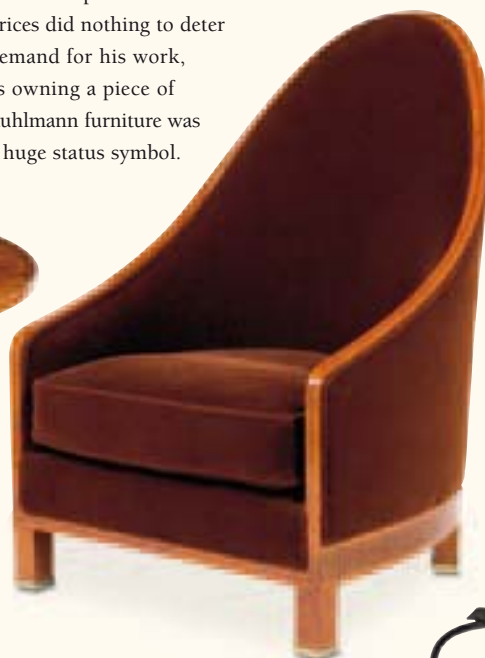
from his workmen for the simple and elegant cabinets, writing desks, dressing tables, and chairs he designed. Early pieces tended to be delicate with slender, tapering legs, while later pieces were sturdier. Ruhlmann used the rarest and most exquisite materials, such as veneers of palisander, macassar ebony, burr walnut, Cuban mahogany, and amaranth. These were enriched with tortoiseshell, silver, horn, or ivory inlays, featuring stylized flower baskets, garlands, or geometric motifs, or embellished with leather, parchment, or sharkskin panelling. Drawer pulls sometimes featured elegant silk tassels, and fabrics were often designed specially for individual pieces of furniture. Exorbitant prices did nothing to deter demand for his work, as owning a piece of Ruhlmann furniture was a huge status symbol.

for Citroën cars. Most exhibits conformed to an “official taste”, with adaptations of historical or traditional styles lavishly ornamented with a host of motifs, including stylized flowers, figures, and animals, and geometric patterns, such as zigzags and chevrons. Nowhere was this tendency more in evidence than in Ruhlmann's majestic pavilion, the *Hôtel d'un Collectionneur*. Ruhlmann was responsible for the overall design of the interiors of this pavilion, which featured work by several of his preferred designers and craftsmen. Within it, André Groult's (1884–1967) *Chambre de Madame* contained chairs inspired by 18th-century designs and wall-coverings in bold and colourful patterns. Veneered with pale green sharkskin, the sumptuous suite of elegant furniture brought to mind the sinuous lines of Art Nouveau. Jean Dunand's (1877–1942) *Fumoir* featured streamlined black and silver lacquered furniture together with brightly coloured screens and fabrics inspired by African art.



Table with rotating top

This elegant circular table, signed by Ruhlmann, is made from amboyna and ivory. Its rotating circular top rests on a central support decorated with stepped geometric panels and an arching base. Like many of Ruhlmann's pieces, the exotic wood veneer is the main form of decoration. c.1929. W:74.5cm (29½in). DEL



Armchair This unsigned Ruhlmann armchair is made of burr amboyna with ebony detailing, gilt metal sabots, and brown velvet upholstery. It appears to be the first model of the macassar ebony and ivory chair that Ruhlmann designed for Jacques Doucet in 1913. c.1913. H:100.5cm (39½in); W:68.5cm (27in). DEL

Rosewood cabinet This signed *demi-lune* cabinet by Ruhlmann has a pull-out shelf above a central recess and drawer carved in medium relief. The two curved side doors are inlaid with ivory and the whole cabinet is raised upon fluted spindle legs. c.1919. W:129cm (50½in). DEL



CONTRASTING MODERNIST STYLE

These lavish examples of what later became known as “high-style” Art Deco were in marked contrast to the few displays mounted by Modernist designers. At the pavilion *L'Esprit Nouveau*, for example, the Swiss-born architect Le Corbusier (see pp.432–33) promoted his vision of minimalist architecture and affordable furnishings for the middle classes. Although this style made a powerful impression, it was not until the 1930s that its influence really began to be felt.

CONSOLE TABLE

Designed by Raymond Subes, this wrought-iron table has a demi-lune top above scrolling supports on a curved solid base. The scrolling supports and stepped geometric decoration are typical of Art Deco design. H:100.5cm (39½in); W:128cm (50½in).



FRANCE

FRANCE, ESPECIALLY PARIS, was the hub of the lavish, or “high-style”, strain of Art Deco. The sumptuous, graceful furniture that was created in the 1920s by Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann (see p.393) set the tone for this version of the style.

DUAL INSPIRATION

Using a host of exotic woods for decorative veneers, and embellishments made of colourful and expensive materials, ranging from ivory to lacquer and from leather to sharkskin, Ruhlmann and his colleagues – who included Paul Follot, André Groult, Jules Leleu, Léon-Albert Jallot, and Louis Süe and André Mare at the

Compagnie des Arts Français – sought inspiration from the opulent furniture crafted by the fine cabinet-makers of the 18th century, such as Jean-Henri Riesener and Adam Weisweiler.

Ruhlmann and his associates were also influenced by Art Nouveau (1880–1910). They took the sinuous lines, organic forms, and naturalistic motifs of that movement and restrained and stylized them, giving their pieces a more geometric form. Their

Wrought-iron gates designed by Edgar Brandt

The stylized water fountain of these fine gates has swirling stems of leaves and pierced flowers, and vines run along the bottom. c.1924. H:129.5cm (51in). SDR



The veneered table top has a radiating geometric pattern.

The S-scroll legs terminate in geometric scrolls.

The table base is decorated with a carved rope-twist design.

CENTRE TABLE

This centre table, designed by Maurice Dufrene, has a veneered table top supported by ornately moulded S-scroll legs. The table top is made from several different pieces of wood, which meet at the centre of the table. The contrasting patterns and textures of the woods used form the main decorative feature of the table

as, seen from above, they create a subtle, radiating geometric pattern. The moulded block feet are carved and support a small circular level with a carved rope design around the outer edge. A centre table was designed to be primarily ornamental rather than functional – to furnish the space in the middle of the room where it would also be the centre of attention. c.1925. H:68.5cm (27in); D:91.5cm (36in). MOD



DEMI-LUNE SIDE TABLE

This Louis Süe and André Mare bird's-eye maple and mahogany *demi-lune* table has a broad crossbanded top above a thumb-moulded edge and a single frieze drawer. The table is supported on cabriole legs. H:79cm (31in); W:122cm (48in). CAL



AMBOYNA CABINET

This amboyna cabinet has two central doors flanked by five small drawers on each side, each of which is decorated with ivory handles and inlay. The cabinet was designed and stamped by Paul Follot, and its symmetry and restrained style typify the elegant French Art Deco style. c.1925. W:153cm (60¼in).

exquisitely crafted Art Deco cabinets, tables, and writing desks were much coveted by an exclusive and wealthy clientele who sought status. Their work was extensively displayed at the 1925 Paris Exhibition (see pp.392-93), bringing it to the attention of a much wider public.

LUXURIOUS MATERIALS

Jallot – who worked with his son Maurice – and Leleu favoured a rich palette of warm woods, such as walnut, palisander, and amboyna, enhanced with understated marquetry created with ivory, eggshell, shagreen, or mother-of-pearl. This often featured

signature Art Deco motifs, such as stylized garlands or baskets of flowers. Süe and Mare created luxurious, theatrical furniture in the Louis-Philippe style, and the decorating firm of Dominique produced stylish and sophisticated furniture in woods such as ebony and sycamore, upholstered in colourful silks, leather, and velvet.

The most exotic form of French Art Deco was realized in the innovative furniture created by Eileen Gray, Jean Dunand, and Pierre Legrain. Both Gray and Dunand exploited the popularity of Oriental art by creating distinctive lacquered screens, tables, cabinets, and chairs, in which the lacquer was

often combined with other luxurious materials, such as tortoiseshell, eggshell, animal skins, and metal, to create a rather dramatic impression. Legrain was one of several designers inspired by African art.

TOWARDS MODERNISM

After 1925, some of the most committed French traditionalists, such as the

Jallots, slowly began to adapt to the changes brought about by both the machine age and the introduction to furniture design of new materials, such as metal and glass. As a result, their later Art Deco designs are distinctly more Modernist in appearance. They set the stage for the Modernist furniture created by designers such as Pierre Chareau and Francis Jourdain.



GILT-METAL TABLE

This table by René Prou is rectangular in shape and has elegant cabriole legs reminiscent of the early 18th-century Rococo style. The table is made of gilt metal and has a decorative pierced frieze of linked circles below the table top. c.1937. GYG



MACASSAR CHAIR

This luxurious ebony and rosewood macassar chair, designed by Paul Follot, is one of a set of four. Each chair has a stylized acorn back within a "theatre drape curtain" arched back, carved by Laurent Malcles. H:81.25cm (32in); W:51cm (20in). CAL



SOLID ROSEWOOD OFFICE CHAIR

This rare Edgar Brandt chair was one of a set designed for Brandt's own offices. The arched high back extends above boldly scrolling J-shaped arms. The tapering legs terminate in gilt sabots. c.1932. H:110.5cm (43½in); W:68.5cm (27in). CAL



TABLE BAR

This Jules Leleu sycamore and mahogany table bar has a rectangular top above a rectangular section column. The fall front encloses a bar compartment with a single drawer below, located in the column. Its interior is veneered in contrasting mahogany. H:61cm (24in); W:85cm (33¼in). CAL



LOW ROSEWOOD STOOL

This low stool is made of rosewood embellished with zebano banding. The seat cushion is upholstered in a fabric that is typical of an Art Deco printed pattern, with overlapping geometric shapes, inspired by abstract art. c.1928. H:35cm (14in); W:46cm (18in). JAZ

BUTTON-BACKED CHAIR

One of a pair of square button-backed chairs by Marc du Plantier, this chair has square-section legs at the front and sabre legs at the back. The legs are made from painted wood and terminate in parchment sabots. The chair is newly upholstered in calfskin. c.1935. GYG



THE UNITED STATES

ALTHOUGH THE UNITED STATES did not participate in the 1925 Paris Exhibition, the Exhibition was still hugely influential there. Many American designers, including Eugene Schoen, visited it, and it was covered by American newspapers and magazines. Also, the following year, a tour of more than 400 objects that had been displayed in Paris was organized by Charles Richards, director of the American Association of Museums. He had been impressed by the Exhibition and hoped to initiate

“a parallel movement” in the United States by mounting the tour.

New York department stores, such as Lord & Taylor and R.H. Macy Company, also helped to publicize the Art Deco style by putting on exhibitions in the late 1920s of Art Deco furniture by leading Parisian designers. Eugene Schoen emulated his French contemporaries by creating pieces in rare and exotic woods, incorporating marquetry and inlays, coloured lacquers, and subtle carvings. His forms were architectural, with

their clean lines and restrained, stylized decoration, and his cabinet-making was of the highest quality.

A NEW DIRECTION

A parallel Art Deco movement did blossom in the United States, but it developed along different lines to those of Europe. A handful of innovative designers, such as Paul Frankl, K.E.M. Weber, and Josef Urban, who had been born in Europe, combined the French Art Deco style with those of the Bauhaus (see p.386) and the Wiener

Werkstätte in their designs. Instead of producing expensive luxury pieces, they created well-crafted, functional pieces that could be mass produced.

Donald Deskey, the principal interior designer for New York City's Radio City Music Hall, created dramatic, highly charged furniture. It combined the luxurious elements of French Art Deco with the more functional and rectilinear features of the Bauhaus style, which made full use of the latest technology. Deskey used the rare woods, lacquer, and glass loved by



Screens with two or three panels were popular with Art Deco furniture designers.

The stylized zebras are painted in black and tan on an ivory ground.

Signed and dated
Robert W Chanler
1928.

PAINTED SCREEN

This dramatic, three-panelled wooden screen by Robert Winthrop Chanler features two zebras locked in combat, painted in black and tan on an ivory background. The back of the screen is decorated with diagonal stripes in black with silver foil, in imitation of a zebra's stripes.

The screen is signed and dated in the lower right corner. Chanler's screens were greatly admired, and this example was commissioned by the Broadway composer Kay Swift and her husband. Screens were popular during the Art Deco period and this particular piece is of the utmost luxury, as emphasized by the use of silver foil. 1928. H:198cm (78in). SDR



CHINA CABINET

This simple, rectilinear cabinet was designed by Paul Frankl. The limed, slate-grey base and case of the lower section provide a striking contrast to the three ivory doors with semi-circular brass pulls. On top of this is an unadorned china cabinet with a limed ivory finish. The three shelves of the cabinet are enclosed by two sliding glass doors. W:183cm (72in). DRA



MAPLE DESK

Eugene Schoen designed this maple desk for Schieff Hungate and Kotzian. The heavy rectangular desktop, with moulded sides, sits on block feet. The supporting table underneath, which has a semi-circular cut-out, carries the desktop section. c.1935. W:114cm (45in). AMO



French designers but combined them with modern materials, such as aluminium and Bakelite, to embellish his opulent furniture designs.

NEW MATERIALS AND MOTIFS
It was modern materials that ultimately beguiled American Art Deco furniture designers. At the celebrated Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan, the Finnish-American architect Eliel Saarinen produced elegant pieces of furniture made from rich

The lift doors in the Chrysler building, New York
These doors, designed by William Van Alen, represent the height of American Art Deco. The abstract fountain motif and surrounding geometric patterns lead the eye upwards. 1928-30.

wood veneers and natural materials, occasionally used in conjunction with innovative materials, such as steel and polished metal.

American designers welcomed the machine age with open arms. They decorated their furniture with machine motifs, such as interlocking cogs and wheels. They celebrated speed and dynamism with the increasingly streamlined look of their furniture inspired by automobiles, ocean liners, and locomotives, and motifs based on dramatic bolts of lightning. They made bold use of Cubist-inspired geometric shapes and jazzy abstract patterns, and included iconic American motifs based

on the modern city and way of life, such as the skyscraper.

The industrial designer K.E.M. Weber established a Californian version of Art Deco. His distinctive furniture was mostly made from metal and glass and often had skyscraper-like features. Weber created sleek, functional furniture for private commissions as well as designs intended for mass production, using new materials such as chromed metal, sprung steel, and laminated wood. He also designed lavish Art Deco furniture for dazzling Hollywood film sets, which were largely responsible for transmitting the American Art Deco style to the world.



PAINTED CHAIR

This William L. Price painted chair has moulded legs and an intricately carved backrest. It was designed for the dining room at Traymore Hotel, New Jersey, which was demolished in 1972. c.1915. H:85cm (34in).



COMMODO

Designed by John Widdicomb for a department store, this commode has a geometrically inlaid top above a single long drawer, with stylized inlay. The twin inlaid and figured panel doors enclose three drawers. H:111.75cm (44in). FRE

PAUL FRANKL (1887-1958)

PAUL FRANKL WANTED TO DESIGN A MODERN FORM OF FURNITURE THAT EXPRESSED THE "NEW SPIRIT MANIFEST IN EVERY PHASE OF AMERICAN LIFE".

Born in Vienna, the architect and engineer Paul T. Frankl, fled Europe and settled in New York in 1914 at the outbreak of World War I. At first, he designed and manufactured furniture based on a formal European tradition, but by the mid 1920s, inspired by the architect-designers Le Corbusier and Walter Gropius, he devoted his attention to producing practical and economical modular furniture.

It was in 1925 that Frankl really came into his own as a furniture designer with his renowned range of custom-made furniture inspired by the New York skyline and the skyscrapers that soared above his New York gallery. Typical Frankl "skyscraper" designs, which frequently evoke the pure lines found in the work of the Dutch painter Piet Mondrian, include tall, stepped chests of drawers, cabinets, and bookcases boasting an architectonic, rectilinear form. They were made from oak or California redwood and were sometimes

embellished with a lacquer finish in black, red, or pale green, edged with silver leaf. He also designed "skyscraper" writing desks and dressing tables with mirrored tops. Designed to be affordable, the quality of "skyscraper" furniture was not always of the highest standard. Frankl also supplied lacquered tables, chairs, and cabinets for the Oriental-style interiors that became fashionable in the period between the two World Wars.



STEEL STOOL

One of a set of four patinated steel stools, this stool has an upholstered, padded seat and a pierced apron cast with scrolling foliage. The stool has turned supports, linked by stretchers, with a maker's label. L&T



ILLUMINATED BAR

Made from black lacquer with an exotic wood veneer, this illuminated bar has a central cabinet with fluted doors and a mirrored interior. It sits upon a U-shaped base. H:162cm (64in); W:140cm (55½in); D:48cm (19in). SDR

"Skyscraper" chest This rare Paul Frankl chest is asymmetrical, with long and short drawers, a single cabinet, a pull-out enamelled shelf in red and black, and geometrically shaped brass pulls. H:142cm (56in); W:91.5cm (36in); D:54.5cm (21½in). SDR



STREAMLINING

SYMBOLIZING AN AGE OF PROGRESS, CHANGE, AND MODERNITY, THE STREAMLINED FORMS OF ART DECO HELPED TO REINVIGORATE THE AMERICAN ECONOMY.

ART MODERNE, AS THE AMERICAN form of Art Deco is also known, had always been inspired by city life, from the outline of the skyscraper to the sharp-edged designs reminiscent of syncopated jazz rhythms. It had always embraced the machine age in its use of industrial motifs and new materials. Then, in the 1930s, it made its final and perhaps greatest contribution to Art Deco with the concept of streamlining.

The Great Depression that swept across the country after the Wall Street crash of 1929 left in its wake a crippled economy in need of rejuvenation and a public whose confidence had been shattered. Embracing both new technology and innovative materials, streamlining had a tremendous impact on American architecture and the decorative arts, as well as giving the economy a much-needed boost.

DYNAMISM AND GLAMOUR

It was in the area of transport that streamlined designs were first developed and popularized. From the early 1930s, great strides were made in the design of all modes of transport, especially railway locomotives and liners. The contoured lines, slick torpedo curves, and smooth horizontal surfaces that were meant to decrease air resistance and reduce turbulence became a glamorous symbol of the modern spirit. The industrial designer Norman Bel Geddes did much to popularize the streamlined style with his book *Horizons* (1932), which was full of striking images of streamlined trains, planes, and cars.

The dynamic qualities that were linked to speed and technological progress captured the imagination of a public eager to move away from the Depression era and into a bold new, brighter future, and the



COFFEE TABLE

This split-level coffee table by Donald Deskey has a large, rectangular Bakelite table top above a smaller, rectangular level. The two are supported on elegant, J-shaped nickel legs.
c.1925. H:45.75cm (18in); W:71cm (28in); D:35.5cm (14in). MSM



FILING CABINET

One of a pair, this Donald Deskey cabinet is made from black lacquer and rosewood and has nickel and bronze fittings. Inspired by industrial developments, Deskey's work has much in common with that of the Bauhaus (see p.426).
c.1945. H:141cm (55½in); W:42cm (16½in). AMO



STREAMLINED SOFA

This sofa with end tables by Paul Frankl is made from black lacquer and black leather and has nickel-plated speed bands, derived from the "speed whiskers" that often decorated trains and cars.

H:127cm (50in); W:223.5cm (88in). MSM

DECORATIVE HOUSEHOLD OBJECTS

PAYING LITTLE REGARD TO FUNCTION, MANY PRODUCT DESIGNERS APPLIED THE SOFT CURVES AND HORIZONTAL BANDING OF STREAMLINING TO A HOST OF HOUSEHOLD OBJECTS.

Every type of household object – from tableware to lamps and from the accoutrements of the jazz age, such as the cocktail shaker, to the radio – were given the streamline treatment in 1930s' America. Their shapes echoed the smooth, egg-shaped outlines of the contemporary railway carriage or the glamorous ocean liner and were often decorated with horizontal decorative stripes, or “speed whiskers”.

The idea was to create traditional, everyday objects in the new, streamlined style, creating a demand for merchandise in the new “modern” style,

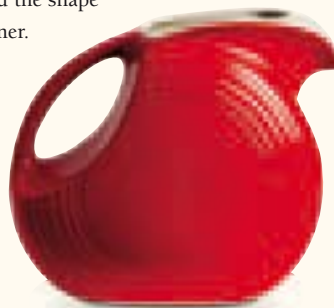


Extendable Bakelite lamp The shape of this lamp emulates the dynamic “lightning bolt” form typical of Art Deco streamlining. 1940s. H:45cm (18in). ROS

Chrome sculpture of a woman's face by Karl Hagenauer This sculpture has stylized features, including hair patterned like the “speed whiskers” that decorated trains and cars. H:53.5cm (21in); W:43cm (17in). SDR



which would, in turn, stimulate the beleaguered economy. Raymond Loewy's refrigerator design for Sears in 1934 embodied the style superbly, with its gently rounded corners and horizontal stripes. Many designers experimented with streamlined forms in tableware made of metal. Russel Wright broke new ground in 1931 with his cylindrical cocktail shaker and spherical cups made of spun chrome-plated pewter. Meanwhile, the chrome-plated brass “Normandie” water pitcher designed by German-born Peter Müller-Munk in 1935 emulated the shape of an ocean liner.



Fiesta pitcher The shape of the pitcher is echoed by a pattern of sleek, streamlined curves. H:18cm (7in). K&R



French poster advertising the Nord Express The power and speed of the streamlined locomotive is dramatically expressed in this iconic poster. Designed by A.M. Cassandre (1901–68), the poster is mounted on Japanese paper. 1927. H:105cm (41¼in).



CURVED DESK

This desk was designed by Donald Deskey for Widdicomb. It has black lacquered surfaces and two veneered side panels with chrome detailing. It was designed as part of a suite. c.1935. W:132cm (52in). HSD

streamlined style was soon adopted by interior and product designers. The interiors of hotels, petrol stations, diners, and shops were all given the streamlined treatment. Streamlining was also strikingly evident on the glamorous sets of 1930s' Hollywood movies, such as *Grand Hotel* (1932).

As the 1930s progressed, streamlining was adopted more frequently in the design of a broad array of consumer wares – from every kind of furniture to all manner of new household appliances. The clean lines and powerful forms made a strong statement. Practical, everyday objects, such as the vacuum cleaner, stove, and radio, made of new materials, such as Bakelite, plastic, rubber, vinyl, aluminium, and chrome-plated steel, brought a sense of glamour and modernity to familiar pastimes and household chores. They also served to domesticate the machine, cleverly concealing its moving parts and removing any awkward protrusions with its smooth surfaces.

Streamlined products were to a certain extent “the technological result of high-speed mass production”, as Harold Van Doren pointed out. Gently curved forms with no surface decoration were easy to manufacture using plastic mouldings and pressed-sheet steel, and assembly-line techniques. However, they were also affordable and hugely popular. With streamlining, American Art Deco finally arrived.

BRITAIN

DURING THE FIRST HALF of the 1920s, most British furniture designers remained loyal to the principles of the Arts and Crafts Movement (see p.330), but occasionally used decorative elements inspired by French Art Deco in their work. One of London's most successful retailers and manufacturers, Heal & Son, produced Arts and Crafts designs made from sycamore, oak, or limed oak, quietly embellished with some Art Deco features. The furniture was essentially machine-made but was finished by hand.

RESTRAINED STYLE

Gordon Russell's furniture designs of the 1920s exhibited the more traditional Art Deco style. He adopted motifs, such as sunbursts and chevrons, and used exotic materials such as ivory and macassar ebony. Exhibiting to great acclaim at the 1925 Exhibition in Paris, Russell rejected the opulence favoured by his French counterparts, and displayed a cabinet that celebrated the simplicity of traditional Georgian design with a minimum of decoration.

The 1925 Paris Exhibition influenced the Heal's designer, J.F. Johnson. From 1926 to 1927, he displayed a range of bedroom furniture made from macassar ebony and influenced by the high Parisian Art Deco style of Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann (see p.393). In 1928, Waring & Gillow, who provided luxury furniture for ships and hotels,

displayed fine furniture in the high Art Deco style in an exhibition called "Modern Art in French and English Furniture and Decoration". The exhibition marked the launch of their Department of Modern Art, which was headed by the Russian émigré Serge Ivan Chermayeff. Although Chermayeff favoured the use of opulent veneers, he soon moved away from the French Art Deco style towards a more Modernist aesthetic. His sofas and coffee tables were geometric in form and the upholstery and carpets featured geometric patterns. His designs were widely copied, using less expensive materials, and were mass produced for the middle class home.

A TASTE FOR LUXURY

Fashionable Art Deco furniture made of sumptuous, expensive materials, and echoing traditional shapes – albeit with a Modernist twist – was also created in Britain by Betty Joel and Sir Edward Maufe. Sir Edward Maufe had won a medal at the 1925 Paris Exhibition for his mahogany, camphor wood, and ebony writing desk, which was gessoed and gilded with white gold, and featured silk tasselled handles. Betty Joel's prestigious and exclusive clientele included the King and Queen and Louis Mountbatten.

By the 1930s, Gordon Russell was producing more Modernist pieces, developing a successful range of good quality, mass-produced furniture that made use of new materials such as tubular steel. Sir Ambrose Heal was also firmly aligned with the Modernist movement. However, elements of Art Deco persisted in Britain. The sunburst motif and stepped tiling could be seen in many suburban houses, and household objects, such as radios, telephones, and vacuum cleaners, exhibited the streamlined style of American Art Deco (see pp.398–99). In 1933, Maurice Adams produced the archetypal streamlined cocktail cabinet in ebonized mahogany with metal casing and chromium mounts.

The lobby of the former Daily Express building in Fleet Street, London The lobby was designed in 1932 by Robert Atkinson and was inspired by Hollywood film sets. It features a starburst ceiling with a silvered pendant lamp and a huge silver and gilt plaster relief panel along one side.



OAK BOOKCASES

This pair of Betty Joel bookcases is made from Australian silky oak. Each bookcase is asymmetrical, with random open and enclosed shelves and two cupboard doors. The circular door handles contrast with the rectangular and

square shapes of the cupboards and shelves. The bookcases stand on fluted square feet. Each one bears the following label on the base: "Token Hand-Made Furniture by Betty Joel, made by J. Emery at Token Works Portsmouth." 1932. W:92cm (36¼in). L&T



BURR MAPLE TABLE

This Epstein table is part of a set, made up of a table and eight chairs (see below). The table is crafted from burr maple, one of the most expensive woods of the time, and has a

rectangular top with rounded corners. The U-shaped base is a typical feature of Epstein's work and was much used by Art Deco designers. It gives a modern twist to the traditional pedestal base of a table. c.1932. W:198cm (78in). JAZ



DINING CHAIR

This chair by Epstein is made of burr maple and is one of eight designed to accompany the table above. The chair is simple in form, has lightly splayed legs, and is upholstered in cream. c.1932. H:89cm (35in). JAZ



MIRROR

This Art Deco mirror, by Whytock and Reid of Edinburgh, has a shaped, rectangular red-lacquered frame. The stylized plant motifs in the crested moulding are highlighted in gilt. H:101cm (39¼in). L&T





CHEST OF DRAWERS

This English chest of drawers, made from walnut, has black-lacquer banding around the drawers and the edges of the case which accentuate its rectilinearity. The distinctive, slender drawer handles are attached vertically in juxtaposition to the horizontal, rectangular drawers. *c.1930. W:123cm (48in). JAZ*



NEST OF TABLES

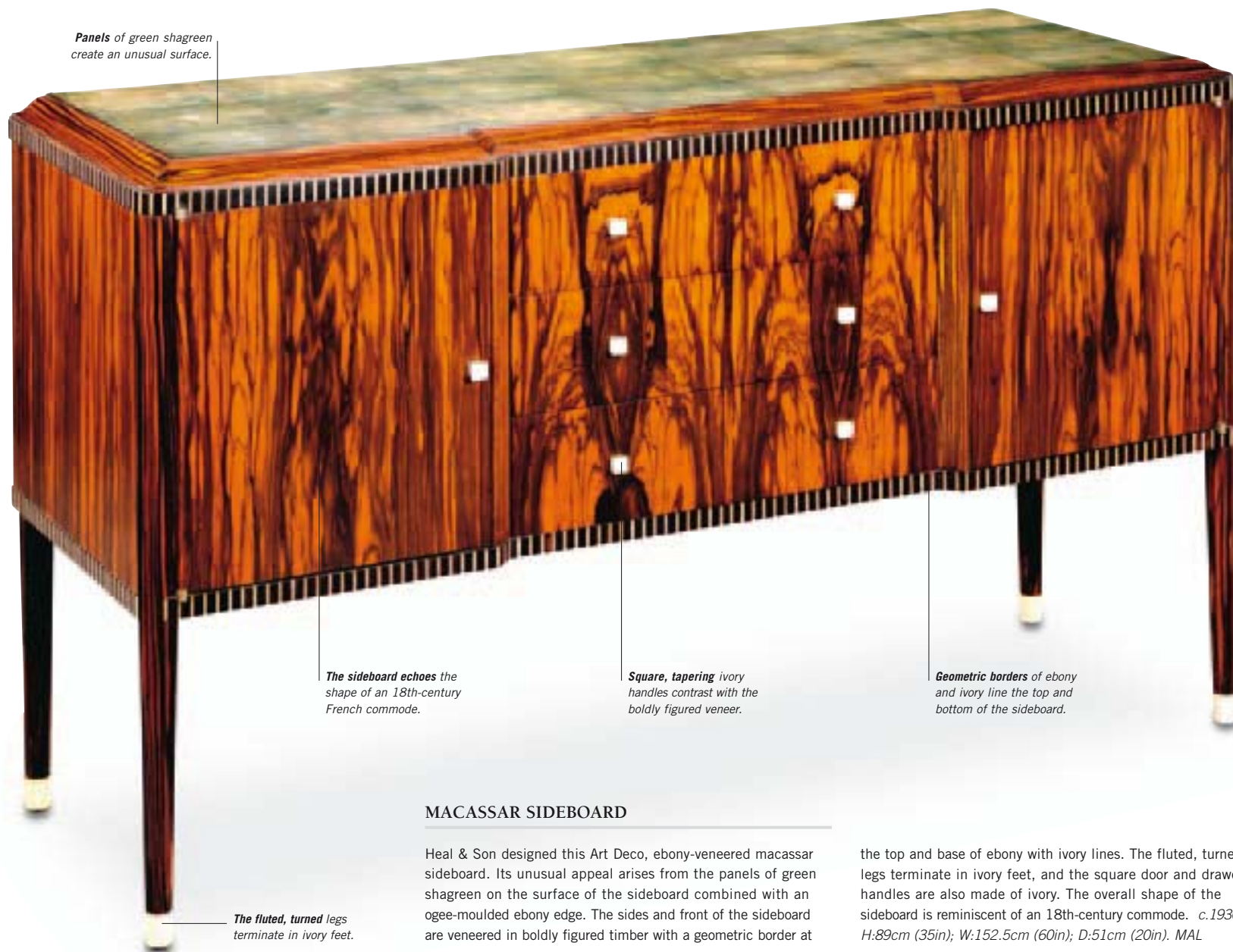
These three tables are made from amboyna and satinwood with a decorative inlay. Each table top has a geometric sunburst design, made from contrasting woods, and a moulded edge. The tables are supported on tapering splayed legs and have moulded pad feet. *c.1925. H:68cm (27in); W:79cm (31in). JAZ*



TUB CHAIR

This squat, geometric tub chair, one of a pair, has a U-shaped framework with a curved back and arms that are veneered in oak from top to bottom. The back and apron of the chair, and the loose cushion seat, are upholstered in a striped fabric. The other chair of the pair has a slightly taller back. *L&T*

Panels of green shagreen create an unusual surface.



The sideboard echoes the shape of an 18th-century French commode.

Square, tapering ivory handles contrast with the boldly figured veneer.

Geometric borders of ebony and ivory line the top and bottom of the sideboard.

The fluted, turned legs terminate in ivory feet.

MACASSAR SIDEBOARD

Heal & Son designed this Art Deco, ebony-veneered macassar sideboard. Its unusual appeal arises from the panels of green shagreen on the surface of the sideboard combined with an ogee-moulded ebony edge. The sides and front of the sideboard are veneered in boldly figured timber with a geometric border at

the top and base of ebony with ivory lines. The fluted, turned legs terminate in ivory feet, and the square door and drawer handles are also made of ivory. The overall shape of the sideboard is reminiscent of an 18th-century commode. *c.1930. H:89cm (35in); W:152.5cm (60in); D:51cm (20in). MAL*

ART DECO INTERIOR

ART DECO, WITH ITS BLEND OF MODERNITY AND EXOTICISM, FOUND A SHOWCASE IN A NEW MUSEUM IN PARIS – THE CITY WHERE THE STYLE WAS BORN.

IN 1931, AN Art Deco design was chosen for the ambitious new *Musée des Colonies* (now renamed the *Musée des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie*) which was built specially for the Colonial Exhibition, to glorify the relationship between France and its colonies. The original plans for the building, incorporating motifs from North African architecture, were rejected in favour of Albert Laprade's clean, modern design inspired by European Classicism.

The exterior of the museum was decorated with an enormous stylized frieze designed by the prominent Art Deco sculptor Albert Janniot. The interior also became a spectacular showcase for Art Deco design, as well as for art and artefacts from Africa and Asia.

Although the rooms designed to display colonial artefacts were kept fairly plain, two oval rooms were lavishly decorated and were used as reception rooms. The *Salon de l'Afrique* celebrated contributions from the African colonies, whilst the magnificent *Salon de l'Asie*, also known as the *Salon Lyautey*, was dedicated to the arts of Asia.

THE SALON LYAUTEY

Designed by Eugène Printz, and with frescoes by André-Hubert and Ivanna Lemaitre, the *Salon Lyautey* remains a fine example of 1930s' French Art Deco. The majestic parquet floor, with its radiating geometric design typical of the era, is made of Gabonese wood, with highlights of ebony and rosewood. The rich colouring of the floor, enhanced by the dark draped curtains, sets the tone for the whole room. In keeping with the Art Deco fascination with exoticism, the dramatic frescoes depict Asian figures, scenes, and deities and dominate the room.

The furniture, which was also designed by Printz, is typically Art Deco: bold and simple in form with clean lines and minimal ornamentation. The doors of the *Salon* and most of the furniture are made of patawa (palmwood), a vividly patterned wood much favoured by Printz. The beauty of the two imposing desks lies in the figuring of the palmwood as much as in their sleek, curved forms. The dramatic outlines of the uplighters, which resemble exotic trees, echo the curves of the desks and the armrests of the matching chairs.

The overall effect is striking; the blend of natural materials, modern shapes, and Oriental-inspired frescoes creates an impression of exoticism, whilst remaining distinctly French. The *Salon Lyautey* is both a lasting moment of Art Deco and a monument to a European empire on the point of decline.

Armchair This colonial-style armchair, upholstered in a golden-yellow fabric has a curved bentwood frame and a rectangular back. The upholstered armrests create fan shapes between the seat back and the curved arms, which continue into the legs.



Sculptural uplighter This distinctive lamp, designed by Eugène Printz, is made of palmwood and has a trumpet-shaped top. The shelf near the base of the lamp serves as an occasional table.





EUROPE

TREMENDOUS UPHEAVALS came about in Europe in the wake of World War I. The need for change was keenly felt by architects and designers from Italy to Belgium and the Netherlands, and from Germany to Scandinavia.

At the heart of this longing for change lay a functionalist ideology and a desire for art to accommodate the exciting technological advances of the early 20th century. Mass-produced, functional furniture designs became the order of the day, a philosophy that was realized by Alvar Aalto in Finland and with the formation in 1919 of the Bauhaus by Walter Gropius. Internationally acclaimed, the Bauhaus sought to

bring together the talents of creative artists, designers, and craftsmen, to create prototype designs suitable for industrial mass production (see p.426).

Although the Modernist Bauhaus style prevailed in Germany during the 1920s and 1930s, there were also architects and designers working in a more decorative manner. Using vibrant colours, and drawing on the Rococo and Biedermeier styles for inspiration, German Art Deco furniture exhibited Oriental touches in its use of lacquer, together with Cubist detailing. Bruno Paul's "Room for a Gentleman", shown at Macy's department store in New York in 1928, was typical of the

restrained form of Art Deco that was pursued by these German designers. The room contained lacquered furniture with inlay work, and a rug with a geometric design. Many German and Austrian – mainly Jewish – designers emigrated to America in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and joined Paul Frankl (see p.397) in developing the Art Deco style there.

NORTHERN EUROPEAN TRENDS
It was in the Netherlands that the concept of abstraction was first applied to furniture design. At the helm of this revolutionary artistic idea was the avant-garde De Stijl group, formed

in 1917 by the painters Theo van Doesburg and Piet Mondrian. The functionalist furniture designed by the group was conspicuously absent from the 1925 Paris Exhibition. The Dutch pavilion there was designed by J.F. Staal, a member of the Amsterdam School, which favoured the use of theatrical, expressionist, and Oriental motifs in furniture designs. Among the exhibits was furniture by C.A. Lion Cachet, designed for a Dutch ocean liner. He used dark tropical woods inlaid with ivory and lighter woods in traditional-shaped pieces with Oriental decoration and parchment panels. Jaap Gidding's cinema and theatre interiors



SWEDISH CHAIR

This Swedish Art Deco chair is upholstered in brown leather and supported upon tapering legs, with two slightly splayed rear legs, and curvilinear arm rests. The backrest has a central panel with burr wood and satinwood details. c.1920. W:61cm (24in). LANE



BELGIAN BRIDGE CHAIR

This bridge chair is one of a pair designed by De Coene Frères. The curved armrests form a continuous "U" shape with the bowed seat frame. The chair is upholstered in a red, checked fabric and has tapering front legs. c.1930. H:82cm (32½in). LM



ITALIAN COFFEE TABLE

This fine Italian coffee table has a rectangular glass-topped surface on tapering plank legs. It has been crafted from bird's-eye maple and ebony veneer. Exotic wood veneers, such as the ebony used in this piece, were commonly used

in European Art Deco furniture. The dark ebony highlights the simple geometric structure of the coffee table. W:99.5cm (39¼in). SDR



BELGIAN DESK

Designed by De Coene Frères, this Belgian desk has four drawers, tapering legs, and nickel feet, and is covered in black lacquer. The sleek black design demonstrates a relinquishing of unnecessary decoration in favour of pure functionality. c.1930. W:172.5cm (68in). LM



SWISS DESK

This Swiss walnut desk has a rectangular top with rounded corners. The central drawer and two flanking cabinets have decorative "English-style" handles, and the whole piece is raised

on square feet. The grain of the walnut has been highlighted, providing additional visual interest. c.1925. W:145cm (58in). VH

also followed the French Art Deco style. The Tuschinski cinema in Amsterdam (1918–21) was typical, with its decorative, opulent interior, and special light effects.

In Scandinavia, Art Deco took a more classical turn with an emphasis on elegance, proportion, luxurious materials, and hand-crafting. In 1930, British writer, Morton Shand, defined the Swedish restrained Neoclassical style prevalent at the 1925 Paris Exhibition as a “line characterized by its slender and almost elfin grace”. Exhibiting a similar style, Otto Meyer’s and Jacob Petersen’s graceful, curving chairs crafted out of sycamore and

mahogany were superbly set off by the batik wall-covering of Ebbe Sadolin in the Danish pavilion.

ITALIAN BALANCE

Italian furniture designers struggled to find a balance between the demand for classical elegance and the language of the sophisticated modern style. Although ill at ease with the display of sumptuous luxury that was the hallmark of French Art Deco, Italian cabinets, tables, writing desks, and chairs made full use of the beauty of lustrous local and exotic timbers. Many of them were embellished with bronze mounts, or lightly carved or

inlaid patterns of flower baskets, garlands, or geometric motifs that were typical of Art Deco.

The Italian version of Art Deco reached its fullest expression in the hands of the innovative architect Gio Ponti. He successfully managed to combine the functional, geometric, spare structure promoted by the Wiener Werkstätte designers with the sophisticated and elegant refinements of the French Art Deco style.



ITALIAN CABINET

This rectangular Ulrich Guglielmo cabinet has two doors and is supported on a square plinth lined with goat parchment. The doors have ivory mounts and the plinth is veneered with kingwood. Round ebony knobs, with gilded bronze mountings and keys, are attached to the 14 interior drawers. *c.1930. H:150cm (60in). QU*



WALNUT EASY CHAIR

This continental walnut easy chair is upholstered in cream, a popular colour in Art Deco furniture design. The chair has broad, curving armrests, each supported on three vertical fluted rods, and moulded sledge-like block feet. *DN*

Mirror glass is commonly used as a decorative feature of Art Deco furniture.

The burr wood veneer makes a boldly luxurious statement.

The strict geometric shape of the buffet is highlighted by the warm colour of the burr wood veneer.



The rectilinear structure of the buffet is emphasized by the austere placement of the doors and drawers.

The ivory inlay used for the drawer pulls is a typical Art Deco detail.

ITALIAN BUFFET

The shelf structure of this Italian buffet is characteristic of Art Deco design, combining clean lines and asymmetry with a luxurious and decorative burr wood finish. The shelf structure contains a mirror on a case with four small drawers and a twin

cabinet door enclosing an adjustable shelf. Subtle, inlaid handles are attached to the four drawers and the cabinet doors. The geometric shape is typical of Italian Art Deco, which took its lead from the Wiener Werkstätte. The use of exotic timber is more typical of the French style. *W:177.75cm (70in). FRE*

INDIA AND EAST ASIA

ALTHOUGH THE Art Deco style had its origins and greatest success in the West, it also found voice in the East.

INDIAN GLAMOUR

Despite a strain of social conservatism and an economy that remained sluggish and underdeveloped, Indian designers welcomed the aesthetic ideals and stylish visual viewpoint promoted by the fashionable modern taste for Art Deco favoured by the colonialists. Appreciation for, and support of, the Art Deco style was also fostered by designers who had emigrated to India from Central and Eastern Europe, taking with them a

keen knowledge of the style, along with a calculated eye to receiving patronage from wealthy, cultivated, and influential benefactors.

At the heart of the Art Deco style in India was Mumbai (then called Bombay), the centre of international communication and a thriving port. Here, the mercantile classes and the Westernized ruling communities came together with the development of the Back Bay area between 1929 and 1940. The Development Trust insisted that all the buildings conform to the same architectural style to ensure “uniformity and harmony of design”. The style was an elegant, streamlined, yet decorated

form of Art Deco. By the end of the 1930s, Bombay contained nearly 300 cinemas, all of which were glamorous Art Deco palaces, both inside and out. The sophisticated and luxurious residences commissioned by wealthy Indian princes also reflected the Art Deco style. The furniture often combined the “high-style” French Art Deco with native decorative traditions.

EAST ASIAN AFFINITY

During the 1920s and 1930s, a lot of the Japanese and Chinese architecture, interiors, and furnishings were inspired by the Art Deco style. Much of Art Deco’s inspiration – simple design,

spare, nature-inspired decoration, and the use of sumptuous, exotic materials such as lacquer, ivory, and mother-of-pearl – came from the traditions of East Asia in the first place, so there was already an affinity between the two.

Throughout Japan, and especially in Tokyo, economic and industrial development after World War I was accompanied by democratization and cultural change. Western ideas were promoted through exhibitions and

The shelves are formed from the side panel, enclosing the space.

The abstract curving lines are executed in different-coloured lacquers.

The curved, geometric handle emulates the line of the top of the chest and locks the doors.

The outer frame is created from one continuous piece of bent wood.



JAPANESE CHEST

This boldly curving, geometric chest features a trailing smoke design in gold and coloured lacquer. It was designed by the leading Kyoto lacquer artist Suzuki Hyosaku II, who was a member of *Ryukeiha Kogeikai* (the Streamline School Craft Association). Continuous pieces of bent wood create the outer frame, the frames of the two central doors, and those

of the two outer drawers. The upper shelf above each drawer is formed from a piece of wood cut out of the side of the chest and bent horizontally. Black lacquer is used to define the outer rim of each of the doors and to set off the abstract design that decorates them. The curving, asymmetrical patterning in shades of red, orange, and gold blend with the overall streamlined form of the chest as well as contrast with its symmetry. 1937. H:83.5cm (32¾in); W:112.5cm (44¼in); D:30.5cm (12in).

The drawer handle is shaped like the individual elements of the patterns.



CHINESE JADE TABLE SCREEN

This large Chinese screen has a striking central panel made of jade, which is carved to depict a pavilion and figures under pine trees. The panel is set within a fretwork frame. c.1930. H:53.5cm (21in). S&K



CHINESE HARDWOOD CABINET

The case of this cabinet is rectangular in outline with rounded corners. Two panelled doors open onto two sections, one with two shelves. The case stands on moulded bracket feet. c.1930. H:124.5cm (49in). S&K



publications, and by Western designers themselves. The Tokyo earthquake of 1923 left a devastated city ripe for renewal, and many of the new buildings reflected the Art Deco style. Numerous cinemas, cafés, and dance halls were built, their interiors filled with modern materials such as aluminium, glass, and stainless steel.

In China's thriving metropolis of Shanghai the spirited Art Deco style was appropriated and assimilated by

The Umaid Bhawan palace, Jodhpur, India

This bathroom is typical of the palace's interior in its use of streamlining, bold curves, and luxuriant materials. The architect, Henry Vaughan Lanchester, brought the state architect, G.A. Goldstraw to Jodhpur to ensure the integrity of the design.

Chinese architects and designers with enthusiasm. Known as the "Paris of the East", Shanghai was a prosperous and cosmopolitan city of business and pleasure. The American Art Deco style dominated in the new high-rise hotels, apartment blocks, offices, department stores, cafés, and restaurants.

The 12-storey Cathy Hotel, built by Palmer & Turner in 1932, set the tone, with its green pyramidal roof and Art Deco features. The Grand Theatre, designed by Czech-Hungarian émigré Laszio Hudec, was a monument to Hollywood glamour with its sparkling Art Deco interior, complete with a marble lobby and neon lighting.

ECKART MUTHESIUS (1904-89)

IN HIS DESIGNS FOR THE MAHARAJAH OF INDORE, ECKART MUTHESIUS SUCCESSFULLY MARRIED THE SIMPLE AND FUNCTIONAL WITH THE MORE DECORATIVE AND FANCIFUL FRENCH ART DECO STYLE.

Nowhere was the desire for the fashionable and the modern better demonstrated than in the luxurious palaces designed by Western architects for the wealthy and sophisticated Indian princes.

One such palace, built with an eye for practical considerations as well as for the latest style, was built by the German architect Eckart Muthesius. Commissioned in 1930 by the Oxford-educated Maharajah of Indore, Yeshwant Rao Holkar, Muthesius designed an air-conditioned, "U"-shaped palace known as Manik Bagh. Containing private apartments, as well as a large ballroom, a banqueting hall, and guest rooms, it had a steel frame, concrete walls, and a wooden roof.

Muthesius was personally responsible for designing all the interiors and created a stylish and modern palace to Art Deco, resplendent with sparkling golden-yellow walls. Nearly all of the fittings that he designed, from

floors and window frames to light fittings, switches, and door handles, were ordered from companies in Germany and shipped out to India. The furniture was bought from some of the best French designers, mainly from the *Union des Artistes Modernes*.

Muthesius furnished the palace with lavish pieces made from sumptuous materials. The Maharajah's study contained fine macassar ebony furniture by Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann, while his bedroom featured an armchair by Eileen Gray and a chaise longue by Le Corbusier, covered in leopardskin. The beds in the palace were made of aluminium and chrome, and the deep leather armchairs had frames of chrome-plated band iron and built-in reading lamps. There were also plush carpets by Ivan da Silva Bruhns, and silverware by Jean Puiforcat.



JAPANESE SCREEN

This wooden screen was designed by Ban-ura Shogo. The spare, asymmetric pattern of flowers and foliage was created with different-coloured lacquers and is typical of Japanese design. It provides a decorous foil for the geometric shape of the screen. 1936. H:91cm (35 $\frac{3}{4}$ in); W:109cm (43in); D:31cm (12 $\frac{1}{4}$ in).



JAPANESE RADIO

This wooden hyperbolic radio was designed by Inoue Hikonosuke. Lacquer was a favourite material for Japanese designers working in the Art Deco style. The powerful stylized flower shapes of luminous gold highlighted with silver foil stand proud against the glossy black-lacquer background. 1934.



Manik Bagh side table This table was designed by Muthesius. The ultra-modern geometric form of the table echoes the "U" shape of the palace. 1930-33.



Tubular steel side chair This chrome-plated chair is covered in brilliant red vinyl and was commissioned by Muthesius for Manik Bagh. 1930-33. H:100cm (39 $\frac{1}{2}$ in).

THE SUITE

SPECIALLY DESIGNED MATCHING SETS OF ELEGANT AND LUXURIOUS FURNITURE BECAME AN INTEGRAL FEATURE OF THE ART DECO INTERIOR.

MATCHING PIECES OF FURNITURE have had a long and rich tradition. From the second half of the 18th century onwards, fashionable rooms in French houses were frequently designed as integrated interiors and were furnished with large and elaborate suites of furniture. In the mid 19th century, rooms became more densely furnished and the desire for comfort amongst the growing middle classes led to the creation of new furnishings that were often produced as elegant, machine-made matching sets.

ELEGANCE AND COMFORT

In the 1920s and 1930s, designers working in the Art Deco style also responded to the demand for integrated interiors. They aimed to make a bold visual statement whilst also providing comfort.

French Art Deco designers created luxurious suites of furniture. Each piece of furniture was embellished with a sumptuous material, such as shagreen or animal skin, lacquer, or an exotic veneer, and matching upholstery. Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann exhibited a complete set of furniture for the "residence of a rich art collector" to great acclaim at the 1925 Paris Exhibition. Paul Follot created suites in the 18th-century style and Jules Leleu designed luxury suites for embassies, ministries, and ocean liners. André Groult created a spectacular bedroom suite veneered in green galuchat (ray skin) and upholstered in pink satin, which was exhibited as the "Chambre de Madame" in the Ambassade Française pavilion at the 1925 Paris Exhibition. This extravagant ensemble caused a sensation.

FROM ART DECO TO MODERNISM

Suites of Art Deco furniture were also designed in Britain. Betty Joel produced room sets in the style of Ruhlmann, while Syrie Maugham created beige and white colour schemes featuring mirror glass and silvered wood. It was the more Modernist style that took hold, however. In 1929, Serge Chermayeff designed a comfortable, but practical, suite of living-room furniture for Waring & Gillow. The room featured geometric sofas upholstered in Cubist-inspired patterned fabric, set around a hexagonal coffee table and rug, also decorated with geometric patterns.

BEDROOM SUITE

Coordinating suites of furniture for bedrooms were particularly popular during this period. The centrepiece of the room was usually the bed, which was surrounded by a host of chests of drawers, dressing tables, wardrobes, and so on, all geometrically shaped and made from the same materials, as here.



Chest of drawers This has a compartmented blind drawer. Below this are three long drawers, with distinctive long metal handles. W:114cm (45¼in). S&K



Gentleman's tall chest of drawers This piece has a blind top drawer containing an adjustable mirror, above five graduated drawers. The bottom drawer is cedar-lined. The chest is flanked by a cedar-lined hanging compartment. H:140cm (56in). S&K



Bedside table The table contains a blind drawer, above a cupboard that is fitted to look like a drawer. H:65cm (26in). S&K



Pedestal desk This desk has a blind, compartmented centre drawer, flanked by two small blind drawers, set over two banks of two deep drawers. W:120cm (48in). S&K



Bedroom mirror This mirror is one of a pair. It has a simple rectangular design with a gently arched top and bottom, and wooden strips at the sides. *W:101cm (39½in).* S&K



STREAMLINED GEOMETRY

The October 1935 issue of *House Beautiful* shows an elegant Art Moderne interior on its cover. The red upholstery stands out from the clean white lines of the curved chairs, which are grouped symmetrically around a rectangular black backgammon table.

THE SAVOY HOTEL

This well-appointed room in the Savoy Hotel, London has a pastel décor and is complemented by original Art Deco furnishings, including the curvaceous bedroom suite.

AMERICAN SUITES

In the United States in 1928, at the American Designers' Gallery, ten designers contributed complete, integrated room sets. Among them was Donald Deskey, who designed a "Man's Smoking Room", with elegant, rectilinear furniture, often decorated with geometric motifs, and made from new materials such as chrome-plated steel, glass, and Bakelite. Paul T. Frankl (see p.397) displayed an entire room full of his furniture shaped like miniature skyscrapers at the same exhibition.

Also in 1928, at Macy's department store in New York, Bruno Paul integrated Oriental and Western traditions in his "Room for a Gentleman". The Japanese screen-style windows were a perfect complement to the plush armchairs and veneered sideboard. The following year, in *Good Furniture* magazine, Paul stated that "the whole interior is more important than any of its parts".

Norman Bel Geddes did much to popularize the American streamlined Art Moderne look. His suites of furniture, characterized by horizontal lines and rounded corners, were frequently made of machine-age materials, such as enamelled metal.

CHAIRS

ART DECO CHAIRS tended to delight in the taste for comfort and luxury. They boast generous proportions and were made from luxurious and inviting materials. Many chairs were designed as part of a salon suite that included a sofa and several chairs. Whether shaped in clean lines based on traditional forms or in more avant-garde, abstract forms, chairs were created to be both comfortable and pleasing to the eye.

LUXURY AND EXOTICISM

The French designers Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann, Süe et Mare, and Paul Follot often based their chair designs on 18th-century forms, such as the *bergère* and the *fauteuil à la reine*. With shaped backs, slender tapering legs terminating in delicate sabots of ivory or bronze, and graceful, scrolling arm supports, these chairs were made from

sumptuous timbers, such as mahogany, rosewood, and macassar ebony, and were often decorated with carving or inlays of exotic materials, including lacquer, tortoiseshell, sharkskin, and mother-of-pearl.

Upholstery played an important part in Art Deco chair design. Luxurious materials, such as the finest leather, exotic animal skins, and velour were used, and vivid colours and geometric or exotic patterns prevailed. The set designs and costumes of Serge Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes*, Cubist and Fauve paintings, and African, Oriental, and folk art were all key decorative influences.

By the 1930s, many Art Deco chairs were designed along more geometric, abstract lines, with simple contours, and were made from new materials, such as laminated wood, tubular steel, chromed metal, aluminium, and vinyl.



The cream-coloured leather upholstery coupled with the walnut frame creates a sense of opulence.

The black-leather trim contrasts dramatically with the broad, cream-coloured surfaces.

The frame is made of walnut – a richly coloured fruitwood favoured in the 18th century.

The box-like shape and generous proportions of the chair recall the form of the *bergère*.

BRITISH WALNUT CHAIR

Part of a three-piece suite, this comfortable and luxurious armchair was produced by Hille & Co., who were manufacturers of reproduction furniture. The chair has a U-shaped walnut frame that forms armrests with gently rounded

corners, and is supported on a square, moulded, block base. The seat and the matching cushion are upholstered in fine cream leather and have a contrasting narrow black-leather trim. The U-shaped frame was a popular feature of many Art Deco pieces of furniture. c.1928. W:184cm (72½in). JAZ 5



FRENCH DESK CHAIR

This mahogany desk chair, by Maurice Dufrene, has an arched tub back and padded seat. The armrests end in bold scrolls and the seat is raised on scrolling, tapering legs. c.1920. H:71cm (28in); W:66cm (26in). CAL 5



ENGLISH C-SHAPE ARMCHAIR

One of a pair of open armchairs, this has prominent, reverse C-shape armrests on squat, sabre legs. The avant-garde Cubist and Futurist movements influenced the pattern of the upholstery. c.1930. BL 3



SWEDISH CLUB CHAIR

This Swedish club chair is box-like in shape and has rounded, wooden armrests. The back, seat, and sides of the chair are upholstered in matt black leather with brass rivet details on the arms. W:64cm (25¼in). LANE 3



AMERICAN D-SHAPE CHAIR

One of a pair of chairs designed by Paul Frankl, the armrests are curved and finished in black lacquer. The seat is upholstered in black vinyl with red piping. c.1927. H:68cm (26¾in); W:61cm (24in); D:76cm (30in). MSM



FRENCH DINING CHAIR

This elegant tall-backed dining chair is one of a set of six designed by Maurice Jallot. The chair is padded and upholstered in red, with elliptical detailing, and has tapering, slightly splayed legs. 1940s. LM 5



FRENCH NIAGARA CHAIR

One of a set of four, this chair was designed by Maurice Dufrene. The "Niagara" patterned upholstery sits within a plain moulded frame, on distinctive, stepped, "falling water" legs. H:94cm (37in); W:48.25cm (19in). CAL 6

**FRENCH ARMCHAIR**

This armchair is one of pair designed by Pol Bouthion. It has a chrome and red-lacquered wooden frame and flat paddle arms. The seat and back are upholstered in dark brown fabric. *H:84cm (33in).* CSB 6

**FRENCH LACQUERED ARMCHAIR**

This armchair is one of a pair by Francisque Chaleysin and is made from black-lacquered wood. The seat, back, and tubular arms are upholstered in brown and beige velvet. *H:85cm (33½in).* CSB 5

**FRENCH ARMCHAIR**

This armchair is one of a pair designed by Soubrier. It has an arched back and is upholstered in a diamond-patterned fabric. The armchair stands on block feet. *H:79cm (31in); W:66cm (26in); D:74cm (29in).* MOD 6

**FRENCH MAHOGANY SIDE CHAIR**

One of a pair, this Jules Leleu chair has an arched back, inverted heart base, and stepped, scroll arm terminals. The tapering legs terminate in gilt-bronze sabots. *c.1930. H:73.65cm (29in); W:63.5cm (25in).* CAL 6

**AMERICAN V-SHAPED CHAIR**

One of six mahogany dining chairs designed by Paul Frankl and produced by Johnson Furniture Co., this armchair has a distinctive V-shaped upholstered back and curved mahogany arm rests. *H:79cm (31in).* FRE 2

**BRITISH CURVED CHAIR**

Tapering splayed legs support this sycamore chair, attributed to Hille and Co. The padded seat and arched tub back are upholstered in a geometrically patterned fabric, with one curving side. *c.1930. H:69cm (27¼in).* TDG 1

**FRENCH DINING CHAIR**

This Léon and Maurice Jallot dining chair has an ebonized frame and legs. The seat and back are upholstered in green leather, above sides mounted with three chrome rails. *c.1930. H:84cm (33in); W:61cm (24in).* CAL 5

**FRENCH CHAIR**

This black-polished and upholstered chair is one of a pair by Alfred Porteneuve. It has slender, flattened arms and tapering legs, which end in bronze sabots. *1940s. H:89cm (35in); W:53.35cm (21in).* CAL 6

**FRENCH ROSEWOOD CHAIR**

This Süe et Mare rosewood side chair has an upholstered arched back above a padded seat. The carved frame has feather detailing and the cabriole legs terminate in scroll feet. *c.1925. H:99cm (39in); W:51cm (20in).* CAL 5

**AMERICAN CHAIR**

This mahogany dining chair is part of a dining suite comprising eight chairs. It has a solid, rectangular back and a padded seat upholstered in striped fabric. The chair is supported on tapering, splayed legs. *FRE 3*

**BLACK-LACQUERED CHAIR**

Designed by De Coene Frères, this Belgian black-lacquered armchair has a framed, square, padded back and seat upholstered in green leather. The armrests are flattened and the tapering legs terminate in nickel feet. *LM*

**FRENCH GAMES CHAIR**

One of a pair, this Dominique cherry armchair is late for the period but its square form, Aubusson upholstery, and tapering legs are all Art Deco in style. *1945. H:78.75cm (31in); W:61cm (24in).* CAL 5

TABLES

AFTER WORLD WAR I, designers working in the Art Deco style created tables of extraordinary richness and originality, continuing the Art Nouveau tradition in a less flamboyant manner.

TRADITIONAL FORMS

Many Art Deco furniture designers based their designs on traditional table forms, such as the early oak trestle table and the drop-leaf designs of the 18th century. They used richly figured timbers, such as walnut, yew, and mahogany, and decorated their tables with crossbanding in exotic woods, such as ebony and tulip wood.

Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann and Jules Leleu created writing tables, dressing tables, and pier tables that echoed the forms favoured by the French *ébénistes* of the 18th and 19th centuries. They used exotic materials, such as lacquer and expensive wood veneers, and their tables often featured decorative details, such as drawer pulls of ivory, slender legs terminating in sabots of gilded bronze, and table tops covered with leather, sharkskin, or marble.

The Irish-born designer Eileen Gray designed finely crafted and exquisitely lacquered tables whose abstract shapes

were frequently defined by different-coloured lacquers and costly inlays of foil and mother-of-pearl.

BOLD INNOVATIONS

The furniture designers who followed a more Modernist Art Deco path, such as Marcel Coard and Pierre Chareau in France, and Donald Deskey in the United States, made tables for a wide variety of uses in bold geometric shapes, such as cubes, cylinders, and pyramids. They used innovative materials characteristic of the machine age, including mirror glass, chrome, and tubular steel, and interpreted traditional forms, such as the tilt-top table with great ingenuity.

Pierre Legrain combined luxurious and machine-age materials with severity of form in a striking low table entitled "Python", which he designed in 1928 for Pierre Meyer. Made entirely of wood, the long, rectangular top and two supports are entirely sheathed in snakeskin. The supports fit into a rectangular base, which is the mirror image of the top, but is veneered in nickel plate. Two nickel-plated ovoid discs encircle the square supports, completing the symmetry of the design.

The stepped top of the table is a distinctive Art Deco feature.

The octagonal shape of the table top is innovative and striking.

The substantial apron adds strength to the table design.



The overhanging top is reminiscent of early trestle and refectory tables.

The central support links the two table legs.

The two box-shaped table legs replace the usual four supports at either end.

BRITISH DINING TABLE

This solid, architectural table is from a table and six chair set designed by H&L Epstein. Made from walnut, the table top is octagonal in shape, with black-lacquered banding running around the edge. Two rectangular block legs

with block feet, connected to each other by a rectangular panel, support the table top. The crossbanding around the edge and the thick inlaid band of crossbanding across the table top add a subtle but decorative touch to the distinctive markings of the walnut veneer. *c.1935. W:183cm (72in). JAZ 6*



Geometric form



Maker's label

FRENCH SIDE TABLE

This rosewood side table, designed by Michel Dufet, is composed of geometric forms, which are characteristic of the Art Deco style. The circular rosewood surface has a glass top, and is placed on two rectangular supports. The

whole table is supported on a lipped tray base. Furniture designers who favoured the Modernist thread of the Art Deco style created all kinds of tables with strong geometric outlines, including interlocking circles, triangles, and cubes. *c.1930. H:59.5cm (23½in). CAL 6*



OCCASIONAL TABLE

This 12-sided table is decorated all over with mirrors to create an unusual, completely mirrored surface. The table top is supported by slightly tapering square legs. *c.1930. W:51cm (20in). L&T 1*



WALNUT TABLE

This geometric occasional table is made from walnut and has an octagonal, crossbanded top that is raised on a rectangular column. The column is centred on a square, spreading base. *H:55cm (22in). L&T 1*



FRENCH MAHOGANY TABLE

This Lucie Renaudot rosewood, mahogany, and ivory-inlaid side table, has a circular top with ivory dentil edging. The stepped, square-section legs are united by a square undertier. *c.1925. H:68.5cm (27in); D:59.5cm (23½in). CAL 6*



MIRROR TABLE

This table is made from walnut and has a circular top, attached to tapering square legs that support the whole table. The table top is covered with a mirrored surface. *c.1930. D:58.5cm (23in). TDG 1*



BELGIAN LYRE CONSOLE TABLE

Designed by De Coene Frères, this Belgian lyre console table stands on a lipped tray base. The base supports a highly polished lyre-shaped frame, a popular feature of the Art Deco style. The frame in turn supports a narrow, rectangular table top. *c.1930. H:75cm (29½in). LM 3*



BELGIAN COFFEE TABLE

This rosewood coffee table, designed by De Coene Frères, is veneered in walnut and has two legs made of chrome tubing. Two crossed, lipped tray bases support the U-shaped structure. The chrome tubular legs reinforce the rectangular table top, which has rounded corners. *c.1930. H:62cm (24½in). LM 3*



FRENCH U-SHAPED TABLE

This graceful French side table has a rectangular top with a stepped edge. It is supported by a tulip-shaped structure, rather than conventional legs, with decorative chrome detailing at the base. The table has been restored and piano varnished, hence its glossy black appearance. *c.1930. SWT*



BRITISH DRUM TABLE

This sturdy oak drum occasional table is designed in the style of Betty Joel. A broad central oak cylinder supports three circular table tops, each arranged one above the other. *c.1935. D:61cm (24in). TGD 2*



BRITISH QUARTETTO TABLE

The quartetto table is designed by H&L Epstein and is made from burr maple. The set of four small tables of graduated size nest together and are supported on square legs. *c.1930. H:56cm (22in); D:76cm (30in). JAZ 3*



CHROMIUM TABLE

This chromium-plated occasional table has a circular top inset with a black glass panel above three curved supports. The supports are attached to a circular ebonized base on flattened bun feet. *H:51cm (20in). L&T 1*



MAPLE CONSOLE TABLE

This console table has a maple top with a moulded mahogany edge, and a single drawer at the front. The two U-shaped supports are united by a stretcher beneath and have arched feet. *W:94cm (37in). FRE 1*



AMERICAN DINING TABLE

This extension dining table, designed by Paul Frankl, has a white rectangular gesso top with gently bowed edges and two 30.5cm- (12in-) long leaves that rest on two curved mahogany supports. Each of the mahogany supports

incorporates three V-shaped slats. The robust, architectural nature of this piece is typical of Paul Frankl's furniture designs, which reflected trends in contemporary architecture. The chevron pattern of the supports is reminiscent of key design elements on the Chrysler Building (see p.387). *H:73.65cm (29in). FRE 3*



DINING TABLE

This elegant dining table is part of a table and eight chair set. The table has a simple rectangular top, with pull-out extensions. A pedestal base, with two C-shaped supports, carries the solid table top. The eight chairs

that accompany the dining table have solid backs with upholstered seats. The graceful interaction of interlocking arcs and rectangles adds a powerful three-dimensional and distinctively avant-garde element to the shape of the conventional rectangular dining table. *W:156cm (61½in). FRE 3*

CABINETS

THE CLEAN LINES and geometric shapes of Art Deco cabinets gave free reign to the prevailing taste for luxurious finishes. The cocktail cabinet made its first appearance in the jazz age. Featuring mirrored interiors and door panels, it contained enough shelving to house all the accoutrements for making cocktails.

REFINED OPULENCE

French furniture designers, such as Paul Follot and Emile-Jacques Ruhlmann, created cabinets that were veneered in a wide range of exotic timbers, including amboyna, bird's-eye maple, mahogany, zebrawood, rosewood, and sycamore, which were admired for their distinctive markings and lustrous sheen. Understated and refined decorative features adorned their cabinets. Crossbanding was used as edging along the top of a cabinet and delicate marquetry flower

bouquets appeared sparingly. Drawer pulls were defined by their contrasting shapes or finishing material. Decorative motifs were created from rare and expensive materials, such as ivory, shagreen, tortoiseshell, and wrought iron. Oriental lacquerwork in strong colours was also used by some cabinet-makers, especially Jean Dunand and Eileen Gray.

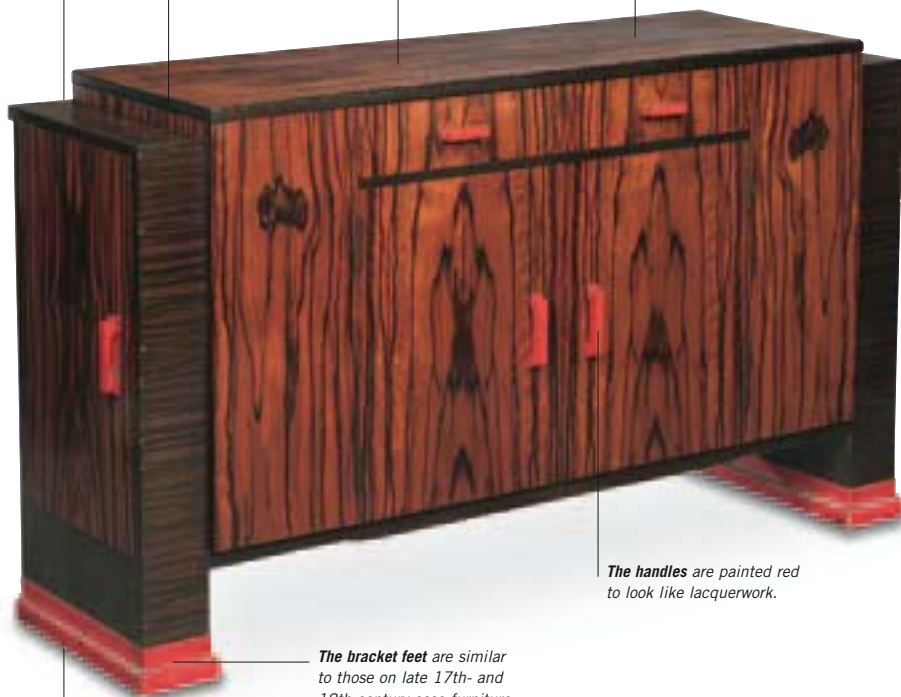
CLEAN LINES

Furniture-makers working in the Modernist strand of Art Deco, such as Sidney Barnsley in Britain and Paul Frankl and Eiel Saarinen in the United States, created streamlined cabinets in geometric shapes. These designers still used lacquerwork and exotic veneers, but they combined them with modern materials, such as Bakelite, mirror glass, and tubular steel. Ivory, metal, and chrome were used to provide decorative details.

The stepped top of the cabinet is a distinctive Art Deco feature.

The cabinet is veneered with coromandel, an unusual variety of ebony.

The rectangular shape of the cabinet recalls 18th-century French commodes.



The handles are painted red to look like lacquerwork.

The bracket feet are similar to those on late 17th- and 18th-century case furniture.

BRITISH SIDE CABINET

This rectangular side cabinet, flanked with a further two slim cabinets, is veneered with coromandel, a variety of ebony sometimes known as zebrawood because of its distinctive striped markings. Below the stepped top, there

is a central drawer and the main cabinet, which has two doors. Two cabinets compose the outer sides. The bracket feet and the door and drawer handles are painted red, the only obvious form of decoration. The cabinet was designed by Whytock and Reid of Edinburgh. *H:77cm (30½in); W:140cm (55in).* L&T 1



BRITISH DISPLAY CABINET

This stylized display cabinet is veneered in walnut. The upper section of the cabinet is circular in form, with two glazed shelves enclosing two glazed doors. The cabinet is raised upon a panelled base and has block feet. *H:109cm (43in); W:187cm (73½in).* L&T 1



BRITISH DISPLAY CABINET

This unusual display cabinet, possibly veneered in walnut, is carried on two, deeply grooved triangular supports that resemble a fish's fins. The cabinet itself is circular and has two minimally decorated glass doors, which enclose four wooden shelves. *BW 1*



BELGIAN SIDEBOARD

This Belgian sideboard is crafted from mahogany, and veneered with rosewood. The shape recalls the forms of late 18th-century commodes. The minimalist design of this rectangular sideboard consists of two simple

doors with understated bronze handles, and the whole piece is raised on short, circular bronze feet. The clean-lined, geometric shape of the piece is complemented by the distinctive vertical figure of the lustrous rosewood veneer used all over the case. *c.1935. W:235cm (94in).* SWT 5



BRITISH SIDEBOARD

This sideboard, designed by M.P. Davis of London, is crafted in bleached mahogany. The three central drawers are flanked by two side cabinets, of a slightly lower height, which have small, circular mahogany handles. The central

pull-out drawers are slightly protruding, arching outwards. The strongly marked, distinctive figure of the mahogany veneer gives the geometric sideboard a rich opulence that needs no additional ornament – a characteristic common of much Art Deco furniture. *c.1929. H:96cm (38in); W:162cm (64in).* JAZ 3



FRENCH SIDE CABINET

This side cabinet is made from mahogany, with amboyna veneering and a stylized ebony inlay. The three drawers have circular metal handles and the whole cabinet is raised on tall, cylindrical, tapering legs. *c.1935. H:78cm (31in); W:46.5cm (18½in); D:32cm (13in). SWT*



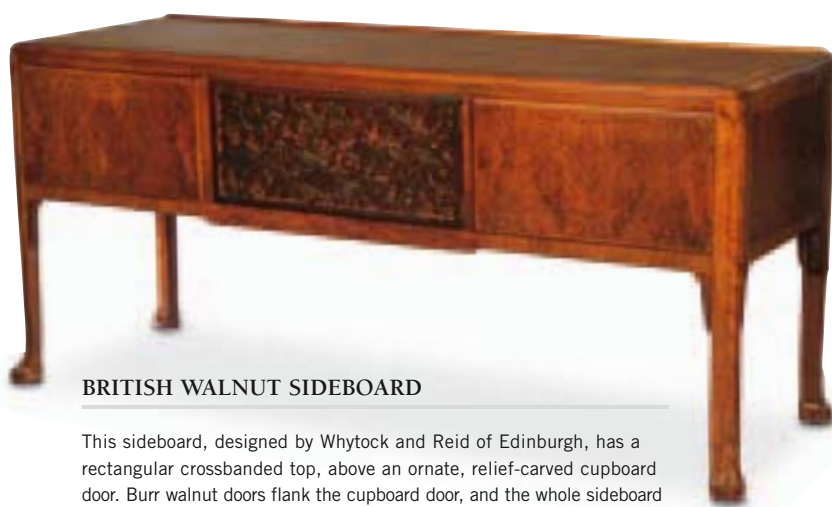
FRENCH COMMODE

Designed by Süe et Mare, this rectilinear, mahogany-veneered commode is a good example of their understated yet luxurious style. The two cabinet doors have subtly stylized circular handles, and the legs and the lower edge of the cabinet are lightly embellished with carving. The cabinet is raised on four slightly tapering, moulded legs. *c.1919. H:89cm (35in); W:114.3cm (45in). LM 5*



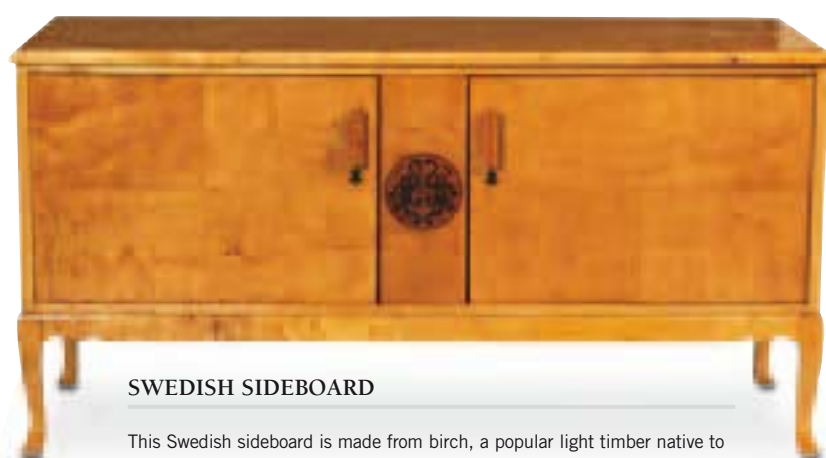
BURLED MAPLE CONSOLE

This rectangular burr maple console has four centrally placed drawers with nickled brass handles. These are flanked by a pair of cupboard doors with circular wooden handles. The whole console is supported on two rectangular side panels. Beneath the cupboards and drawers there is a lower shelf that connects the two side panel supports. *W:119.4cm (47in). FRE 1*



BRITISH WALNUT SIDEBOARD

This sideboard, designed by Whytock and Reid of Edinburgh, has a rectangular crossbanded top, above an ornate, relief-carved cupboard door. Burr walnut doors flank the cupboard door, and the whole sideboard stands upon shaped legs with moulded feet. *H:85cm (33½in); W:182cm (71¾in); D:63cm (25in). L&T 3*



SWEDISH SIDEBOARD

This Swedish sideboard is made from birch, a popular light timber native to Scandinavia, with ebony and burr ash details. It has two cupboards with simple rectangular handles, short cabriole legs, and moulded, splayed feet. The centrally placed, geometric, dark wooden motif is influenced by Asian decorative motifs. *c.1930. W:150cm (59in). LANE 4*



FRENCH SIDEBOARD

This mahogany sideboard is a good example of French Art Deco, with its simple elegant forms, rectilinear design, and high standard of craftsmanship. The cabinet has four cabinet doors, decorated with narrow horizontal bands

of chrome and a central circular feature. The whole sideboard is raised on a pedestal block base. It is typical of Art Deco styling in combining fine woodwork with chrome details. *c.1925. W:165cm (65in). JAZ 3*



BRITISH SIDEBOARD

Designed by H&L Epstein, this fine rectangular maple sideboard has rounded corners and a stepped top. The central section is made up of two drawers with circular, moulded handles above a cupboard with a decorative vertical,

slatted-wood design. Two more cupboards with moulded oblong wooden handles flank the central section of the sideboard. The whole sideboard is set on a block base. *c.1935. H:104cm (41in); W:152cm (60in). JAZ 3*



MODERNISM

1925-1945



A NEW AGE

WORLD WAR I AND THE RISE OF INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY BROUGHT ABOUT RADICAL CHANGES IN SOCIETY THAT WERE REFLECTED IN MODERN DESIGN.

THE EFFECTS OF World War I on the nations of Europe and North America were considerable. People were psychologically scarred by the atrocities of the war, and the economies of many countries were in ruins. Homelessness, too, proved a major problem, as bombs had destroyed large areas of housing. Indeed, such was the devastation that many had witnessed, it was inevitable that some would question the cultural values that had caused the war in the first place. It is no coincidence, then, that the period after World War I saw some of the most radical cultural shifts the world had seen in centuries.

The interwar years must be considered a new dawn, too, in terms of industry. During the years leading up to World War II, industry

became an integrated part of civilized societies, although many still resented its existence. Allied to the march of industry were the technological breakthroughs that occurred during this era: the car, the telephone, electricity, and air travel all became relatively common aspects of daily life.

Such rapid and momentous advancements inevitably had their side effects. For many, this progress was seen as a licence to dream of a new, utopian future, while for others, it was a worrying sign of moral degeneration.

Mass production, in particular, was changing society and was a direct cause of the growth of the leisure industry. Mass production meant cheaper products, and long days of labour became increasingly unnecessary, giving many



Cantilever armchair This tubular-steel frame supports a cane seat and back. 1927. Re-issued by Tecta in 2004. H:79cm (31in); W:48cm (19in); D:74cm (29in). TEC

an unprecedented amount of free time. The prospect of national and international travel also became more realistic, and a spirit of adventure took hold of many people's imaginations.

This optimism was short-lived, however, as the interwar years were also a time of economic turmoil. In 1926, Britain was rocked by the General Strike, while the Wall Street crash of 1929 ushered in the Great Depression in the United States. By the mid 1930s, poverty was a grave concern. A sense of disillusionment descended across Europe and North America, as it became clear that widespread industrialization was not the panacea some had painted it to be. This increasingly sour climate proved the ideal breeding ground for extremist political parties. Promising to bring drastic change to the everyday lives of citizens, these parties took advantage of the economic instability and uncertainty that many felt in the face of cultural changes brought on by the rise of industry and technology. The National Socialist Party of Germany would, of course, prove the most powerful of these factions, as it was Adolf Hitler's rise to power in the 1930s that eventually sparked World War II.

Villa Savoye, Poissy-sur-Seine This is an early and classic example of Modern architecture. Typical of what became known as the International Style are the strip windows, flat roof and deck, and rectilinear lines of the design. Designed by Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret. 1929–30.

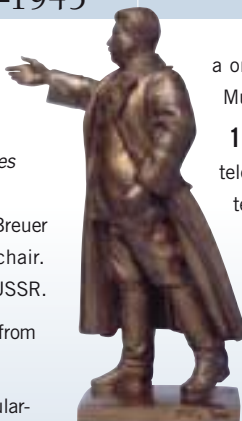


TIMELINE 1925–1945

1925 Le Corbusier presents *Pavilion de l'Esprit Nouveau* at the *Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* in Paris. Chromium becomes commercially available. Marcel Breuer designs his first tubular-steel chair. Josef Stalin comes to power in USSR.

1925–26 The Bauhaus moves from Weimar to Dessau.

1926 Mart Stam designs a tubular-steel cantilever chair. Italy becomes



Josef Stalin

a one-party state under Benito Mussolini. General Strike in Britain.

1927 The first transatlantic telephone call is made. An electronic television system is developed in the US. Charles Lindbergh makes the first solo flight across the Atlantic.

1928 Penicillin is discovered by Alexander Fleming.

1929 The Wall Street Crash cripples the American

economy. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe completes the German pavilion at the *Exposición Internacional* in Barcelona. *Die Wohnung* exhibition in Stuttgart is organized by *Deutscher Werkbund*. The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) opens in New York City.



Paimio chair by Alvar Aalto

1929–33 Alvar Aalto creates a range of fittings for the Paimio Sanatorium.

1930 The Swedish Functionalism exhibition is held in Stockholm and sparks debate.

1931 *Wohnbedarf* store opens in Zurich; the catalogue gives Modern designs international exposure. Empire State



Interior of the Schroeder House, Utrecht, the Netherlands Built of steel, wood, and concrete, this early Modernist house is a composition of abstract planes. The moveable walls make it possible to transform the upper floor from a single space into a series of rooms. Furnishings and design by Gerrit Rietveld. 1924–25.

Gerrit Rietveld's Beugelstoel The chair has a lacquered plywood seat and back, which curves over the aluminium frame to provide stability. 1927. H:59.75cm (23½in); W:40cm (15½in); D:58.5cm (23in).



Building is opened. Collapse of banks in Central Europe results in major recession.

1931–32 The Bauhaus moves to Berlin after the National Socialists force the school out of Dessau.

1933 National Socialist Party closes the Bauhaus. First annual Triennial exhibition held in Milan. **Empire State Building**

Hitler becomes German Chancellor.

1934 Wells Coates designs London's Isokon Flats, which become a magnet for Modernists in Britain. "Machine Art" exhibition at MoMA in New York.

1936 SLR camera is developed in Germany. Spanish Civil War begins (ends 1939).

1939 Gino Sarfatti founds the Arteluce



lighting company in Milan, helping to establish Italy's reputation as the leader in lighting design.

1939 World War II begins. The first successful jet aeroplane is flown in Germany.

1939–40 Organic Design in Home Furnishings competition held at MoMA; designs include a plywood chair by **SLR camera, 1936**

Charles Eames and Eero Saarinen. World's Fair held in New York.

1940 Roosevelt elected for a third term in office.

1942 First nuclear reactor built in USA.

1945 United Nations is established. World War II ends.



Franklin D. Roosevelt

MODERN DESIGN

THE STRIPPED-BACK, EXPOSED STYLE of much Modern furniture had already been experimented with by designers years before it became common across Europe in the 1930s. Adolf Loos, an Austrian architect, wrote his influential text “Ornament and Crime” as early as 1908, and the designers of the *Wiener Werkstätte* (see p.367) produced a few stark, minimal designs long before the outbreak of World War I. These early efforts, however, seem tentative compared with what followed. In the aftermath of the war, many designers gave up decoration for good, developing a severe, anonymous style that valued structure over surface.

Although the Modernists’ reductionist style was certainly intended as an aesthetic affront to what had gone before, it also had more practical aims. It was a considered attempt by designers to develop a new language for industrially manufactured furniture. Previously, manufacturers had preferred to reproduce old styles, making their mass-produced furniture rather duplicitously appear hand-crafted. A new

generation realized the absurdity of



Child’s NE60 stool This simple stacking stool is made from lacquered birch. The circular, linoleum-covered seat rests on rectangle-section legs that curve in under the seat. Designed by Alvar Aalto for Artek in 1932–33; this example is a re-issue. H:34cm (13½in).

this and proposed a style that fearlessly articulated the processes by which furniture was made. Thus, they hoped, mass-produced furniture would finally be afforded the dignity it deserved, especially considering the urgent need for inexpensive furniture at the time.

It was in Germany, which was particularly hard hit by World War I, that the most significant advances in furniture design were made in the interwar years. In an earnest attempt to produce viable prototypes for industrial production, students and staff at the celebrated Bauhaus school (see p.426) instigated a new approach to design that was mimicked, with varying degrees of success, the world over.

MATERIALS OF MASS PRODUCTION

It was not only the forms of furniture that came under scrutiny from Modernists at the Bauhaus and beyond, but the materials as well. Tubular steel, plywood, and plate glass – all little explored in terms of furniture design before 1925 – were introduced in the interwar years as the materials to take furniture forward. Indeed, metal, which had none of the mystical, emotional qualities of wood, soon came to symbolize the ruthless, reforming character of Modernism. First used by a few pioneers in the late 1920s, these materials would eventually become a common, if controversial, sight across the developed world by the end of the 1930s.

As well as throwing up new materials and processes with which designers could work, the relentless march of industrialization also provoked a shift in lifestyles. Leisure became an increasingly prominent feature of family life and, as such, the formality and structure of day-to-day existence began to loosen. Designers responded by concentrating increasingly on lounge chairs aimed not only at the affluent elite, but also at the working classes. Chaises longues became increasingly popular and designers took inspiration



Black-and-white desk The desk’s steel case has alternating black-and-white drawer fronts and a glass top. A chrome leg supports the black-stained ash desk top. By Marcel Breuer in 1932. Re-issued by Tecta in 2004. H:69cm (27in); W:160cm (63in); D:61cm (24in). TEC

from the folding furniture found on ocean liners. The lightness of furniture also became a key feature, as the concept of a fluid space filled with multipurpose furniture made its presence felt.

When considering the breadth of the innovations that occurred in furniture design in this era it is worth remembering that this was a period of unprecedented communication between countries. The telephone and advances in the travel industry made it easier than ever before for designers to keep abreast of developments elsewhere. The use of tubular steel spread rapidly after the initial experiments made by Marcel Breuer at the Bauhaus in 1925, and, by 1934, some American academics were referring to an International Style that encompassed developments in architecture and the decorative arts. Of course, each nation developed its own idiosyncrasies – the Scandinavians, for instance, steered clear of tubular steel, preferring the warmth of wood in their harsh climates – but overall it was an era of standardization, a time when feats of audacious craftsmanship became firmly unfashionable.

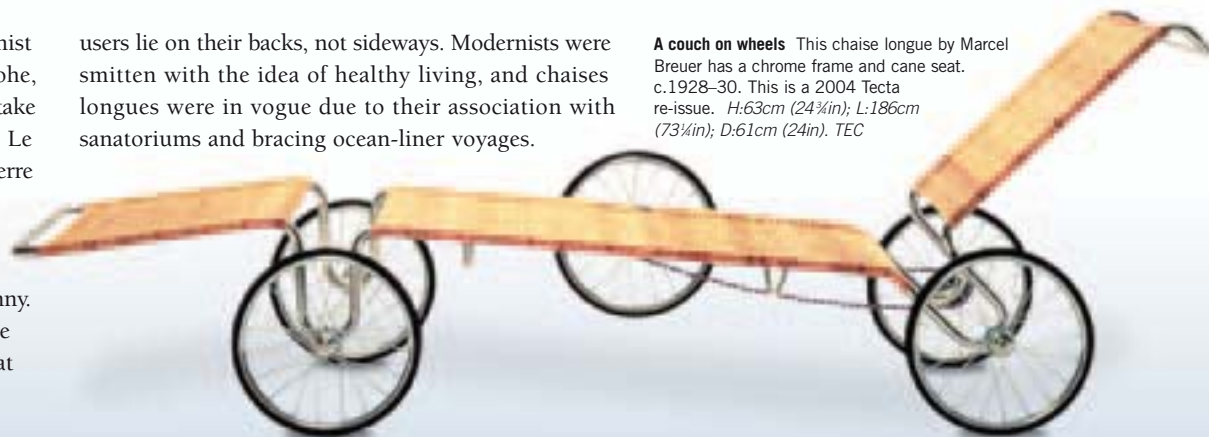
Designers of the interwar years attempted to let the processes of manufacturing guide the shapes of their furniture. The simple, angular shapes of much tubular-steel furniture of this period expresses the way it was made, while the more organic lines of plywood furniture reflect the gentle bending done to produce it. The furniture of Modernist designers, while certainly ideologically motivated in its rejection of all that their predecessors held dear, was also largely inspired by nothing more radical than mere common sense.

THE CHAISE LONGUE

In the 1920s and 30s almost all the major Modernist designers created a chaise longue. Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, and Alvar Aalto all produced their take on the chaise longue (which means long chair). Le Corbusier designed his B306 chaise longue with Pierre Jeanneret and Charlotte Perriand, while Marcel Breuer produced versions in tubular steel, plywood, and aluminium. He even made one with wheels, to be dragged outside when it was sunny.

Originating in 16th-century France, the chaise longue differs from the day bed, or *récamier*, in that

users lie on their backs, not sideways. Modernists were smitten with the idea of healthy living, and chaises longues were in vogue due to their association with sanatoriums and bracing ocean-liner voyages.



A couch on wheels This chaise longue by Marcel Breuer has a chrome frame and cane seat. c.1928–30. This is a 2004 Tecta re-issue. H:63cm (24½in); L:186cm (73½in); D:61cm (24in). TEC

EASY CHAIR

The forms, materials, and mechanisms of industry provided significant inspiration for all designers of the Modern era, but never is this more apparent than in the work of Jean Prouvé. The *fauteuil de grand repos*, or easy chair, created by the French designer in 1928 almost appears to be ripped from the interior of a car, plane, or train. The long, low shape of the chair, too, reminds one even more of a form of vehicle. Never one to spare a thought for those with more delicate aesthetic sensibilities, Prouvé produced furniture as if he were building a functional machine. The crudely sprung adjustable seat is proof that Prouvé thought primarily on a practical level, using whatever means necessary to make the chair comfortable. First shown to the public in 1930 at an exhibition of work by the members of the UAM (*Union des Artistes Modernes*), the *fauteuil de grand repos* has recently been refined by the Tecta furniture company in Germany and put back on the market.

The seat is made of canvas, a material that had previously been used exclusively for portable military or nautical furniture.

The chair's structure is exposed, allowing the sitter to see how the chair was made.

The long, sloping back of the chair gives it an unexpected elegance.

Padded armrests offer additional comfort.

Steel armrests provide leverage when sitters push the seat forward or pull it back.

Obscured ball bearings allow the seat to move back to a reclining position.

Springs beneath the seat provide comfort and also ease the seat's movement.

Side sections are of varnished steel, a material borrowed from the automobile industry.

A bar at the rear of the chair provides the structure with added strength.

Jean Prouvé's *fauteuil de grand repos* The chair is made from varnished steel. It is upholstered with horse hair and covered in canvas. The seat is adjustable. 1930. H:94cm (37in); W:68cm (26½in); D:108cm (42½in).

ELEMENTS OF STYLE

There is the sense that the Modern era of furniture was a period of cleansing the palette. Furniture forms became remarkably stark after World War I, with stylistic flourishes occurring only very rarely and even then with great understatement. The skills of the hand-craftsman became increasingly marginalized as designers fell in awe of the capabilities of the machine. The arrival of new technologies and new materials in the field of furniture design also gave rise to new forms and techniques that soon spread across Europe and North America. Particular emphasis, too, was placed on lowering the cost of furniture production, as World War I had left many countries economically shattered. Furniture acquired a lean quality in the Modern era that had never been seen before, and has never been seen since.



Starburst-patterned table

Birch

While many Modernist designers adopted the new-found materials of the industrial age – glass and metal – some, particularly in Scandinavia, turned to birch, which suited the fashion for light-coloured furniture. Birch is lightweight and easily stripped into layers, so is ideal for plywood.



Wooden frame and upholstered armrest

Plain surfaces

In their constant effort to align their work with industrial methods of production, Modernist designers almost entirely abandoned the notion of surface decoration on their furniture. The decreasing use of solid wood, too, dictated the decline in decorative carving and ushered in an era of streamlined simplicity.



Chrome-plated legs and armrests

Chrome-plating

While surface decoration may have been outlawed by Modern designers, many of them were drawn to the shiny effect of chrome-plating on the dull surface of tubular steel. Americans, in particular, were enamoured with the technique of chrome-plating and used it to dazzling effect in their furniture designs.



Tubular-steel chair

Tubular steel

The strength, affordability, and pliability of tubular steel made it the ideal material for Modern furniture. The fact that it produced such lightweight furniture was also of crucial importance at a time when many people had lost their homes in World War I and were living in temporary housing.



Armrest made of bent plywood

Bent plywood

Plywood is made by bonding thin strips of wood together. When it is softened by steam, plywood can easily be bent. It is inherently more flexible than solid wood and was adopted by Modernist designers who recognized that it could eradicate the need for numerous joints on a piece of furniture.



Detail of buttoned-leather seat back

Leather and hide

Leather was much appreciated in the Modern era for its versatility and ready availability; as such, it became a very popular material and was widely used by furniture designers. Hides were often employed to add an exotic element to furniture designs, particularly when designers were trying to appeal to more affluent clients.



Detail of tubular-steel chair frame

Curvaceous lines

The process of producing both tubular-steel and plywood furniture often involves a great deal of bending, especially if one is attempting to avoid welding or joining. Allowing this action to inform the shapes of their furniture, many Modernist designers created works that incorporated flowing, curvaceous lines.



Heavy plate-glass table top

Glass

Glass appealed to furniture designers of the Modern era because of its associations with both architecture and industry. Its transparency, and thus its integrity, was appreciated too – as was the fact that glass could provide the sort of clean, concise lines that many furniture designers wanted to create.



Structure of seat back in plain view

Exposed structures

With surface decoration considered superfluous, the structure of Modern furniture became all-important, for stylistic as well as functional reasons. Designers equated exposed structure with integrity and rationality and saw the stripped-back style as a way to minimize the use of costly materials and create an egalitarian style of design.



Cantilevered chair base

Cantilevering

Cantilevered chairs, which did away with the accepted notion that a chair need to have four legs, were the most obvious expression of the reductionist tendencies of the Modernist style. The sinuous shape of a cantilevered chair also achieved the purity of form that many Modernist designers were constantly striving to create.



Chair back and seat of woven cane

Cane

Of all the pre-Modern furniture admired by Modernist designers, none received more praise than the mid 19th-century work of Michael Thonet (*see p.284*). Many adopted Thonet's use of cane, recognizing it as lightweight and inexpensive. The decorative effect of cane is expressive of its construction, which also appealed to Modernists.



Boldly coloured, geometric cradle

Geometric forms

In an era when many designers were seeking to align themselves with industry and steer clear of whimsical associations with nature, it seemed an obvious move to employ geometric forms. The use of geometric shapes, often rendered in primary colours, was also a response to the new forms of abstract art of the time.



Detail of black leather headrest and seat

Black

In an effort to distance themselves from the decorative designs of their predecessors, many Modernist designers abolished colour from their furniture. The use of black deflected attention away from the furniture's surface to its structure. Black leather was a favourite, and plywood was often painted to hide the wood's grain.

GERRIT RIETVELD

KNOWN FOR MODERN CLASSICS SUCH AS HIS FAMOUS RED-AND-BLUE CHAIR AND ZIG-ZAG CHAIR, DUTCHMAN GERRIT RIETVELD WAS ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL DESIGNERS OF THE 20TH CENTURY.

GERRIT RIETVELD WAS BORN the son of a cabinet-maker in Utrecht, the Netherlands, in 1888. His early years, working in his father's workshop and as a goldsmith's draughtsman, gave no indication that he would later become one of the most influential and uncompromising furniture designers of the 20th century. Initially, he planned to become a painter, but pressing financial needs and the birth of the first of his six children in 1913 pushed him to take up the family profession.

Even as the first works emerged from Rietveld's furniture studio, he appeared to be producing pieces reluctantly. The chairs seemed defiantly inelegant when compared to those of his contemporaries, and even Rietveld himself referred to his furniture works as "studies". If we look at Rietveld's celebrated Red-and-Blue chair, of which an early, unpainted version was made in 1918, it certainly has the appearance of being unfinished – as if the chair is waiting to have the overlapping bars of its structure cut down to size.

MONDRIAN ET AL

It was the startling nature of Rietveld's designs that brought him to the attention of a radical group of artists, architects, and thinkers who went by the name of De Stijl. Led by Piet Mondrian and Theo van Doesburg, De Stijl expressed "a new spirit", one that overlooked the charms of nature in favour of a rigorous, abstract approach to design.

Rietveld, in turning his back on refined hand-craftsmanship, clearly intrigued Mondrian and van Doesburg. On seeing Rietveld's work, van Doesburg proclaimed that it held a particular form of beauty, an "unspeaking elegance like that of a machine". Rietveld's work, unlike that of his contemporaries, articulated only its construction and made no attempt to seduce by aping natural forms.

So closely did this approach mirror the aims of De Stijl that it is often assumed that Rietveld constructed the Red-and-Blue chair, and other similar works, whilst a member of De Stijl. Indeed, this chair is often described as "a 3-D Mondrian painting": the strong line definitions and geometric shapes of the seat and back suggest that they are merely fragments of a larger structure that continues beyond the actuality of the



GERRIT RIETVELD *The designer and architect is preoccupied with a model of his design for the Schroeder House. Built in 1924, the house conforms to De Stijl ideals. The walls on the upper floor of the house can all be removed to make a single space, rather than a number of rooms. Rietveld designed not only the house, but also the furnishing that went in it.*



CRATE DESK *This desk is part of a range of furniture that also included an easy chair, a table, a bookcase, and a stool. It is made of identical strips of pine, which have been fixed together and painted white. By Metz & Co. 1934. H:71cm (28in); W:100cm (39 1/2in); D:59.5cm (23 1/2in).*



ZIG-ZAG CHAIR *This cantilevered chair is made from four rectangles of oak held together with nuts and bolts. The seat and back are dovetailed and the zig-zags are reinforced with wedges. 1934. H:70.5cm (27 3/4in); W:37cm (14 1/4in); D:37cm (14 1/4in). BonE*

END TABLE *This end table consists of four sheets of lacquered wood. The asymmetry of the table's design, with the square table top above two end-on rectangular sheets of wood and the circular base, gives the piece a precarious look, and yet the pieces are well balanced and the table perfectly stable. Designed for the Schroeder House. 1924. H:58cm (22 3/4in); W:50cm (19 3/4in); D:50cm (19 3/4in).*

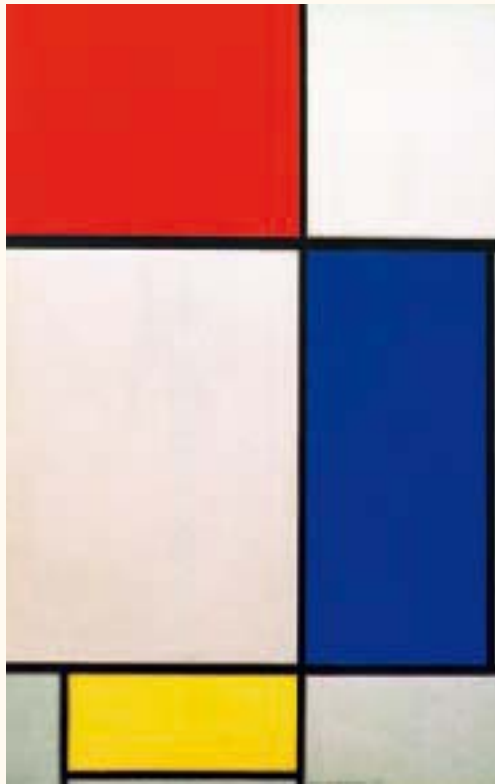
MONDRIAN

AS A LEADING MEMBER OF THE DE STIJL GROUP, PIET MONDRIAN LAID DOWN MANY OF THE FOUNDATIONS FOR THE GROUP, WHICH PROMOTED A RIGOROUS, ABSTRACT APPROACH TO ART AND DESIGN.

The De Stijl group, of which Gerrit Rietveld was a member, is probably best recognized today by the geometric paintings of Piet Mondrian. Where Rietveld, who was working in his father's furniture workshop at the age of 12, was essentially a practical man, Mondrian was more cerebral. In 1917, inspired by the Cubist work he had seen in France, Mondrian wrote "Abstraction as Representation of the Pure Spirit". It was a dense, polemical text that laid the foundations for the De Stijl movement, which was started in the same year.

Although Mondrian was always clear that the "new spirit" of De Stijl should be "manifested in all the arts without exception", he was, understandably, concerned primarily with painting. Mondrian stressed repeatedly in his writings, and expressed in his pictures, the belief that a painting should "aim to express equilibrium and harmony as purely as possible" (his italics). By "purely", he meant without recourse to the representation of nature. A painting of a tree, he argued, was primarily enjoyed as a harmonious composition of colour and line, so why paint a tree when you can paint pure colour and line instead?

Mondrian called this approach "a new plasticity", and with it he attempted to express a standardized, universal beauty of the sort rarely found in what he described as the capricious world of nature. Mondrian's writings – and paintings, too – clearly emboldened his fellow De Stijl members and clarified for many of them the way in which they should go forward. Rietveld, in particular, gained direction and momentum from the ideas of Piet Mondrian, and without his input would have certainly left a far fainter impression on the history of Modern design.



Large Composition with Red, Blue and Yellow, 1928. Oil on canvas. Piet Mondrian. Stefan T. Edlis Collection. © 2005 Mondrian/Holzman Trust c/o HCR International, Warrenton, Virginia, USA. 1928. H:123cm (48½in); W:80cm (31½in).

Rietveld's Red-and-Blue chair This is the three-dimensional equivalent of Mondrian's art. Designed in 1918 mostly for visual effect, it is made from dyed pine wood and plywood. This example is by Cassina. c.1980. H:101.5cm (40in); W:53cm (20½in); D:68.5cm (27in). BonBay

chair. This similarity with Mondrian's work, however, was entirely serendipitous. Although it was his contact with De Stijl designers that prompted Rietveld, in 1923, to paint the Red-and-Blue chair in red, black, yellow, and blue, he came up with the chair's form independently.

In 1924, by this time a committed member of De Stijl, Rietveld completed his first major architectural work, the Schroeder house in Utrecht. It was a building based on strict De Stijl principles. Curves of any sort were absent, and the house became something of a celebration of "the tensed line", which, according to Mondrian, "most purely expresses immutability, strength, and vastness".

Almost all the furniture and fittings for the house were designed by Rietveld, and it is interesting that among them were some tubular-steel chairs. The dining chairs owe a clear debt to the tubular-steel designs of Marcel Breuer (see p.434). Breuer is known to have greatly admired the work of Rietveld, to the extent that he adopted the Dutchman's geometric approach to chair design when tackling the Wassily chair, his first work in tubular steel. It is intriguing, then, to see Rietveld follow the younger man with metal designs of his own.

A RETURN TO WOOD

Rietveld's experiments with bent tubular steel were short-lived, and he soon returned to his favoured medium of wood. In 1932, inspired once again by Breuer, and by the work of Dutch architect Mart Stam, Rietveld designed a wooden cantilever chair. He approached the problem of the cantilever chair in a typically no-nonsense style, resulting in the stark forms of the Zig-Zag chair. Despite having such a severe, angular silhouette, the Zig-Zag chair still manages to charm, thanks to its sheer simplicity.

In the 1930s, the Dutch economy was in a seemingly endless slump and, in response, Rietveld produced a series of low-cost furniture designs. Never one to err on the side of luxury, Rietveld's 1934 range of Crate furniture appears amazingly minimalist even by today's standards. Some of his most avid supporters took their time to appreciate these rudimentary designs. "A crate represents a method of carpentry aimed straight at its goal", Rietveld argued, "and the plain materials of which it is composed often make it stronger than its precious contents." Consisting of a desk, a stool, a bookcase, a low table, and an easy chair, Rietveld's Crate collection was, perhaps, his most explicit snub to the craftsman's skills he learned as a boy.

During the 1940s and 50s, Rietveld continued to work in the raw, reductionist idiom that he had established. By this time, however, design had somewhat overtaken him and, while he created exceptional pieces (many still in production today), he rarely made the impact that he had in his earlier career. In 1954, Rietveld designed the Dutch pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale, and in 1963 started work on the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. A year later, though, he was to die in his hometown of Utrecht, leaving behind him a remarkable legacy.



BAUHAUS

DURING ITS SHORT LIFESPAN, THE BAUHAUS BECAME THE MOST IMPORTANT DESIGN SCHOOL OF THE MODERN ERA, AND ITS IDEAS CONTINUE TO RESONATE.

NO NAME LOOMS LARGER in the history of Modern furniture than that of the Bauhaus. Founded by Walter Gropius in Weimar, Germany, in 1919 and dismantled by the Nazis in 1933, this avant-garde school for art, architecture, and design was the most important institution of the era. Now known for its severe, industrial aesthetic, the Bauhaus was, in its early days, concerned with crafts. It was Gropius's radical idea that the School contain many disciplines, all of equal status. "Let us create a new guild of craftsmen without the class distinctions", he wrote. The "building of the future will combine architecture, sculpture, and painting in a single form...and will one day rise towards the heavens from the hands of a million workers as the crystalline symbol of a new and coming faith."

This spiritual rallying cry was reflected in the teachings of the most important tutor of the School's early years, Johannes Itten. Itten initiated a preliminary course for newcomers that became the precursor to the



WASSILY CHAIR This chair has a bent, tubular-steel frame, leather slings for the back, seat, and armrests, and a sled base. Designed by Marcel Breuer, this lightweight chair was revolutionary in its use of industrial materials. 1925. H:72cm (28½in); W:79cm (31¼in); D:70cm (27½in). SDR

THE BAUHAUS BUILDING

WALTER GROPIUS'S VISION FOR THE BAUHAUS – TO ALIGN ART WITH INDUSTRY – IS REFLECTED IN THE BAUHAUS BUILDING IN DESSAU.



Walter Gropius

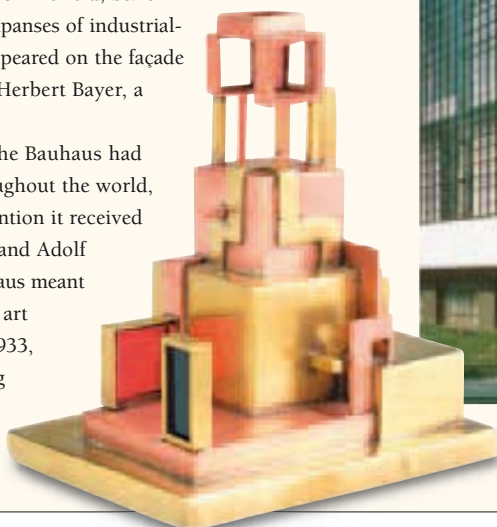
In 1925, having been forced out of their original location in Weimar for political reasons, the Bauhaus moved to Dessau. This change mirrored a shift in the School's outlook, with director Walter Gropius now wanting to cast the Bauhaus as a research centre dedicated to producing prototypes for industry.

To reinforce this point, he and Adolf Meyer designed a building for the Bauhaus that borrowed heavily from the architecture of factories. Gone was any evidence of the hand-craftsmanship or decorative touches that had adorned the first building designed under the

umbrella of the Bauhaus (the wooden Haus Sommerfeld, built in 1921). Instead, the new building used vast expanses of industrial-looking glass and steel. The word Bauhaus appeared on the façade in the new Universal typeface, designed by Herbert Bayer, a Bauhaus tutor.

Before the Dessau building was erected, the Bauhaus had achieved a certain degree of recognition throughout the world, although it was nothing compared to the attention it received after the building went up. Walter Gropius's and Adolf Meyer's design proved to people that the Bauhaus meant business, and was not just another idealistic art school. Sadly, the Nazis closed the School in 1933, and the building fell into disrepair, only being renovated in recent years.

Form study This is a Bauhaus model for a building proposal during the Weimar years. c.1920. MOD



Gropius's and Meyer's industrial-looking masterpiece for the Bauhaus School The dominant feature of this building was its steel-and-glass façade. It was testament to the Bauhaus belief that form should follow function.



ADJUSTABLE TABLE This painted ash table, designed by Erich Brendel at Bauhaus Weimar, has four flaps and additional foldable tops stored within the table base, making it possible to extend the table in a number of ways. A shelf sits within the base and the table stands on casters. First designed in 1924, the table was re-issued by Tecta in 1985. H:71cm (28in); W:56/147cm (22/58in); D:56/147cm (22/58in). TEC

foundation courses now found at all art schools. Students were taught the value of interdisciplinary study and allowed to experiment in new areas.

In 1923, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy joined the Bauhaus. The Hungarian had little time for mystical idealism and encouraged Gropius to adopt a practical approach. Gropius received similar advice from Theo van Doesburg, a De Stijl founder, who

suggested that the machine be adopted by architects and designers, as crafts were becoming outdated.

Gropius's chance to redefine the Bauhaus came in 1924, when the School moved to Dessau. He launched the new-look Bauhaus in 1926 under the banner of "Art and Technology: A New Unity". Students worked in laboratories, not workshops, creating prototypes for industrial production. The aim was "the methodical removal of anything that is unnecessary", and so the look that we now associate with the Bauhaus was born.

PIONEERS IN DESIGN

At this time, Gropius also took the bold step of asking his most talented students to become tutors. Perhaps the most important of these was Marcel Breuer, whose pioneering work with tubular steel revolutionized the forms of furniture and became his legacy.

Another student-turned-teacher was Marianne Brandt. With Christian Dell, she dominated the metalwork department, producing designs that were mass produced and affordable – and among the few Bauhaus products to make money.

The role of women within the Bauhaus can be viewed from conflicting angles. While the most talented women were given the credit they were due, most were confined to the weaving workshops.

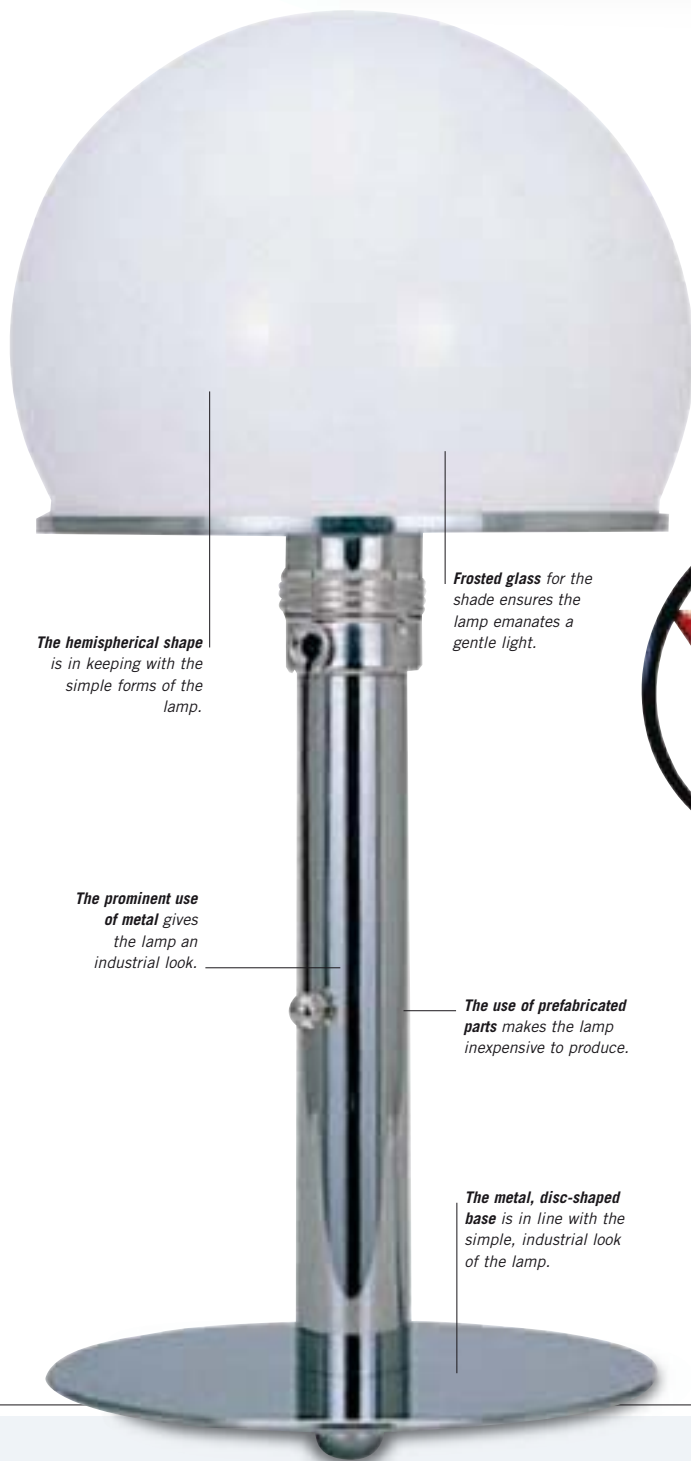
It is worth noting, however, that the weaving workshop, under Gunta Stölzl, was the School's most successful workshop.

BAUHAUS AFTER GROPIUS

In 1928, Hannes Meyer became director of the Bauhaus. Meyer stressed the social responsibilities of the School, but fell foul of the authorities because of his left-leaning views. In 1930, the Bauhaus appointed its final director, the architect Mies van der Rohe. Although many think of him as a major figure within the School, he was only there to oversee its sad decline and fall. The Nazi Party objected to the liberal tendencies of the Bauhaus and shut it down in 1932. Mies van der Rohe attempted to re-establish the School in Berlin, but in 1933 it was closed for good.

By 1937, most of the students and staff had scattered across Europe and America. Wassily Kandinsky settled in France, Marcel Breuer in Britain, and Paul Klee in Switzerland. Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, who fled to the United States along with Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and Josef Albers, established a New Bauhaus in Chicago that ran 1937–46. Although the School had closed, the ideas and innovations of the Bauhaus continued, and still continue, to shape the future of art, architecture, and, in particular, furniture design.

DESK LAMP An opaque glass globe sits at the top of a nickel-plated metal column and base. Simple in its design, this lamp became known as the Bauhaus lamp, so closely did it embody the theories of the School. Designed by Wilhelm Wagenfeld. 1923. H:36cm (14¼in); D:18cm (7¼in).



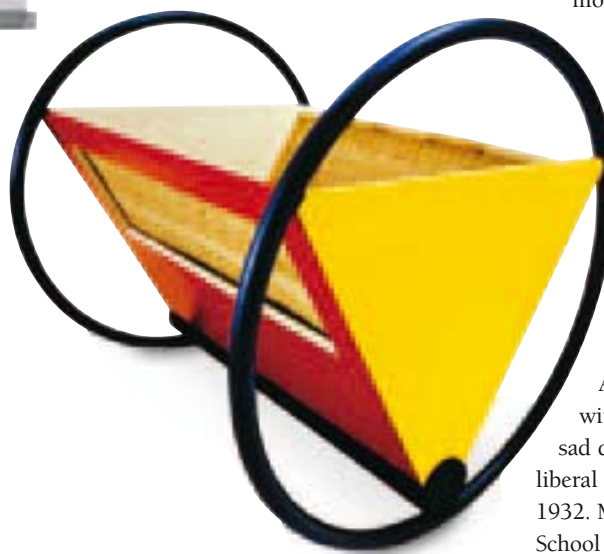
The hemispherical shape is in keeping with the simple forms of the lamp.

Frosted glass for the shade ensures the lamp emanates a gentle light.

The prominent use of metal gives the lamp an industrial look.

The use of prefabricated parts makes the lamp inexpensive to produce.

The metal, disc-shaped base is in line with the simple, industrial look of the lamp.



BAUHAUS CRADLE Designed by Peter Keler while at Bauhaus Weimar, this brightly coloured cradle was inspired by Wassily Kandinsky. Its form is geometric, with blue-painted circular rockers and red-and-yellow painted triangular sides. The sides are lined in wicker. Originally designed in 1922, this example is a Tecta re-issue from 2004. L:98cm (38¾in); D:91cm (35¾in). TEC

GERMANY

OF ALL THE COUNTRIES in Europe, Germany was the most committed to Modern design. The reasons for this are many, but can be boiled down to two: firstly, World War I had a particularly destructive impact on Germany, thus kindling a desire amongst the people to move on; secondly, the central ideas of Modernism – most significantly, the union of art and industry – had their origins in the existing cultural heritage of the *Deutscher Werkbund* (DWB), formed in Munich in 1907.

EARLY INFLUENCES

Founder members of the DWB, such as Richard Riemerschmid, Josef Maria

Olbrich, and Peter Behrens, aimed to engender discussion between designers and manufacturers. The DWB's members were incredibly active in making their voices heard – they gave lectures, mounted exhibitions as far afield as the United States, and published books and magazines. “The German ideal for the future”, wrote Friedrich Naumann, a prominent DWB member, “is to become a highly educated machine people.” By 1914, however, a split had occurred between those who saw the future of design as a process of standardization and others who were reluctant to lose the individual, artistic approach to design.

STANDARDIZATION

It was the desperate need for economically viable products in the wake of World War I that eventually brought the DWB down on the side of standardization. In 1924, the DWB published “Form without Ornament” and in 1925 re-launched the influential journal *Die Form*. It was the ambitious *Die Wohnung* (The Dwelling) exhibition in Stuttgart in 1929, however, that proved the DWB's high point. The exhibition featured a housing estate which was built by architects and designers including Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, Mart Stam, and J.J.P. Oud. It was the furnishings as much as

the architecture that caused shock waves. This was the first time that tubular-steel furniture had been seen by a wider public, and the event that persuaded many manufacturers to work with avant-garde designs.

Despite the international flavour of *Die Wohnung* – participants came from the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Austria, and France – Germany made a strong showing. In buildings designed by Peter Behrens and Mies van der Rohe the furniture of the Stuttgart-based brothers Heinz and Bodo Rasch could be found. Their cantilevered Spirit of Sitting chair was a



SIESTA MEDIZINAL CHAISE LONGUE

This chair has a solid beech frame and a birch-plywood-slatted seat, back, and footrest. There is a tension adjustment bracket to one side. The design of the chair is such that the user can adjust the positions of the three separate supports, simply by shifting his or her body weight, and without the chair losing balance. Designed by Hans and Wassili Luckhardt. c.1937. H:113cm (44½in). BonBay

Exposed screws and joints accentuate the functionality of the chair.

The slight kink in the chair's back, and bent slats, give better support to the sitter's back.

The surface of the wood is left unpainted and undecorated, a further indication of the functional nature of this chair.

Hinges are used to allow the sitter to shift the chair from an upright to a reclining position.

An in-built footrest allows the chair to function as a chaise longue.



CLUB CHAIR

The exposed frame of this chair is made from solid oak and is held together by screws. The seat and chair back are upholstered and covered in a hand-woven wool fabric. Designed by Erich Dieckmann for the *Bauhochschule* (Building Academy) in Weimar. 1926–28. H:70.5cm (27¾in); W:62cm (24½in); D:75.5cm (29¾in). WKA



SIDEBOARD

This dark-stained birchwood sideboard has a rectangular case and stands on a plinth with four short, square-section legs. It has two short drawers above a hinged, fall-front door, which opens to reveal a fitted interior. Attributed to the *Deutsche Werkstätte*. c.1935. QU

talking point of the event, as was the refreshingly plain furniture of Erich Dieckmann and Ferdinand Kramer.

In Berlin, another pair of brothers, Wassili and Hans Luckhardt, were also breaking ground with their unadorned style – their ST14 cantilevered, tubular-steel and plywood chair (1931) being, perhaps, their best-known work.

MODERNISM EMBRACED

One of the most notable features of Modernism in Germany is just how widespread the movement was. Berlin, Stuttgart, and Munich have already been mentioned, while Weimar and Dessau proved important centres of

Modernism as well, by being home to the Bauhaus. Hamburg, too, had a thriving Modern community, while in Frankfurt the local authorities embraced Modernism enthusiastically.

A slew of housing projects in the Modern style went up in Frankfurt in the years following World War I. In 1926, Ferdinand Kramer designed a range of simple, plywood furniture suitable for the new houses. It was made in workshops set up in disused army barracks. Also in 1926, the Austrian architect Grete Schutte-Lihotzky developed the Frankfurt Kitchen, which was a scientifically researched standardized unit that

could be fitted into kitchens at minimal cost. Revolutionary at the time, the idea later became commonplace.

THE MOVEMENT'S DECLINE

Adolf Hitler's rise to power in 1933 signalled the decline of the Modern era in Germany. Although in favour of the Modernist ideals of efficiency and cleanliness, Hitler was troubled by the non-Germans involved in the movement. A select few German Modernists worked for the Nazi government, while schools such as the Bauhaus (accused of

“cultural Bolshevism”) were closed. Although Germany was the breeding ground for many of the greatest ideas and developments of the Modern era, it was in other countries that the full range of the style was eventually explored.



CANTILEVER CHAIR

In its original condition, this cantilever chair has a metal frame within the green, upholstered seat and back. The arms of the chair are made from chrome-plated tubular steel and have padded elbow rests. Designed by Hans and Wassili Luckhardt. c.1930. L:175cm (68 $\frac{3}{4}$ in). DOR

LUDWIG MIES VAN DER ROHE

ONE OF THE MODERN ERA'S BEST-KNOWN DESIGNERS AND ARCHITECTS, LUDWIG MIES VAN DER ROHE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR CREATING SOME OF THE PERIOD'S MOST ICONIC FURNITURE AND BUILDINGS.



Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, the son of a stonemason, was born in Aachen, Germany, in 1886, and was the man who coined the famous phrase “less is more”. Mies, as he is more commonly known, was an architect and furniture designer whose dedication to Functionalism was allied with an instinct for graceful form. This combination, and his exacting eye for detail, has made his furniture among the most enduring of the Modern era.

Although many associate Mies with the Bauhaus, he was only involved with the School at the very end of its lifespan. Such iconic designs as the Barcelona chair (created for the king of Spain) and the cantilever chair were developed in his architectural office in Berlin, some years before he became director of the Bauhaus in 1930. It is perhaps because Mies had little interest in low-cost designs (he insisted on using only the best-quality materials) that he steered clear of the Bauhaus and its more egalitarian agenda for so long.

In 1938, Mies moved to Chicago to escape the Nazi regime, and, although he almost completely stopped designing furniture, he did go on to design two of America's most revered Modern buildings – the Farnsworth House in Illinois (1946–50) and the Seagram Building in New York City (1951–58).



Barcelona table The X-shaped base of the table is made from chrome-plated steel and supports a heavy plate of glass. 1929. H:46cm (18 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); W:100cm (39in); D:100cm (39in). BK

Barcelona chair The simple-looking design consists of chromium-plated steel cross-frames, which support buttoned-leather cushions on leather straps. H:74cm (29 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); W:75cm (29 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); D:76cm (29 $\frac{1}{2}$ in). SDR



OCCASIONAL TABLE

The circular top of this occasional table has a geometric, rosewood-marquetry surface and is supported on nickel-plated tubular uprights, which extend to form stretchers. The table was designed by Josef Albers for his colleague Wassily Kandinsky. c.1933. D:79cm (31in).

FRANCE

IN 1925, THE FRENCH opened a grand international exhibition entitled the *Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* (Decorative and Modern Industrial Arts Exhibition). Although the exhibition promised to showcase the modern and industrial arts, it instead highlighted just how much the French still favoured opulence and decoration. Instead,

it was the Russians and a young, Swiss-born architect named Le Corbusier who showed the public the inspiring new designs the organizers had promised.

The Russian designer Konstantin Melnikov's Soviet Pavilion was a striking design in the Constructivist style, while Le Corbusier's *Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau* was a stark exercise in rational geometry. Perhaps most shocking to the public was the sparse interior of Le Corbusier's pavilion, which looked like a

prison cell compared to the lavish pavilions designed by designers such as Emile-Jacques Ruhlmann (see p.404).

With his high-profile pavilion design, Le Corbusier laid down a challenge to the French, and slowly some designers started to respond.

UNION OF MODERN ARTISTS

By 1929, a group of French architects and designers had come together to fight the rising tide of Art Deco. Calling themselves the *Union des Artistes Modernes* (Union of Modern Artists, or UAM), they counted Eileen Gray, Charlotte Perriand, Jean Puiforcat, and Jan

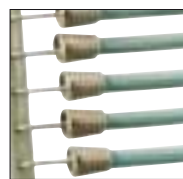
and Joel Martel among them. Their first president was Robert Mallet-Stevens, an architect whose heavily geometric buildings led to the group's style being dubbed "the great nudity".

Although the influence of the Bauhaus was clear, the UAM kept a careful distance from activities in Germany. In the wake of World War I, there was bad blood between the neighbours, so no matter how much they admired the works of Marcel Breuer, Walter Gropius, and Mies van der Rohe, UAM members did not admit as much.



The blue-grey colour was in keeping with the then current vogue for neutral shades.

The construction of the chair is very simple, making it easy to mass produce.



Detail of "sandows"

The "sandow" straps simply hook on to the tubular-steel frame.

The elasticated "sandow" straps mould to the body shape of the person sitting down.

The frame of the chair is made from nickel-plated tubular steel.

Rubber tips on the chair's legs stop it from slipping.

SANDOWS CHAIR

Designed by René Herbst, this chair has a tubular-steel frame and blue-grey, cotton-covered, elasticated, sprung "sandow" straps. Inspiration is said to have come from the elastic straps used to fasten packages to a bicycle. c.1929. H:81cm (32in); W:42cm (16½in); D:50cm (19¾in). BonBay



PLYWOOD CHAIR

This is an early design for a chair by Jean Prouvé. The moulded plywood seat and back are screwed to a solid, dark-stained wooden frame. The durable plywood seat has waterfall edges. The chair can be used in a domestic or a commercial setting. 1942. BonBay



RECTANGULAR CHAIR

This Modern chair is of strict rectangular construction with prominent feature screws. The back panel, seat panel, arms, and floor-level stretchers are made of ebonized wood. The panel legs and uprights are fashioned from figured oak. Attributed to Robert Mallet-Stevens. c.1930. BonBay

There were, at any rate, considerable discrepancies between the Modern styles in Germany and France. Although the French embraced materials such as tubular steel and plate glass, they used them with greater grace and elegance than the Germans, who preferred to keep their designs unerringly concise.

The second UAM president, René Herbst, was among the first in France to experiment with tubular steel. A keen advocate of low-cost mass production,

which he said would “provide a healthy home for every family”, he was also active at the affluent end of the market, designing, in 1930, a Paris apartment for the Prince Aga Khan.

A close friend of Herbst, and a member of UAM, was the architect and designer Pierre Chareau. It was Chareau who designed an icon of the Modern era, the *Maison de Verre*. Built from glass bricks and exposed iron beams in 1928, the house caused a stir in Paris. It was some time later that

Chareau translated his bold approach into furniture design. After years of designing luxurious furniture, he eventually developed a leaner style. Chareau’s desks of wood and bent-iron strips appeared almost mechanized.

This mechanical aesthetic, startling enough in the work of Chareau, was taken to even further extremes by Jean Prouvé, who was younger than many UAM members. “In my opinion”, Prouvé once said, “furniture design requires the same procedure as any

other building construction”, which is perhaps why his designs appear so robust. Based in the small town of Nancy, the prolific Prouvé took an energetic and fearless approach to furniture design. If French designers were accused of shying away from the raw vocabulary of industry in the early interwar years, Prouvé’s work was inarguable proof that their attitudes changed considerably.



TEA TABLE

This tea table, or coffee table, was designed by the French furniture designer Jean Prouvé. Its simple design consists of an oak-veneered table top positioned above three legs that

are fashioned from solid oak; the legs taper fairly sharply towards the bottom. The table top is supported beneath by a lacquered iron frame in a reddish-brown colour. 1934. H:34.5cm (13½in); Diam:95cm (37½in).



MB 405 DESK AND SN 3 STOOL

This L-shaped rosewood desktop is raised on a wrought-iron frame, which supports additional shelving above and below the desktop. The stool has a rectangular rosewood seat above a

wrought-iron frame, where the back leg bends under the stool to provide extra stability for the two front legs. c.1927. Desk: H:93.4cm (36¾in); W:161.2cm (63½in); D:102.8cm (40½in). Stool: H:35.6cm (14in); W:50.2cm (19½in); D:40cm (15½in).

EILEEN GRAY

ARCHITECT AND FURNITURE-DESIGNER, EILEEN GRAY CREATED REDUCTIONIST PIECES OF FURNITURE THAT ARE SOME OF THE MOST REMARKABLE OF THE MODERN PERIOD.

Born in Ireland in 1878, Eileen Gray was to make her name in France. Having studied at the Slade School of Art in London (as one of its first female students), Gray headed for Paris in 1907. When she arrived, she was greeted by a city enjoying a rich period of creativity.

Gray began to work for a Japanese craftsman, Seizo Sugawara, from whom she learned the lacquering. Her early furniture designs were heavily inspired by Sugawara and appeared as a luxuriant mix of Art Deco with Japanese overtones.

In 1922, Gray opened her own gallery in Paris – Galerie Jean Désert. Her work became a favourite of the intellectual classes, although she soon tired of making exclusive furniture. An encounter with the De Stijl group made her question her own design style as well.

A pivotal year in Gray’s life was 1927, as it was then that she drifted away from Paris and began work on a house in the South of France. Known as E1027, the house was incredibly

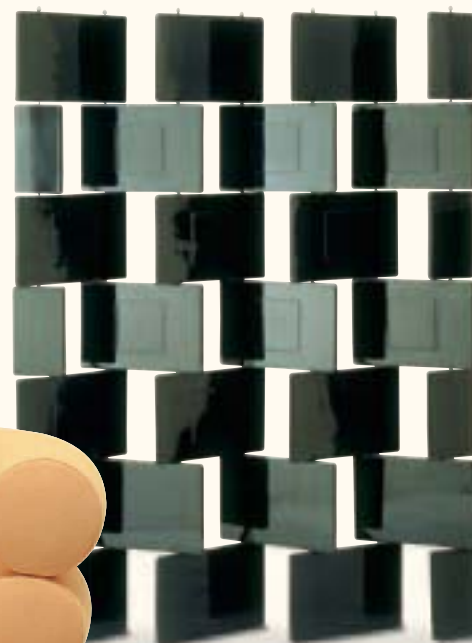
radical for its time. Built with an open-plan interior, it also gave Gray the opportunity to re-appraise her approach to furniture.

The furniture designs that Gray created for E1027 are among her most successful. Viewing items of furniture as components in the larger “machine” of the house, she developed an immensely practical style that was the very definition of form following function. The economy of line and flexibility of such pieces as the E1027 side table and the *Transat* chair make them among the most remarkable works of the Modern era.

Throughout the rest of her long life (she died in 1976), Gray worked in this Reductionist style, although her ability to give a sense of singular refinement to her work never deserted her.



Eileen Gray



Blocs screen An ingenious design, this screen consists of 28 black-lacquered panels that pivot on rods to open and close holes in the screen. 1923. H:189cm (74½in); W:136cm (53½in); D:2cm (¾in).



Bibendum chair Padded, tyre-like rings form the back and seat of the chair, which is covered in fabric. The base is chrome-plated steel. 1929. H:73cm (28½in); W:87.5cm (34½in); D:83cm (32½in).

LE CORBUSIER

LE CORBUSIER'S BOLD, MINIMALIST ARCHITECTURE AND INDUSTRIAL-LOOKING FURNITURE UNIQUELY CAPTURED THE FORWARD-LOOKING IDEALS OF THE EARLY MODERNISTS.

IF ONE MAN WERE SAID TO EPITOMIZE the spirit of the early Modern movement in architecture and design, it would be Le Corbusier. With his famous statement, "The house is a machine for living in," he encapsulated the Modernists' utopian desire for efficiency, economy, and a radically contemporary lifestyle.

Although an architect first and foremost, Le Corbusier was too energetic to restrict himself to the slow process of erecting buildings. He instigated the artistic movement known as Purism (a form of Cubism), was a prolific writer, and designed some of the most important furniture of the 20th century.

Le Corbusier's approach to design reflected his wider ideas, one of which was that industry should be accepted into daily life. His writings, for instance, extolled the virtues of industrial designs such as the grain silo. In an era when Art Deco was the dominant force (see pp.386–415), he was understandably viewed with suspicion.

THE EARLY YEARS

Although Le Corbusier became a French citizen in 1930, he was born in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland, in 1887. His first architectural project, which was completed at 18 under his real name – Charles-Edouard Jeanneret – was a house in La Chaux-de-Fonds. The Le Corbusier moniker came later, in the 1920s. Lecorbesier was the name of one of his forefathers, so it is thought that this is where he took the name from.

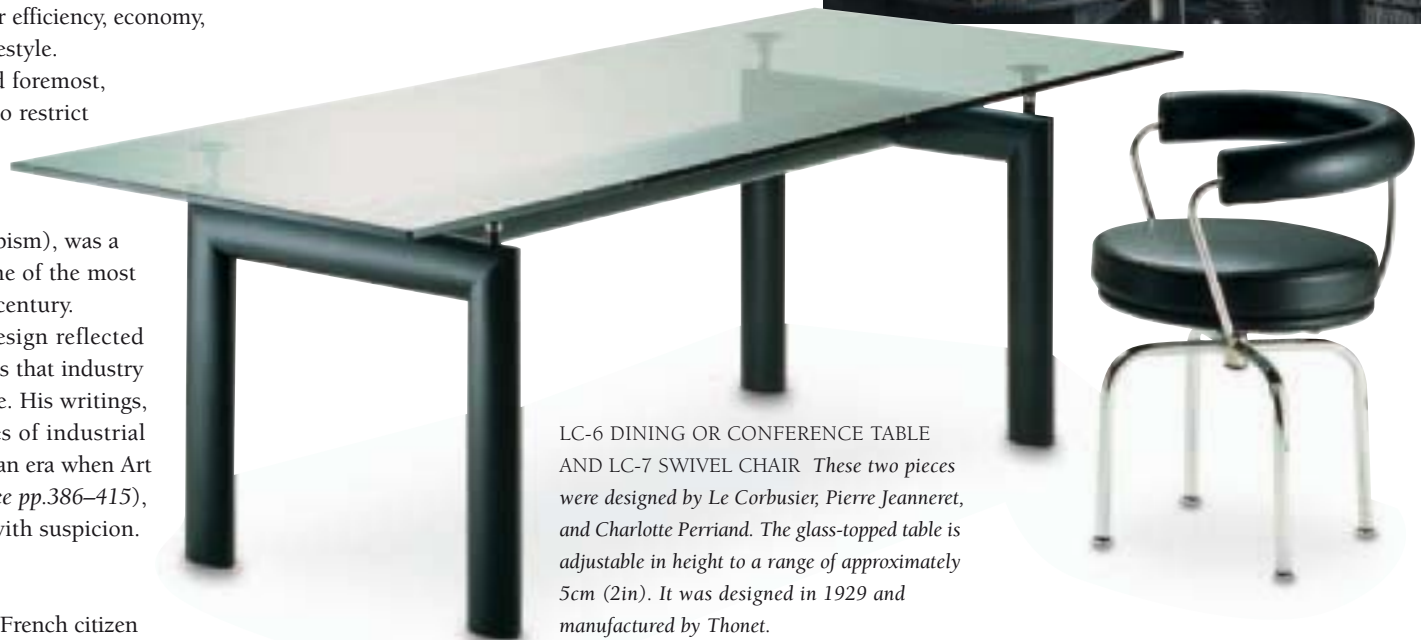
Le Corbusier's early years in Paris, where he settled after World War I, were spent writing such progressive tracts as the "Contemporary City for Three Million Inhabitants". Printed in 1922 in *L'Esprit Nouveau* – a review magazine Le Corbusier created with the painter Amédée Ozenfant in 1920 – this magnificent vision of the future showed just how ambitious he was.

MINIMALIST STYLE

In 1925, having persuaded the organizers of the Paris *Exposition des Art Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* to grant him an exhibition site, Le Corbusier built his *Pavillon de L'Esprit Nouveau* with his cousin Pierre Jeanneret. The bare walls and bold, geometric lines of the structure prompted outrage. "We find nothing but inadequate fittings, metal furniture, glass tables, cold lighting, and pale colours", wrote a shocked reviewer.

Inside the pavilion, the interior was sparsely furnished with Thonet's bentwood No. 9 and No. 14 chairs (see p.375), which Le Corbusier thought possessed "a nobility of their own". Still, Le Corbusier

LE CORBUSIER *The artist is in his studio in Rue Jacob, Paris. A prolific writer, he also co-founded and produced the influential design journal, L'Esprit Nouveau. 1931.*



LC-6 DINING OR CONFERENCE TABLE AND LC-7 SWIVEL CHAIR *These two pieces were designed by Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret, and Charlotte Perriand. The glass-topped table is adjustable in height to a range of approximately 5cm (2in). It was designed in 1929 and manufactured by Thonet.*

BIOGRAPHY



Le Corbusier

1887 Born Charles-Edouard Jeanneret in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland.

1905 Completes his first architectural project: a house in La Chaux-de-Fonds.

1910–11 Travels to Germany where he meets members of the *Deutscher Werkbund*.

1917 Opens his own architecture office in Paris.

Early 1920s Changes name to Le Corbusier.

1922 Publishes the progressive tract "Contemporary City for Three Million Inhabitants" in *L'Esprit Nouveau*.

1925 Builds *Pavillon de L'Esprit Nouveau* for the *Exposition des Art Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes*.

1928 With Pierre Jeanneret and Charlotte Perriand, develops forward-looking range of furniture that includes the B306 chair and the *Gran Confort* chaise longue.

1930 Becomes a naturalized French citizen.

1950–55 Builds chapel in Ronchamp.

1965 Dies in Cap Martin.



JEANNERET AND PERRIAND

ALTHOUGH THEY WERE NOT AS FAMOUS AS LE CORBUSIER, PIERRE JEANNERET AND CHARLOTTE PERRIAND INFLUENCED SOME OF HIS MOST RENOWNED DESIGNS.

When correctly credited, the less famous names of Pierre Jeanneret and Charlotte Perriand often appear alongside the furniture designs of Le Corbusier. Although it must be assumed that Le Corbusier led the way in the design of these items, they must, nonetheless, be considered a collaborative effort.

Pierre Jeanneret was a cousin of Le Corbusier who had worked with the architect since 1922. Charlotte Perriand was offered a position by Le Corbusier after he saw an exhibition of her anodized-aluminium and chromed-steel furniture.

It was Perriand's specialist knowledge that gave Le Corbusier the confidence to develop a range of furniture that, debuting in 1927, would include such renowned designs as the B306 chaise longue and the *Gran Confort* range.

The trio's furniture designs were first seen by the public as part of a mock-up of a modern apartment exhibited at the *Salon d'Automne* (Autumn Salon) in 1929. Incorporating such features as concealed lighting, sliding doors, and modular storage units – things that were not to become commonplace for many years – it proved to be the high point of the trio's collaboration.

Perriand left Le Corbusier's office in the late 1930s and went on to forge a successful career as an independent architect and designer. She spent much of the 1940s collaborating with companies in Japan, although she briefly returned to work with Le Corbusier in the 1950s, helping him with the interiors of his *Unité d'Habitation* (Living Unit) in Marseille.

Perriand and Jeanneret were to work together again in 1940, when both teamed up with Jean Prouvé to produce a series of prefabricated aluminium structures that were intended as temporary housing. Jeanneret, who assisted Le Corbusier throughout his career, also briefly made a name for himself as an independent furniture designer with the production of the birch Scissor chair that, in 1947, became one of the first items to appear in the catalogue of Knoll, the celebrated American manufacturer of furniture.



Charlotte Perriand The designer reclines on the B306 chaise longue, 1928.



B306 chaise longue This day bed is made from chrome-plated tubular steel with rubber stretchers and leather upholstery. Often attributed to Le Corbusier alone, it was also the work of Perriand and Jeanneret. Designed in 1928, this is a Cassina re-issue from the 1960s. H:70.5cm (28¼in); L:160cm (64in); W:49.5cm (19½in). QU



GRAN CONFORT This two-seat sofa, model LC2 was produced as part of the Gran Confort range designed by Le Corbusier, Perriand, and Jeanneret. It has a chrome-plated tubular-metal frame and burgundy leather cushions. Originally designed in 1928, this example is a Cassina re-issue from the 1980s. W:167.5cm (66in). FRE

recognized the irony of using 75-year-old designs in such a brazenly contemporary structure. By 1925, he knew that his next project would be to create furniture for his radical architecture.

The arrival of Charlotte Perriand was just the catalyst he needed. In 1927, Perriand, Pierre Jeanneret, and Le Corbusier devised a range of designs that were industrial-looking, yet surprisingly comfortable. The resplendent B306 chaise longue looked more like a piece of equipment than a luxury item of furniture. The slight *Basculant* chair was an economical design that used the bare minimum of materials. The cube-shaped *Gran Confort* armchair was the trio's take on the club chair, although in this case the chair's structure appeared on the outside. Produced in 1928, these designs made full use of tubular steel, the material popularized by Marcel Breuer. Ironically, it was Thonet – the maker of Le Corbusier's beloved bentwood chairs – that produced these designs.

Le Corbusier's crusade to turn the world into a symphony of mechanical existence continued unabated until the advent of World War II. After this, he struggled to stick to his hard-edged aesthetic views in the face of such destruction. After the war, Le Corbusier developed a softer, although no less impressive, style (his chapel in Ronchamp, built from 1950 to 1955, being a good example). In his later years, Le Corbusier's attention turned increasingly towards urban planning and his early interest in furniture, unfortunately, rarely resurfaced.

TUBULAR STEEL

ORIGINALLY USED ONLY IN INDUSTRY, TUBULAR STEEL WAS EMBRACED BY DESIGNERS AS THE IDEAL MATERIAL FOR MODERN FURNITURE AND A NEW KIND OF LIFESTYLE.

TUBULAR STEEL WAS a truly Modern material. Not long after it emerged as a viable material for domestic furniture construction in the mid 1920s, it became a symbol of the new era of the interwar years. Industrially manufactured, easily cleaned, lightweight, and, of course, with a striking metallic gleam, it was ideal for a forward-looking lifestyle.

A method for manufacturing tubular steel was patented in 1885 by two Germans, Max and Reinhard Mannesmann. The technique involved passing a short, heated stick of steel through a piercing machine, thus producing a tube. By 1921, a more advanced technique had been developed that produced more pliable tubes with thinner walls.

GERMANY LEADS THE WAY

It was some years before furniture designers thought of using this slimline tubular steel. At the time, tubular steel was largely used in the central heating systems of industrial plants. It was only when the automobile industry and bicycle manufacturers began to use the material that tubular steel became visible in everyday life. The first experiments with domestic tubular-steel furniture – by Marcel Breuer in Germany and Mart Stam in the Netherlands – were in 1925.

Breuer's first tubular-steel design was the Wassily chair, created in 1925 for the flat of artist Wassily Kandinsky, a Bauhaus tutor. The stout outline of the Wassily chair is clearly modelled on the English club chair, although Breuer appears to have dissolved the entire bulk of the club chair, leaving just the skeleton.

In 1925–26, Breuer developed tubular-steel chairs and tables for the Bauhaus canteen, although it was only in 1927 at the *Die Wohnung* exhibition in Stuttgart that tubular-steel furniture gained wider exposure.

Not long afterwards, the furniture manufacturer Thonet began to produce tubular-steel designs across Europe. It was fitting that Thonet took on these designs, as it was the German company's innovations in functional, inexpensive bentwood furniture in the mid 19th century that pushed many Modernist designers towards the use of tubular steel.

DEVELOPMENTS FARTHER AFIELD

Although Germany was the launching pad for tubular-steel furniture, it soon appeared in other countries. Mart Stam introduced the material to the Netherlands, and by 1930 many Dutch designers were using tubular steel. Gerrit Rietveld was briefly smitten by it, even making a tubular-steel version of his Red-and-Blue chair. Willem Gispen, a designer who had worked in a florid style, became a champion of tubular steel. "Seeing the social changes in the world around me",



BREUER'S INSPIRATION Marcel Breuer had the brainwave of using tubular steel for furniture whilst riding his bicycle, which had bent, tubular-steel handlebars. Sheet steel was also a favoured material at the Bauhaus, and was used for jewellery and lamps as early as 1923.

The armrest appears substantial but is little more than a strip of fabric.



Fabric strips prevent the sitter from coming into contact with steel, which can be cold.

The overlapping planes were inspired by the early work of Gerrit Rietveld.

Early versions of the chair were nickel-plated, although most versions were chrome-plated.

Generous width is reminiscent of English club chairs and lends the chair a sense of comfort.

Bends in the steel give the impression of a single, continuous form.

WASSILY CHAIR

Marcel Breuer's masterpiece is made from nine pieces of tubular steel, which are bent, giving the frame the appearance of a continuous form. Screwed together, rather than welded, the chair is easy to dismantle. 1925. H:76cm (30in); W:77.5cm (30½in); D:68.5cm (27in).



BAUHAUS METAL WORKSHOP

From its inception, the Bauhaus metal workshop was primarily concerned with the different qualities of various metals – brass, silver, gold, copper – and with how they could be applied to Bauhaus design ideals. Under Marcel Breuer – head of the furniture workshop in Dessau from 1925 – it followed that the technical properties of tubular steel would be examined and exploited in much the same way. 1928–29.

THE CANTILEVER

THE CANTILEVERED CHAIR WAS A FAVOURITE OF MODERNIST DESIGNERS, ALTHOUGH IT IS UNCLEAR WHO FIRST HAD THE IDEA TO USE THE CANTILEVER PRINCIPLE IN CHAIR DESIGN.

The cantilever principle, whereby a structure's load is borne by a single mounting point, was used by many Modernist furniture designers, but there has been much debate – and litigation – to try to ascertain who employed the principle first. The attraction of the cantilever for Modernist designers is obvious.

It reduces a chair's form to the minimum; it displays a one-upmanship on the age-old principle of the four-legged chair; plus, it has the visually arresting effect of making sitters appear to float on air.

The first cantilevered steel chairs were shown at a *Die Wohnung* exhibition in Stuttgart in 1927: two by Mart Stam, a Dutchman, and two by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, a German designer. It is most likely that Stam had the idea first, discussing it with Mies van der Rohe the previous year, before both went on to develop their own versions. Marcel Breuer, however, once claimed he was working on a design for a cantilevered steel chair as early as 1925, although it was not until 1927 (after the *Die Wohnung* show) that his version was exhibited.

To complicate matters further, when Mies van der Rohe applied for a patent it was discovered that an American, Harry Nolan, had registered a convoluted drawing of a metal cantilevered chair in 1922. Mies van der Rohe proved that Nolan's design would collapse the moment anyone sat on it and was awarded the patent.

Cantilever chair This chair is a Thonet re-issue of Mart Stam's S33 cantilever chair. The chair has a chrome-plated, tubular-steel frame and a leather seat and back. Designed in 1926. H:84cm (33in); W:50cm (19½in); D:57cm (22½in).

Swinging tubular steel chair MR-10 By Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, this chair's frame is nickel-plated and the seat and back are cane. Made by Josef Müller of Berlin. Late 1920s. H:80cm (32in); W:48cm (19¼in); D:65cm (26in). QU

The B33 chair This tubular-steel-framed chair has a canvas seat and back. Designed by Marcel Breuer c.1929. This example is a Thonet re-issue from 2004. H:84cm (33in); W:49.5cm (19½in); D:86cm (34in).

VANITY UNIT

This tubular-steel dressing table has a tall mirror above a small case with two drawers. It has been painted light blue and bears the label "VICHRA SPOL, PRAHA". Prague. c.1930. H:180cm (70¼in). DOR

SIDE TABLE

Marcel Breuer's model B12 side table has two black-painted wooden shelves – one flush with the top, the other a third of the way down. The table appears to be made of a continuous loop of steel. c.1928. W:76cm (30in). DOR

wrote Gispen in 1977, "I simplified my designs and joined the train of thought of the Rationalists." Gispen's factory in Rotterdam, which exists today, specialized in tubular-steel lamps.

While the Dutch and Germans saw tubular steel as a resolutely utilitarian material, it was used in a more stylized manner in France. René Herbst, Eileen Gray, and Le Corbusier all produced tubular-steel furniture in the 1920s and 30s that betrayed aesthetic, as well as Rational, concerns.

EMBRACED BY THE ELITE

Although clearly a material with its roots in industry, tubular steel initially proved more costly than wood, an irony that is often overlooked. Until the price of tubular-steel furniture fell in the late 1930s, it was sold almost exclusively to an affluent elite.

This trend was particularly apparent in Britain. By 1928 the lower-middle classes were being encouraged to buy tubular-steel furniture for its space-saving properties. Many people had been forced to downsize after World War I and were living in small homes ill-suited to older styles of furniture. This audience, however, proved resistant to tubular steel, and it was the moneyed classes that were drawn to it.

Two British firms, PEL (Public Equipment Limited) and Cox and Co. began making tubular-steel furniture in the early 1930s, clearly basing their designs on works in the Thonet catalogue. PEL's customers included Noel Coward, the Prince of Wales, and Lord Mountbatten, and by 1932, when the BBC employed Cox and Co. and PEL to refurbish their buildings,

tubular steel was in vogue, albeit among a tiny minority. Widespread use of tubular steel was to come later, with the *Cabinet Maker* magazine reporting in 1935 that steel furniture "is being taken up by all sections of the community".

Although the late 1930s was a period of growth in sales of tubular-steel furniture, it was also a period of artistic decline. With Marcel Breuer and Mart Stam realizing the essential forms of tubular-steel furniture so early on, there was little scope for progress. By 1935, Stam was lamenting the endless bastardization of his, and Breuer's, ideas, expressing his wish for "all those macaroni-like steel monsters to disappear". His wish came true with the advent of World War II, which put a stop to the proliferation of tubular-steel designs. After 1945, tubular steel was used only sparingly, by designers who realized its moment had passed.

SCANDINAVIA

SCANDINAVIA – USUALLY CONSIDERED to include Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, and Iceland – experienced a very different history in the interwar years to that of many European nations and, as a result, produced a very different style of furniture.

The first thing to note is that the political situation in Scandinavia was relatively settled compared with much of what was happening in the rest of Europe. Industrialization, too, was slow to catch on in Scandinavia, and if you add this to a harsh climate and a deep, inherent reverence for the crafts, it becomes clear why the severe, iconoclastic forms of tubular-metal

furniture pioneered in Germany held no appeal for the Scandinavians.

A PREFERENCE FOR WOOD
Tubular steel was labelled “unsatisfactory from a human point of view” by Alvar Aalto, the foremost Scandinavian designer of the era (who also noted that metal furniture was particularly uncomfortable in the cold). It was wood, a material readily available from the forests that covered the region, which proved the most popular material for Scandinavian designers of the time.

There was an attempt at the beginning of the 1930s to introduce

to Scandinavia the sort of hard, industrial aesthetic that had taken root on the rest of the European continent. In 1930, the architect Gunnar Asplund put on an exhibition in Stockholm under the banner of Swedish Functionalism that showcased an angular style and synthetic materials, which, understandably, shocked the Scandinavian public. Asplund and his fellow exhibitors, many of whom had returned from studying and working abroad, were swiftly labelled “anti-Swedish”, and the idea of Functionalism began to fade.

A GENTLER APPROACH
By the mid 1930s, Scandinavian designers had struck a balance between the bare, unadorned style of European Modernism and the organic, craft-based forms to which they were accustomed. What developed was an approach that came to be termed Soft Modernism, as epitomized by designers like Bruno Mathsson. Although Mathsson used natural

SAFARI CHAIR

The maple frame of this lightweight chair has no joints as such, but is held together simply by the leather seat and straps, which form the arms of the chair, and the slots that join the side struts together. Inspired by the traditional pieces originally made for the British military, the chair is collapsable and

easy to take apart. A market success from the time it was introduced, the Safari chair was handmade by the small furniture-making firm of Rudolf Rasmussen, which manufactured many of the Danish designer Kaare Klint's works. Wooden and canvas versions of the chair were also sold. By Kaare Klint. 1933. *H:77.5cm (30½in); W:55.75cm (22in); D:63.5cm (25in).*



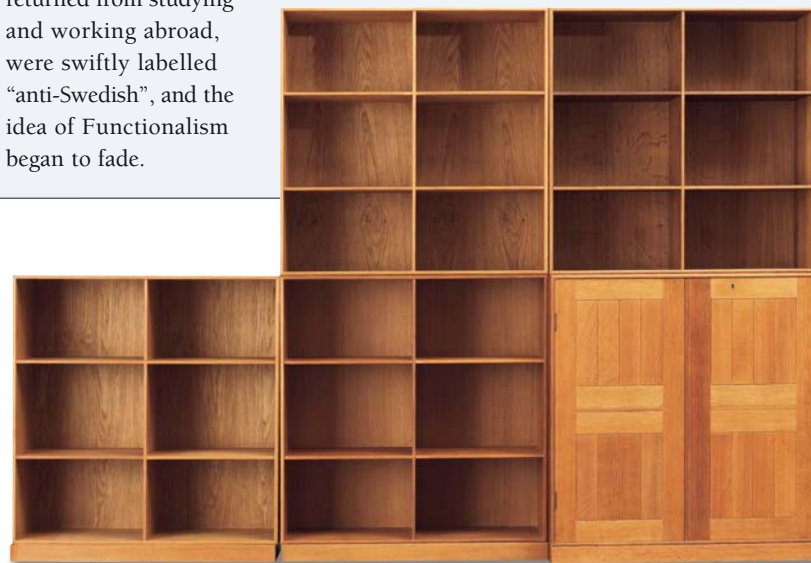
The chair's back and seat are soft, allowing it to fold away when the chair is dismantled.

The chair's back is attached to the frame in the centre, allowing it to pivot.

The loose leather armrests, which attach lightly to the legs, articulate the temporary nature of this chair.

The side struts slot into the chair legs. No glue or screws are used.

The buckled leather strap is used to bundle the separate pieces of the chair together when it is taken apart.



MODULAR SHELVING

This multi-unit shelving system is referred to as a composite storage system. The modular piece is made up of five individual units, four of which are open and fitted with identical and symmetrical shelved interiors.

The whole storage system is supported by three base plinths, which are also of wood. The fifth unit is fronted with cupboard doors and is slightly deeper than the others. Designed by Mogens Koch. 1933. *H:76cm (30in); W:76cm (30in); D:27.5cm/37cm (10¾in/14¼in).*



ANNIKA TABLE

This round magazine table, or occasional table, has a plain elm table top, free of surface decoration. It is mounted on three bent-laminated beech legs. The legs taper slightly as they near the floor. Designed by Bruno Mathsson for the company Karl Mathsson. 1938. *H:38cm (15¼in); D:65cm (26in).* Bk

materials and undulating lines, his furniture was undeniably Modern in its brazen display of its own construction and its lack of ornament.

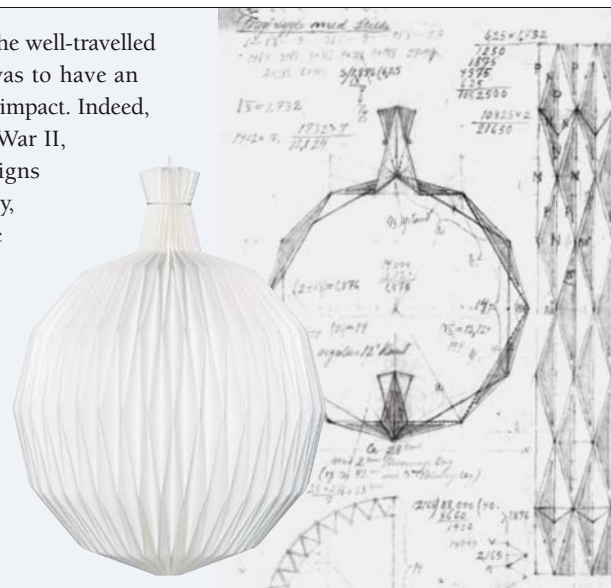
Another thing to note about Mathsson is that the forms of his furniture were often inspired by ergonomics – the relationship between people and the equipment they use. This was a particularly Scandinavian trait, pioneered by Kaare Klint in

Copenhagen in the 1920s. Klint and his students at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts spent a great deal of time studying anthropomorphism; Klint used the information he gained to design ergonomic versions of archetypal forms of furniture.

The soft, sculptural style that we associate with Modern Scandinavian furniture, then, was partly inspired by the natural shapes that surrounded designers in their un-industrialized environment. It was also informed by the study of human behaviour and an insistence on using wood rather than metal. Most European and American designers came to learn of Soft

Modernism through the well-travelled Alvar Aalto, and it was to have an increasingly apparent impact. Indeed, by the end of World War II, the tubular-steel designs pioneered in Germany, France, and Italy were shunned by a new generation of designers that favoured the more humanistic approach of the Scandinavians.

Fruit lantern This piece was designed by Kaare Klint. 1944.



EVA CHAIR

This armless easy chair has a solid-birch seat frame; the underframe is bent-laminated beech; the seat and back are a single piece of plaited webbing. Bruno Mathsson. 1941. H:82cm (32¼in); W:49cm (19¼in); D:71cm (28in). Bk



SMALL CHEST OF DRAWERS

Designed by Alvar Aalto, this chest of drawers has a birch frame and stands on wooden casters. Indentations in the drawers serve as handles. 1930. H:26.5cm (66in); W:38cm (15in); D:68.5cm (27¼in). QU

ALVAR AALTO

THE FINNISH DESIGNER ALVAR AALTO IS CREDITED WITH INTRODUCING THE USE OF PLYWOOD AND LAMINATED WOOD IN FURNITURE DESIGN, AN IDEA HE IS SAID TO HAVE GOT FROM HIS LAMINATED CROSS-COUNTRY SKIS.

While across Europe and America artists, architects, and designers proclaimed their visions for the future in manifestos, essays, and speeches, Alvar Aalto let his designs do the talking. Assisted by his wife, Aino, Aalto worked primarily with laminated wood and plywood. Unheard of in Scandinavian furniture design before the Finn adopted them, these materials soon became inextricably linked with his name.

By 1931, two years after he started to experiment with plywood, Aalto produced the 41 chair. With the seat and back made from one piece of ply, it demonstrates Aalto's mastery of the material

both formally and technically. The cantilevered 31 chair was another audacious display of his confidence with a form of furniture that was startlingly new.

Birch, which is abundant in Finland, was Aalto's wood of choice, and it's clear that the process of forming ply and laminated wood – which incorporates steaming the wood then gently bending it – largely dictated the forms of Aalto's designs. Such was the couple's proficiency with plywood and laminated wood that in 1935 they launched their own company – Artek – to manufacture their designs, which are still produced in Finland today.



Aalto interior Riihitie House, Helsinki
This was Alvar Aalto's residence for over 60 years – designed and furnished by him and his wife. 1935–36.

The rolling form of the chair's seat expresses the flexibility of laminated birch.

Paimio No. 41 The armchair's gently curved seat is moulded plywood, suspended in a laminated birch frame. Designed for the Paimio Tuberculosis Sanatorium in Finland. c.1931. H:64cm (25¼in); W:60cm (26½in); D:80cm (31¼in). BonE



Slits in the seat back allow air to reach the back of the sitter's head, thus making it more hygienic.

The loops at the head and base of the seat give it a comfortable springiness.

The lacquering of the seat helps articulate the separate elements of seat and frame.

BRITAIN

IN THE FIELD OF MODERN furniture design, Britain was considered more of a follower than a leader. In the late 19th century it had been home to the radical Arts and Crafts movement – which was itself of considerable influence on Modernist pioneers such as Alvar Aalto and Le Corbusier – but after this period the development of British furniture slowed down.

LITTLE PUBLIC INTEREST

In the latter half of the 1920s simple, solid-wood furniture, of the sort advocated by the Arts and Crafts Movement, was still relatively hard to come by. Industrial reproductions

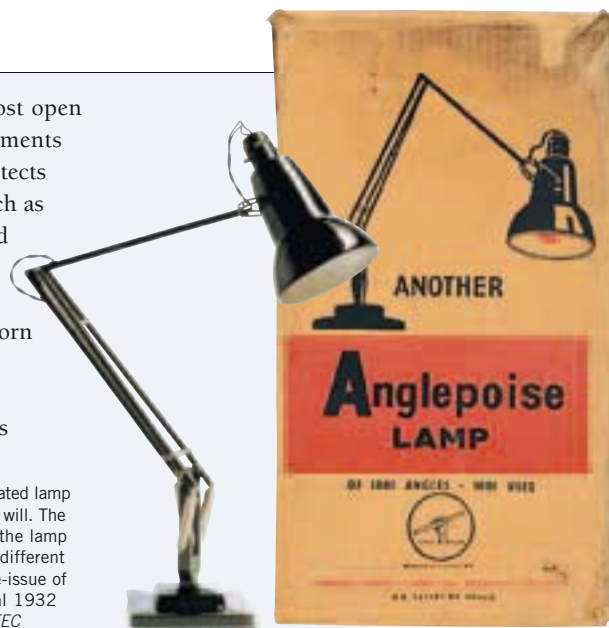
of older, more ornate styles were preferred by the public, but this didn't stop a few shops – such as Heal's on London's Tottenham Court Road – from waving the flag for furniture of a more Modern bent. Perhaps the most notable designer of this style was the Cotswolds-based Gordon Russell, who worked prolifically on pieces that were pared down to their most basic form.

INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCES

The adoption by British designers of such new materials as plywood and tubular steel was a far from common occurrence. Tellingly, it tended to be designers who arrived in Britain from

abroad who were most open to the latest developments from overseas. Architects based in London, such as Serge Chermayeff and Berthold Lubetkin (both Russian-born) and the Hungarian-born Erno Goldfinger, all experimented with plywood in the 1920s

Anglepoise lamp This articulated lamp allows light to be directed at will. The head and base swivel, and the lamp bends and flexes to obtain different positions. This is a Tecta re-issue of George Cawardine's original 1932 design. H:90cm (35½in). TEC



The body of the desk is made of limed oak.

The upper section comprises open and closed storage.



The geometric shape reflects the fashions of the time.

CORNER DESK

This corner desk is made of limed oak and formed part of the "Signed Edition" Series, designed by Sir Ambrose Heal and manufactured by Heal's. The upper section of the desk consists of various storage areas, including three cupboards plus open storage. The lower section consists

of a deep writing surface above two pedestals which form a triangular arrangement with the back of the desk. Each pedestal contains a deep drawer at the base. This compact piece would have been ideal for the new urban homes where space was at a premium. This angular desk reflects the geometric fashions of the time. 1931. H:108cm (43½in); W:91.4cm (36½in).

SWOOPING ARMCHAIR

This lacquered plywood armchair by Gerald Summers is today considered an icon of Modern design. Summers succeeded in creating a unified design using just a single sheet of plywood. Only 120 chairs were produced before manufacturing was ceased due to war-time rationing of materials. 1933–34. H:72.5cm (29in) W:60cm (24in); D:90cm (36in).



OBJECT DESK

This is a Modernist interpretation of the single pedestal desk. The rectangular top is raised on four bow-fronted drawers at one end and fixed to a glass support at the

other. Additional stability is provided by a metal stretcher at the back of the desk. The curved wooden drawer fronts have offset chromed handles. The piece was designed by Denham Maclaren. c.1929.

and 1930s, although without the panache of their continental European counterparts.

Perhaps the most important designer working in Britain in the interwar years was Gerald Summers, a modest man whose lack of publicity skills meant that much of his furniture went unseen by the wider world. His celebrated Swooping armchair (1933–34), made from one piece of bent plywood, was a virtuoso effort that has rightly found a firm place in the history of Modern design. Also appearing to operate largely in isolation was Denham McLaren, a part-time designer who was inspired

by the elegance of French Modernism to produce pieces using plate glass and animal hides.

GRADUAL ACCEPTANCE

After 1935, when the political climate in Germany had become unbearable for many artists, architects, and designers, there was an influx of Bauhaus-trained designers into Britain. The most prominent of these was undoubtedly Marcel Breuer, who contributed designs both to Heal's and the newly established Isokon company. Others, such as Egon Riss and Hein Hockroth, also made their mark.

Slowly, the British attitude towards

the Modern style began to relax, and companies such as Morris of Glasgow and PEL (Practical Equipment Limited) began to manufacture furniture in tubular steel and bent plywood. The government promoted the style by publishing "The Production and Exhibition of Articles of Good Design and Everyday Life". The British people knew that the Modern style pointed the way towards the future, but they were nevertheless reluctant to accept it.

Further efforts to encourage the British to embrace Modern design were undertaken by the BBC, which not only commissioned

the forward-thinking Serge Chermayeff and Wells Coates to design their building's interiors, but broadcast discussions on contemporary design. Journals such as *Architectural Review* and *Building News* also reported enthusiastically on the developments in form and materials in countries across Europe. It was to be some time, however, before Britain could once again, after the innovations of the Arts and Crafts Movement, boast of being at the forefront of international furniture design.

THE ISOKON FLATS

THE LONDON-BASED ENTREPRENEUR JACK PRITCHARD AND HIS WIFE, MOLLY, GAVE THE CITY OF LONDON ITS FIRST LANDMARK MODERN BUILDING, THE ISOKON FLATS.

Jack and Molly Pritchard were firm believers in Modern design. In 1934 they commissioned the architect Wells Coates to build the defiantly Modern Isokon Flats, on Lawn Road, London. The flats soon became a beacon for those interested in the developments of the Modern style.

In 1935 the Pritchards persuaded Walter Gropius, the leader of the by-then-defunct Bauhaus, to move to London. Gropius became head of a new furniture-manufacturing company. Given the appropriately technical name Isokon (short for Isometric Unit Construction), the company would, it was hoped, teach the British public about the delights of Modern design.

The Pritchards, however, were not entirely confident of their customers' tastes and refused to use tubular steel, seeing it as too avant-garde. Bent plywood became Isokon's signature material, and, when Gropius brought Marcel Breuer to Britain, the man who had pioneered the use of tubular steel was instructed to work only in wood.

Breuer, who was fleeing Germany's Nazi regime, moved into the Isokon Flats in 1936 and soon set about designing

and installing what became known as the Isobar, so that people could have a drink whilst discussing the finer points of Modern design.

Breuer's Isokon Long Chair (1935–36) is perhaps the most celebrated piece of furniture to emerge from the Isokon factory, although Wells Coates and Egon Riss contributed successfully to the company too. Sadly, World War II forced Isokon into hibernation, but Jack Pritchard did revive the company in 1963, and it still survives, under the name of Isokon Plus, to this day.



Isokon Flats The building epitomized the Modernist desire for minimal living. The laundry facilities and restaurant made living spaces just that – doing away with cooking and washing areas.



MODEL Z SIDE TABLE

Designed by Gerald Summers, this piece is fashioned from bent and laminated plywood to form a Z-shaped occasional table. The two table tops are circular, positioned one above and to the left of the other. c.1936. H:44.5cm (17½in); W:55cm (21¾in).



OCCASIONAL TABLE

This two-tier circular-topped occasional table is made of oak and plywood, and the top is laminated with black bakelite. The legs of the two tiers form a continuous loop, creating the effect of one table inside another. The table was manufactured by Heal's. c.1932. H:66cm (26½in); Diam:61cm (24¼in).

The Isokon Long Chair Marcel Breuer's chaise longue has a bent-laminated birch and polished-shellac frame. 1935–36. H:74cm (29in); L:137cm (54in); W:61cm (24in). DOR



UNITED STATES

DESPITE BEING A NATION largely defined by industry, the United States was surprisingly slow to adopt the Modern style in furniture. Indeed, in 1925, when asked by the committee of the Paris *Expositions des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* to submit Modern designs for display, the Americans sheepishly admitted that they had nothing to show.

By the start of the 1930s a vogue had developed for streamlining (see p.398).

This stylistic conceit was the United States' own take on



CHROME ARMCHAIR

The armchair frame is made of tubular chrome. In profile, the arms and legs form a Z shape. The seat cushion and back pad are upholstered in rose-coloured brushed fabric. Designed by K.E.M. Weber for Lloyd. c.1930. H:79cm (31½in). SDR

Modernism and was greeted with great enthusiasm by the American public.

Streamlined furniture was inspired by the trains, planes, cars, and ships that were causing such a stir in American society at the time. These vehicles were designed with curvaceous forms so as to offer less wind resistance; yet it was not the practical principle that appealed to designers, but the futuristic look of these forms of transport.

Needless to say, many Americans, particularly the intelligentsia, sneered at streamlining. It was seen as a marketing ploy by companies keen to make



SIDE CHAIR

This side chair has an aluminium frame, which stands on an H-shaped base with hockey-puck feet. It is upholstered in burgundy oilcloth. Designed by Warren McArthur. c.1930. H:87cm (34¼in); W:42.5cm (16¾in); D:51cm (20in). SDR

their goods appealing during the tough times of the Great Depression.

EUROPEAN INFLUENCES

A new style emerging at this time was the so-called International Style. The term was coined by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson in their book of the same name. It referred to the austere architecture and design practised by the likes of Le Corbusier and those associated with the Bauhaus. The Museum of Modern Art in New York City was a particularly active supporter of the International Style,

mounting exhibitions, such as “Machine Art” (1934), which promoted an approach to design that was based more on structural integrity than on formal flourishes and a belief that the form of a piece should be true to the nature of the materials from which it was made.

Meanwhile, designers on the West Coast quietly took on board the ideals of their European counterparts, while still maintaining their own sense of American style. One such designer, based in Los Angeles, was Kem Weber, whose stated aim was to make “comfortable, hygienic, and beautiful furniture inexpensively”. Weber’s Airline



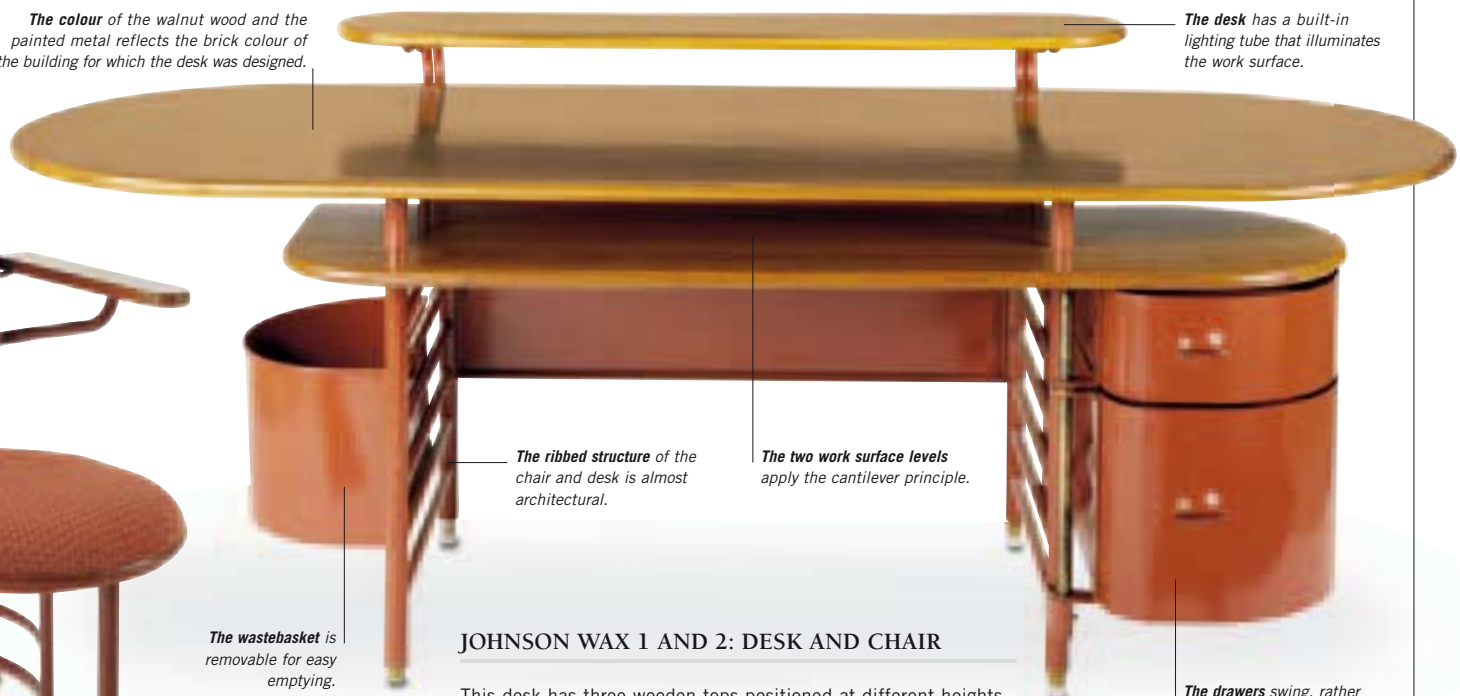
SINGLE-PEDESTAL DESK

The frame of this Warren McArthur single-pedestal desk is made from tubular steel. The rectangular, black-laminate top has a square shelf raised above it to the left-hand side. Below this are three drawers, also in black laminate, with circular pulls. c.1930. H:77cm (30¼in); W:124.5cm (49in); D:61cm (24in). SDR

The circular seat and back add to the formal abstract appeal of the chair.

The colour of the walnut wood and the painted metal reflects the brick colour of the building for which the desk was designed.

The desk has a built-in lighting tube that illuminates the work surface.



The ribbed structure of the chair and desk is almost architectural.

The two work surface levels apply the cantilever principle.

The wastebasket is removable for easy emptying.

The chair stands on three legs to save space.

The drawers swing, rather than slide, open to allow for their curved shape.

JOHNSON WAX 1 AND 2: DESK AND CHAIR

This desk has three wooden tops positioned at different heights and a painted steel structure. There are two drawers, a wastebasket, and two racks in the same colour as the structure. The painted steel-tube chair has a tilted backrest, padded seat, and wooden armrests. The three legs terminate in brass feet. It was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright for the Johnson Wax building. 1936–39.



chair of 1935 displayed a modest, streamlined look and could be packed flat for easy transport.

Warren McArthur was another Los Angeles-based designer, one whose place in the history of American design was only asserted by academics in the 1980s. McArthur's tubular-steel and aluminium furniture grew from his interest in efficient manufacturing – indeed, so successful was his company that during World War II he was enlisted to make aluminium seats for

Interior of the Johnson Wax Building Architect and furniture designer Frank Lloyd Wright designed the interior and furnishings of the Johnson Wax administrative building, which is located in Racine, Wisconsin.

aircraft bombers – although he also had a winning way with form.

A NEW DIRECTION

Also operating outside New York was the architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Although Lloyd Wright remained aloof from much of what was being discussed in the design world at the time, he still cast a long shadow on American furniture. By the 1930s, Lloyd Wright had rejected the heavy Arts and Crafts style that he had favoured earlier and moved on to a lighter, sprightlier look. The desks and chairs Lloyd Wright designed for the Johnson Wax building (1936–39)

are a perfect example of his new approach. Like all of Lloyd Wright's furniture, they show an awareness of the function of furniture as a divider of interior space, although there is also a dynamic element that is clearly influenced by the streamlined style.

By 1940, the United States' infatuation with streamlining had waned. A new, organic style was beginning to arise that took more inspiration from Alvar Aalto than from sleek express trains. By the time Charles and Ray Eames began to assert their influence after World War II, the United States had come a long way from the humiliating no-show in Paris in 1925.

THE BUTTERFLY CHAIR

THROUGHOUT THE 20TH CENTURY, DESIGNERS RE-INVENTED ARCHETYPAL FORMS OF FURNITURE, NONE MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN THE BUTTERFLY CHAIR.

Also known as the A chair, the Hardoy chair, the Sling chair, and the Butterfly chair, the B.K.E. chair is named for its designers: Antonio Bonet, Juan Kurchan, and Jorge Ferrari-Hardoy, three architects who met while working for Le Corbusier.

In 1937, all three left for South America, where they set about updating a British-army, collapsible, canvas-and-wood chair patented in the 19th century by J.B. Fenby, an English engineer.

It is unlikely that any of the three ever saw Fenby's chair, but they would have known either the Tripolina chair (a French adaptation) or the US No. 4, which was sold as a camping chair.

Regardless of the model they saw, the three made vital changes to its design: tubular steel replaced wood, making it lighter, and leather replaced canvas. In 1940, the Butterfly went into mass production; by 1945 it had sold millions.



SECTIONAL DAVENPORT

This three-piece sectional davenport has a narrow centre section flanked on either side by two slightly wider ones. Essentially rectangular in form, its tubular-steel frame is exposed. The seats are raised from the floor, where the frame

makes an X-shaped support beneath each section. The back, side, and sprung seat cushions are upholstered in skunk skin and black leather. Inspiration must have come from Le Corbusier's *Gran Confort* (see pp.432–33). The piece was designed by Wolfgang Hoffmann. 1936. L:202cm (79½in). SDR

LOUNGE CHAIR

This is a fine example of a Gilbert Rohde lounge chair. The angular, wooden frame rises vertically from the floor to make the uprights and reaches back horizontally to form the arms of the chair. The chair is upholstered in a dark brown woollen fabric. H:80cm (31½in). SDR



The leather cover of the chair is slipped onto the steel frame with no additional attachments.

The soft leather of the seat contrasts with the hard steel frame to articulate the simplicity of the chair's construction.

Two loops of bent steel are welded together to form the chair's frame.

The thin steel piping makes the chair appear almost bodiless.

The chair's tension comes only from the gravitational pull caused by the sitter.

Butterfly chair Designed in 1938, this Knoll Associates chair has a tubular frame and leather seat. c.1950s. H:90cm (34½in); W:80cm (31in); D:85cm (27in). BonBay

ITALY

MODERNISM IN ARCHITECTURE and furniture design first emerged in Italy in 1926 under the banner of *Razionalismo*, or Rationalism. Most prominent among the Rationalists, all of whom espoused a functional, pared-down approach to architecture and design, was Gruppo 7, a collective that included Luigi Figini, Gino Pollini, and Giuseppe Terragni.

Mussolini's government, whose rise to power coincided with the emergence of the Rationalists, initially embraced the nascent design style. Gruppo 7's

advocacy of industrial progress, clean living, and moral reform appeared to fit well with the Fascists' own ideals. Indeed, such was the relationship between the Rationalists and the Fascists that in 1934 Giuseppe Terragni completed both the building and the fittings for the Fascist headquarters in Como, near Milan. Needless to say, the architecture was unremittingly stark, with equally uncompromising furniture. Employing primarily tubular steel, Terragni

produced a range of tables and chairs that owed much to Marcel Breuer's work at the Bauhaus, although the furniture was more expressive in its lines than Breuer's deliberately anonymous-looking pieces.

THE USE OF TUBULAR STEEL

Italian designers would have seen the tubular-steel designs developed in Germany at the regular Triennial exhibitions, held for the first time in Monza in 1923. Ten years later, the

exhibitions were moved to Milan under the title of International Triennial of Decorative and Modern Industrial Art. The Triennials showcased the latest developments in design from Italy and across Europe. The idea of using tubular steel, which Italian designers first saw in 1930, struck a chord, as Italy was, in the interwar years, suffering a severe wood shortage. Mussolini's hard-line approach to rule had seen the country fall from favour with more liberal governments across



Detail of lock

COMACINA DESK

This writing desk has a simple, tubular-steel frame. The rectangular, white-laminate top offers a plain work surface; a storage unit with four drawers is below, to the right. Designed by Piero Bottoni in 1930; this example was re-issued by Zanotta in 2004. *H:75cm (29½in); W:130cm (51in); D:65cm (25½in)*. ZAN



ARMCHAIR

The chair's frame is made from laminated beechwood. On each side, the arm and legs are one continuous loop of wood; joined beneath the seat by a cross-stretcher. The seat has a beech frame with a woven cane seat and back. Designed by Giuseppe Pagano. 1938. *H:71cm (27¾in); W:61cm (24in); D:68cm (26¾in)*.



OCCASIONAL TABLE

The most striking feature of this side, or occasional, table is its thick plate-glass top, which has a bevelled edge. The circular glass table top collects light like a lens, producing a brilliant reflection below. The table top rests on a walnut support from which emerge four splayed legs, that taper sharply towards the bottom. The legs are made of lacquered walnut. Designed by Pietro Chiesa, the table was manufactured by Fontana Arte. *c.1950. H:48.25cm (19in); D:66cm (26in)*.



TELEPHONE STAND

This occasional-table-cum-telephone-stand was designed by G. Levi Montalcini and Giuseppe Pagano. It has a chrome-plated, tubular-steel frame. Two circular, black-laminate shelves sit at the top of the stand and are cantilevered over the base. 1932, re-issued by Zanotta in 2004. *H:80cm (31½in); W:37.5cm (14¾in)*. ZAN



The lounge chair The Modernist era saw many pieces made for sanatoriums. The lounge chair was a favourite, with versions made that could be easily moved from inside to outside or transformed from a seat to a day bed.

the world, and Italy was suffering under sanctions. As a result, tubular-steel designs by the likes of Terragni, Piero Bottoni, and Gabriele Mucchi were developed during these years, although they rarely met with popular success. Designed as prototypes for mass production, many designs of the era were only produced in significant numbers much later.

The Rationalists eventually fell out with the Fascists after Mussolini deemed their approach “too

international”; Mussolini opted to support the Neoclassical style of the *Novecento* group. But where Hitler hounded all Modernist architects and designers from Germany, Mussolini took a far more lenient view. Indeed, the 1930s and 40s was a time in which many of Italy’s most celebrated manufacturers and designers got their start. The likes of Cassina and Fontana Arte were not to gain fame until the 1950s, but they put down roots in the interwar period. Although the years 1925–45 were not the most distinguished in Italy’s remarkable design history, they certainly paved the way for much of what was to come.



LOUNGE CHAIR

Made from tubular steel and slung fabric, this innovative piece can be used as a chair or a chaise longue, depending on which end it stands (see above). Designed by Battista and Gino Guidici. 1935. H:98cm (38in); L:113cm (45in); W:49cm (19½in). WKA



FOLLIA CHAIR

The black-painted, rectilinear wooden seat and back of this Giuseppe Terragni chair are connected by chrome-plated spring supports. 1934, re-issued by Zanotta in 2004. H:80cm (31½in); W:50cm (19½in); D:60cm (23½in). ZAN



Detail of leather straps



Tubular-steel frame

The cylindrical headrest is strapped to the chair to minimize bulk.

The armrest padding is kept to a bare minimum so as not to disturb the clean lines of the chair.

Simple, black upholstery covers the mattress on the footrest.

Tubular steel is used to form the chair’s frame.



Cushioning on the ottoman is strapped to the tubular-steel base, accentuating the contrast of natural and synthetic materials.



The chair’s seat appears suspended, giving it a sense of weightlessness.

GENNI LOUNGE CHAIR

This lounge chair’s seat sits within a tubular-steel frame and is adjustable, having two positions. The upholstered mattress and headrest match the black elbow rests. The footstool echoes the chair’s rectangular frame. It was re-issued by Tecta in 2004. H:82cm (32½in) (max); W:41cm (16in); D:109cm (43in). Footstool: H:41cm (16in); W:45cm (17½in); D:55cm (21½in).

CHAIRS

AS FURNITURE PRODUCTION steadily shifted emphasis from craft-based manufacturing to industrial methods, so the look of the chair changed dramatically. Ornament was doggedly erased from designs as structure became more important to the aesthetic look. Solid wood began to fall from favour (too expensive and inflexible) as moulded plywood and tubular steel stepped into the spotlight.

Just as the notion of open-plan space was creeping into Western architecture, so furniture was freed from fulfilling just one function. Chairs became increasingly ambiguous, with some made for indoor and outdoor use, and others equally at home in an office or dining room. Chairs became lighter, too, as they were frequently moved around the house.

With mass production in mind, designers began to concentrate their efforts on fixtures. The aim became

to produce a chair made of a minimum number of components that fitted together easily and quickly. It's no surprise, then, that the cantilever chair became so popular, as the continuous loop of legs and base eradicated the need for numerous nuts and bolts.

While the structure of the chair became increasingly celebrated in its design, as opposed to any stylistic conceits, so the designer as an individual receded into the background. Industry became more important than art, as designers sought to express nothing more romantic than the manufacturing process.

The reason the chair dominated the focus of designers' efforts is because a person's emotional attachment is far greater to a chair than to, say, a shelving unit. If Modernist designers wanted to alter their audience's emotional and intellectual outlook, it was through the chair that they tried to do so.



The slender armrests display a use of cushioning that is rare for a chair by Marcel Breuer.

The steel struts beneath the seat have been bowed so they cannot be felt by the sitter.

The chair is made from non-reinforced tubular steel, thereby making it less rigid.

B34 CHAIR WITH ARMS

The frame of this cantilever chair is made from one continuous loop of tubular steel. Although the base looks as though it is all in contact with the floor, the side pieces bend slightly so that only the corners touch the floor – the idea

being that most floors are slightly uneven and the smallest change in level would make the chair wobble. This chair has arms with elbow supports, and a blue canvas seat and back. Designed by Marcel Breuer and produced by Thonet. 1928. H:85cm (33½in); W:57.5cm (22½in); D:63cm (24½in). Qu 1



CLUB CHAIR

The rectilinear frame is made from stained pearwood secured with brass fittings. The chair is upholstered in hand-woven woolen fabric. Peter Keler, Bauhaus Weimar. 1925. H:69cm (27in); W:62cm (24½in); D:68cm (26¾in). WKA



AALTO-INSPIRED CHAIR

This armchair was inspired by a model made by Alvar Aalto. The chair's seat and back are made from a single sheet of laminated wood and sit within an oak open-arm frame. H:76cm (30in) CA 1



EASY CHAIR

This easy chair comprises a series of square-section planks of pine, joined by wooden dowels. It has a slatted section on both seat and chair back. Designed by Hein Stolle. c.1930. BonBay 2



LANDI CHAIR

Lightweight and durable, this stacking chair is made from pressed and bent aluminium. Each armrest and pair of legs is from one piece of aluminium. Hans Coray. 1938. H:76cm (29in); W:51cm (19in); D:55cm (21in). BonBay 2



SIDE CHAIR

The seat and back of this early cantilevered chair are made of ebonized moulded plywood and sit on a chrome-plated tubular-steel frame. The armrests are ebonized beech. Mart Stam for Thonet. c.1930. BonBay 2



ZIG-ZAG CHAIR

One of a pair, this chair has a tubular-steel frame reminiscent of Rietveld's Zig-Zag chair. The wooden seat is supported on steel rods and has a later vinyl cover. H:82.5cm (32½in); W:41.5cm (16½in); D:63.5cm (25in). Qu 1



LOUNGE CHAIR

One of a pair, this armchair has a tubular-chrome frame and seat with cushions upholstered in a dark brown, brushed fabric with red trim. The armrests are black-enamelled. *H:86.5cm (34in)*. SDR 1



CANTILEVERED ARMCHAIR

Designed by Gilbert Rohde, this cantilevered armchair has a bright chrome base and black laminated armrests. The cushions are upholstered in ivory leather with a black trim. *H:94cm (37in)*. SDR 1



FREE SWINGER ARMCHAIR

The base of this chromed-steel cantilevered armchair from Austria is the only part of the structure that is exposed. The chair seat and back are filled with down and upholstered in sand-coloured velour. *H:84cm (33½in)*. DOR 3



LAMINATED LOUNGE CHAIR

This chair has been made from one sheet of cut and moulded laminated birch and resembles the Gerald Summers classic (see p.438). The arms are fixed to the back with metal brackets. Hans Pieck. 1944. *H:76cm (30in)*. BonBay 4

THE STACKING CHAIR

STILL FOUND IN CAFÉS WORLDWIDE, THIS ICONIC DESIGN IS PERHAPS THE FIRST STACKING CHAIR, AND CERTAINLY THE FIRST WIDESPREAD DESIGN, OF ITS KIND.

The origins of this chair, despite the efforts of numerous historians, have proved murky at best. The design is most likely to have been developed in France some time around 1925, specifically for the country's booming café culture. The chair bears a strong, albeit rather crude, resemblance to chairs designed by Emile-Jacques Ruhlmann, although it's doubtful whether the French high-society designer ever had a hand in its conception.

What is perhaps most impressive about the chair, apart from its stackability, is its economy of materials. The steel used is incredibly thin and, to give the legs rigidity, the steel has been subtly curved. To save further on metal, holes have been cut from the seat back. While the perfect low-cost, space-saving chair was to become something of a holy grail for 20th-century furniture designers, few ever bettered the chair design that first set the ball rolling.

The so-called Bistro chairs These have a pressed-steel frame and are painted red; with plywood seats. *c.1926*. *H:82cm (32½in)*. DOR 3



BAUHAUS ARMCHAIR

This chair was designed by Erich Dieckmann for the Weimer Bauhaus, in collaboration with Ernst Mayo. Made from solid beech, it has a bowed back and slatted seat. *c.1930*. *H:81.5cm (32½in)*; *W:52.5cm (21in)*. WKA



DINING CHAIR

This is one of a pair of stacking birch plywood dining chairs that were produced by Artek. The chair has a circular wooden seat and a pierced plywood back, supported on L-shaped plywood uprights. *c.1930s*.



DIAGONAL CHAIR

This chrome-plated, tubular-steel chair is named after the supports between the seat back and legs. The arms, seat, and back are of laminated wood. W.H. Gispen. *c.1927*. *H:82.5cm (32½in)*; *W:54cm (21½in)*; *D:60cm (23½in)*. QU 2



SLATTED CHAIR

This Viennese chair has a tubular-steel frame and solid, stained-beech wooden slats for the seat and back. The arms have wooden armrests. One of a set of four. 1925. *H:84.5cm (33½in)*. DOR 3

TABLES

AS WITH MOST FORMS of furniture during the interwar period, tables were subjected to a radical process of reduction. All details deemed superfluous were stripped away to leave what designers considered to be a pure, practical form.

Marcel Breuer, the Hungarian-born student-turned-teacher at the Bauhaus, was the designer who most successfully achieved the desired, pared-down look. Utilizing tubular steel, a material that he is said to have borrowed from the bicycle-making industry, he produced tables that expressed little beyond their own function.

Eileen Gray's tubular-steel and glass side tables, now known as the E1027 tables in reference to the house for which she designed them, may not be as rudimentary as Breuer's tables, but they display more invention. The tops of the tables can be adjusted to sit at differing heights, and the table's stem

is placed at the side to allow the table top to come over an item of furniture (which, in Gray's case, was her own bed). Such versatility was to become a key feature in table design of the Modern era.

Since many designers in the interwar years were reacting to the excesses of the Art Nouveau style, most table tops were either a simple, unadorned circle or square. It wasn't until after World War II, with the advent of a more organic style, that this strict design principle was relaxed and irregular shapes came into use.

Glass, plywood, and tubular steel were always considered the most cutting-edge materials from which to make tables (due to their close association with industry), although some designers did use solid wood. If this was used it was considered important to avoid all efforts to carve or decorate it, thereby keeping its surface as clean to the eye as possible.

The black-painted tops hide the wood grain and give the tables an industrial look.



The tables "nest" so as to save space in small apartments.

Chrome plating gives the tubular steel an alluring gleam.

NESTING TABLES

This series of four nesting tables fits neatly, one above the next, in a stack. They all have the same depth, but increase in width and height as they grow in size. Each table has a simple, rectilinear, chrome-plated tubular-steel

frame and a black-painted wooden top. The top sits flush with the table frame. Designed by Marcel Breuer at Bauhaus Dessau in 1925–26, it is thought that they were initially designed as stools. This example was re-issued by Tecta in 2004. *Largest table: H:60cm (23½in); W:66cm (26in); D:38cm (15in).* TEC 2



GLASS DINING TABLE

Made of tubular steel, the frame of this table consists of a rectilinear base. At the top, at each end of the table, is a semi-circular support for the glass table top that interlocks with the base. There are rubber pads on the

supports, where they come into contact with the table top, to cushion the glass and prevent slippage. The glass top has been ground at the corners to produce smooth curves. Attributed to Emile Guillet and produced by Thonet, Paris. 1930. *H:79cm (31¼in); W:120.5cm (47½in); D:72.5cm (28½in).* WKA 4



BLACK-ENAMELLED TABLE

The chrome-plated tubular-steel frame of this dining table offers a support for the black-enamelled rectangular table top, before dropping to the floor in each corner to form the legs. Each leg is made from two parallel

lengths of steel. As the legs reach the floor, they join in the centre to form one single length of tubular steel below the table top. Designed by Wolfgang Hoffmann for Howell. *W:147.5cm (58in).* SDR 1



EXTENSION DINING TABLE

This extension dining table was made in America. The simple, straightforward design consists of a plain, rectangular wooden top with two pull-out leaves. The leaves, which are concealed underneath the table top, increase the table's

width by 45cm (18in) on each side when extended. The top rests on a trestle base that ends in tubular-steel stretchers and bracket feet. Designed by Gilbert Rohde. *Closed: W:152.5cm (60in).* SDR 2

**SUNSHADE TABLE**

This two-tiered end table is one of a pair. Each black laminate table top has a chrome trim. The smaller, top table sits flush with the tubular-steel frame, and the larger, bottom table is supported by the table base and legs. Designed by Gilbert Rohde for Troy. *W:45.5cm (17½in).* SDR 1

**MODEL 91 TABLE**

The rectangular top of this table is made from unlimed oak and has a black-linoleum surface. The corners have been slightly rounded. The table top rests on four rigid, chrome-plated tubular-steel legs. Designed by Marcel Breuer for Embru. *c.1933. W:120cm (48in).* DOR 4

**PALADAO DINING TABLE**

This flip-top, wooden dining table has a simple rectangular top with rounded corners. It has two additional leaves for extending the table size and a fifth leg for extra support. The legs taper sharply as they reach the floor. Designed by Gilbert Rohde for Herman Miller. *H:91.5cm (36in).* SDR 1

**E1027 SIDE TABLES**

These side tables are made from chrome-plated tubular steel, where the table's stand is placed to one side and can be adjusted to raise or lower the height of the circular glass table top to suit a range of purposes. Designed by Eileen Gray. *c.1927. D:51cm (20in).* DOR 1

**CAFE TABLE**

The square top of this table has a black-linoleum surface with a riveted, plate-steel surround. It rests on four chrome-plated tubular-steel legs, which bend to meet each other in the centre above an X-shaped, tubular-steel base. The linoleum top is new. Produced by Thonet Mundus. *c.1930. H:75cm (29½in).* DOR 3

**GAMES TABLE**

The square, orange-laminate table top rests on a chrome-plated brass base. The base hinges in the centre, making the table collapsible. At each corner is a swivel plate for holding a glass. Designed by Boris Lacroix. *c.1930. H:70cm (27½in).* DOR 3

**BEECH SIDE TABLE**

Designed and manufactured in Sweden, this small side, or occasional table has a circular, white laminate top above three bent-beech legs. The legs taper slightly as they reach the floor. Designed by Bruno Mathsson. *1936. D:44.5cm (17½in).* SDR 3

**ROSEWOOD TROLLEY**

The circular, rosewood top of this trolley table has hinged sides and rests on a chromium tripod base. The front wheels are also made from rosewood. The caster at the rear of the table is used to stabilize the trolley. *H:56.5cm (22¼in); D:80cm (31½in).* L&T

**BAUHAUS SOFA TABLE**

The table's frame consists of a rectilinear, nickel-plated tubular-steel base, with a rectangle of tubular steel suspended below the circular, plate-glass table top. Designed by Marcel Breuer in 1929 and produced by Thonet. This example is a Tecta re-issue from 2004. *H:60cm (23½in); D:80cm (31½in).* TEC 2



MID-CENTURY MODERN
1945-1970



OPTIMISM AND WEALTH

IN THE AFTERMATH OF WORLD WAR II, THE UNITED STATES AND MUCH OF EUROPE EXPERIENCED NEW PROSPERITY AND OPTIMISM, WHICH FUELLED THE GROWTH IN CONSUMERISM AND YOUTH CULTURE.

THE PERIOD BETWEEN the end of World War II and the early 1960s was, on the whole, characterized by optimism and prosperity. Leading this boom was the United States, a country that had remained relatively unscathed during the war and would soon emerge as the world's dominant nation, not only economically but also culturally. Quick to fall in step behind the United States were many European countries, for whom the 1950s and 1960s were also an era of unprecedented progress.

In the immediate aftermath of the war, however, most nations were occupied with regeneration. A quiet desire to return to a normal way of life dominated, so that the

late 1940s became a time of relative sobriety, as trade partnerships were gradually re-established and industries rekindled.

The United States recovered from the ravages of war more quickly than most, and by the beginning of the 1950s its factories were achieving record levels of productivity, while technological innovations such as colour television were helping to foster a sense of opportunity. It was in this atmosphere that artists such as Alexander Calder, Jackson Pollock, and Willem de Kooning established new forms of art, while Charles Eames and Eero Saarinen took the design world by storm. The United States, it seemed, was making its presence felt.

Between 1948 and 1951, with the introduction of the Marshall Plan, the United States used its considerable financial muscle to assist Europe in recovering from the war. This influx into Europe of nearly \$13 billion dollars (close to \$100 billion at present-day conversion rates) was the catalyst that many European nations needed to regain economic confidence. Italy, in particular, went on to enjoy a period of sustained industrial growth throughout the 1950s, while other nations, notably Germany and France, also prospered.

As the era of wartime frugality receded, a new consumer society bloomed in its place. Across the globe, buyers were beginning to demand

greater choice, a trend that was stimulated by the growth of the mass media. The 1950s was the era that saw the explosion of youth culture, as a younger generation began to feel increasingly alienated from their elders. By 1961, when the first man orbited Earth in a spaceship, it was clear that a new age had begun.

John F. Kennedy, the youngest man ever to be elected president of the United States, seemed to symbolize this shift in the balance of power towards a new, forward-looking generation. Music, fashion, and furniture design of the time, not only in the United States but also across Europe, expressed an urgent mood of vitality.

By the end of the decade, however, cracks in this exciting culture were beginning to appear. President Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, the United States' involvement in the war in Vietnam was escalating out of control, crime rates were rising, and the realization was gradually dawning that many of the recreational drugs being used were not as harmless as was previously thought.

The heady feeling of liberation that had so characterized the 1950s and the early 1960s was fading, and an atmosphere of bitterness and resentment was slowly taking its place. Tensions flared up in many cities across the world – most notably in Paris during the riots of 1968 – as the generation who had been raised during the prosperous years of the 1950s realized that much of their unfettered idealism had been misplaced.



Pierre Paulin Tulip footstool This used new materials: the seat cover is vinyl and the base moulded steel. 1965. W:73.5cm (29in). FRE



The Kaufmann Desert House, Palm Springs, California Constructed of a series of horizontal planes that appear to float over glass walls, this is regarded as one of the finest examples of a Mid-century Modern house in the United States. By Richard Neutra. 1946.

TIMELINE 1945–1970

1945 *Arts & Architecture* launch Case Study House. Designs by architects such as Richard Neutra and Pierre Koenig become icons.

1948 Gio Ponti edits *Domus*, the forum for debate on Modernist design.

Cover of *Domus* magazine



Charles and Ray Eames design a moulded-plastic armchair; it follows their innovations with plywood and precedes those with aluminium. The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) organize International Competition for Low-Cost Furniture.

1949 R. Buckminster Fuller creates his strong, lightweight, low-cost Geodesic dome.

1950 First MoMA Good

Design exhibition. *Hochschule für Gestaltung* opens in Ulm, Germany; it becomes the centre for design education in Europe.

1951 Italian manufacturer Kartell introduces mass-produced plastic homewares. Black and white TV is widely available. The Festival of Britain is held between May and September; the focus of this nationwide event is London.

Buckminster Fuller's Geodesic dome

1953 Osvaldo Borsani founds Tecno in Milan, producing luxurious furniture with an industrial aesthetic. Boeing 707, a military aircraft, is re-designed for civilian use. Air travel becomes more common.

1954 *Compasso D'Oro* launched by *La Rinascente* stores.





Interior of the Kaufman Desert House, Palm Springs
The interiors of the Kaufman House in California reflected the trends of the time in their use of wood, in-built furniture, and abstract patterns on the furnishing. A desert colour palette is used throughout the interior, as well as the exterior. Designed by Richard Neutra. 1946.

The Low Armchair Rod (LAR) chair This chair, by Charles and Ray Eames for The Herman Miller Furniture Company, has a fibreglass-reinforced, moulded-plastic seat raised on a bent-wire frame. The American couple produced many iconic pieces in new materials. 1950. H:61cm (24in); W:63cm (24¾in); D:64cm (25¼in). WKA



1950s Bakelite television

1955 Arne Jacobsen designs the hugely successful Series 7 chair.

1956 Alison and Peter Smithson's

House of the Future designed for the "Ideal Homes" show in Britain.

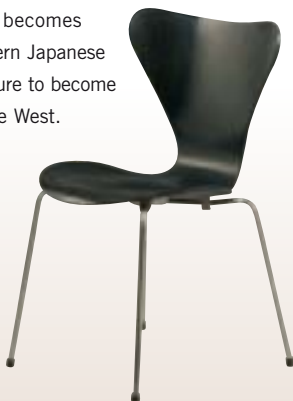
1957 Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni design the Sella stool, which uses a bicycle seat. The design pre-dates the Pop designs of the next decade. The USSR launch

Sputnik, the first artificial satellite.

1958 Isamu Kenmochi's Rattan chair becomes the first Modern Japanese item of furniture to become popular in the West.

1959 The Mini, by Alec Issigonis, is

Arne Jacobsen's Series 7 chair



introduced. It is the first small-scale car to become a resounding success.

1962 André Courrèges designs the miniskirt.

1964 The Herman Miller Furniture Company launch the Action Office furniture system by George Nelson and Robert Propst. Terence Conran opens Habitat, which carries European designs, in London.

1965 Cassina begin the *I Maestri* range, the first collection of Modernist reproductions.



1959 Austin Mini

1966 Archizoom and Superstudio founded in Florence, ushering in an intellectual, art-orientated approach to Italian design.

1968 Verner Panton presents colour-saturated roomsets at *Visiona* in Cologne.

1969 First man on the Moon.

MID-CENTURY MODERN FURNITURE

WORLD WAR II HALTED the development of furniture design. While some designers were in active service, others were in hiding, and many more were occupied with the war effort at home. For this reason, coupled with the prevailing sobriety of the post-war years, it was the pre-1945 Rational style that once again assumed centre stage after the war.

There were, however, significant changes to what drove the post-war furniture industry, most of which stemmed from newly available manufacturing techniques. Pioneered for military purposes, most often by aircraft designers, processes such as aluminium-casting and innovative ways of bonding wood were embraced by designers and manufacturers.

RATIONALISM ON THE WANE

The increased scope that new techniques afforded designers soon led to a relaxation of the principles of Rationalism. The early work of American designers Charles and Ray Eames, for instance, clearly shows



Egg chair This armchair is a good example of the trend for a more sculptural look and feel that characterizes many pieces from this period. The chair has a padded-leather seat and back over a fibreglass frame and is supported on an aluminium, star-shaped base. Designed by Arne Jacobsen for Fritz Hansen, Denmark. 1958. *Bk*

PORTABLE TUBE CHAIR

Joe Colombo's innovative Tube chair consists of four polyurethane-foam-covered cylinders and six steel-and-rubber joints. Sold in a drawstring bag, the chair's components could be assembled any way the user chose. Made in 1969, the chair is a striking example of the rebellion against existing typologies of furniture design that occurred in the 1960s. Although he found an admirably logical solution to the problem of transporting furniture, Colombo appears to have been more concerned with creating a visually iconoclastic design than with providing comfortable seating.

that a looser, sculptural style – influenced by sculptors such as Constantin Brancusi – was emerging. The Eameses developed a technique for moulding plywood in two directions – a method used in leg splints for injured servicemen during the war – and this lent their furniture an unprecedented three-dimensionality.

Of unparalleled popularity in the early 1950s – although Charles and Ray Eames' work was also well received – was Scandinavian furniture. In the 1930s, designers such as Alvar Aalto and Bruno Matthson had developed Soft Modernism, an aesthetic that was maintained in the post-war years. This gentle, ergonomically informed take on the severe look of Modernism struck a chord with both designers and consumers looking for comfort after the experiences of the war.

By the mid 1950s, many countries were experiencing a return to economic prosperity, which resulted in a welcome wave of optimism. It was in this atmosphere that the more extreme elements of the Rational style were phased out, as designers rebelled against the sober approach of previous generations.

This trend was most marked in Italy, where designers such as Gio Ponti and Carlo di Carli added a sensuous element to furniture design not seen since the heyday of Art Nouveau. In Britain, Alison and Peter Smithson presented their House of the Future (1956), a structure filled with (mostly fitted) furniture that was inspired as much by fantasy as by reality.

PLANNED OBSOLESCENCE

By the 1960s, a new spirit had overtaken the furniture industry. Many designers scrapped the ideal of making timeless designs and began creating work made for the moment. The concept of in-built obsolescence, which had emerged in the United States in the 1930s,

resurfaced, as furniture with a limited lifespan was seen as making good economic sense.



Tube chair The four tubes that make up the chair are of arcipiuma plastic covered in foam and upholstered in vinyl. They fit within each other and come packaged in a duffel bag. Using a number of steel-and-rubber points, the user can make a range of different chairs to suit his or her needs. 1969. *H:61cm (24in); W:61cm (24in); D:120cm (44in)*. *WKA*



Walnut sideboard This piece has a free-edge top above two sliding, spindle-front doors with pandanus cloth backing. Inside the sideboard are two interior shelves and four drawers. The case stands on a cross-plank base. Designed by George Nakashima, USA. *H:197cm (77½in)*. *SDR*

Disposable furniture became a major craze, as did furniture in bright, attention-grabbing colours and shapes – often inspired by advertising. Early forms of plastic also allowed designers to experiment with new and daring shapes. At the forefront of this change was Italy, a nation giddy with its own economic success and willing to entertain radical ideas concerning furniture design and manufacturing.

Beneath all these new, seemingly spontaneous, explorations in material and form remained a strong underlying desire to make furniture that was both functional and articulate. Designers, in other words, still considered the comfort and desires of their users. This was to change as the 1960s wore on.

Anti-design was a phrase first used in Italy to describe the furniture being made by the likes of Superstudio and Archizoom. Disillusioned with what they perceived as a pervading culture of excess, many designers of the late 1960s made furniture that was deliberately awkward to use and look at. Shunning the Functionalism that had been in vogue since the 1920s, they made furniture that mocked the high-mindedness of Modernism. This antagonistic attitude, which grew as the economic and political outlook of Europe and the United States worsened, eventually developed into what we now call Postmodernism.



Duffel carrier bag Each tube component of this chair fits within the next one up in size, the whole being neatly packaged in a drawstring bag. *WKA*

ALL-IN-ONE DESK

Produced in 1948 by The Herman Miller Furniture Company in Zeeland, Michigan, George Nelson's Home Office desk is a typical piece of Mid-century Modern design, and the type of furniture design coming out of the United States at that time.

The lightweight look of Nelson's desk is achieved by raising much of the visual bulk of the object above the desk's thin, tubular-steel legs. The use of tubular steel, and the complete absence of surface decoration on the desk, illustrates the influence on Nelson of a previous generation of Modernist designers such as Marcel Breuer and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.

NEW USE OF MATERIALS

Unlike the work of earlier Modernist designers, however, Nelson's desk differs in that it displays an eclectic use of both materials and form. Stylistic details such as the walnut veneer, the imitation-leather sliding doors, the bevelled façade of the upper storage unit, and the splayed legs of the desk show how the purist attitude prevalent in the interwar years had begun to soften. The use of colour, too, is further proof that designers such as Nelson were becoming more playful in their designs as they attempted to reflect the upbeat mood of the era.

Nelson's endeavours to incorporate a drawer, a shelving unit, a retractable wastepaper bin, a typewriter cabinet, and a desktop into a single piece of visually exciting furniture is emblematic of the progressive, can-do attitude that was a characteristic of much of American furniture design of the post-war years.

Home Office desk This writing desk has a hinged, walnut-veneered writing surface, below which is an aluminium wastepaper bin to one side and a typewriter cabinet to the other. Above the desktop are two sliding doors, each of which opens on to additional storage space. Designed by George Nelson for The Herman Miller Furniture Company, USA. 1948. H:103cm (41in); W:137cm (54¼in); D:71cm (28½in). QU



The doors slide open and shut neatly, rather than swinging open awkwardly.

Thin steel rods separate the upper storage unit from the desktop, lending the former a look of weightlessness.

The mustard-coloured imitation leather adds further levity to the look of the desk.

The façade of the upper storage unit is bevelled to add to the dynamism of the unit's appearance.

The walnut-veneered drawer appears to be suspended but is, in fact, supported by the tubular-steel legs.

The use of tubular steel maintains continuity with designs of the interwar years.

The desk's tubular-steel legs are splayed to increase the desk's sturdiness and give it a more informal appearance.

Perforations in the detachable aluminium container give it a lightweight look and distinguish it as a wastepaper basket.

ELEMENTS OF STYLE

After the austerity of the interwar years, a much more fleshed-out form of Modernism characterized furniture design in the late 1940s, the 1950s, and the 1960s. Reflecting the optimism of the era, as well as the greater variety of available materials and manufacturing techniques, furniture assumed a more playful appearance. The introduction of plastics and foam padding in the late 1950s took Modernism even further from its Rationalist roots, as new colours and forms dictated new designs. By the end of the 1960s, the idea of Functionalism that had previously dominated 20th-century design was dying a very visible death, as designers overlooked practicality in favour of more experimental ideas.

Valet chair

Form and function

Designers of the 1940s and 1950s embraced many of the ideals of the Modernists, not least the idea that form should follow function. The form of this Hans Wegner chair relates to its function, the outstretched arms of the chair back mirroring those of the human form.



Detail of wire table base

Metal-rod construction

The availability of increasingly narrow and lighter gauges of steel brought about a refinement in the use of metal in furniture design. Designers such as Harry Bertoia and Warren Platner produced lightweight wire furniture that was in keeping with the principles of Modernism: the exposed structure of metal-rod furniture provided the essence of its visual appeal.



Detail of chair

Stretch fabrics

The development of new, elastic types of fabric allowed furniture designers of the 1960s to explore new forms. Most significantly, these fabrics allowed designers to stretch material over internal frameworks to create shapes that were no longer dictated by an object's structure. The clinging qualities of these new fabrics also did away with the need for upholstery.



Japanese-inspired door front

Japanese influences

As international travel became easier and more commonplace during the late 1940s and early 1950s, design was opened up to new influences that had previously had little impact on Modernism. Of particular appeal to designers who adhered to the Modern aesthetic were the traditions of simplicity and clarity found in Japanese design.



Close-up of light fitting

Bold colours

As the purist tendencies that defined early Modernism ebbed away, designers began to use colour to draw attention to their work. Although painted wood was still rejected (as too superficial), designers in the 1950s did use brilliantly coloured upholstery. The introduction of plastics opened up new opportunities for the use of colour, which many designers eagerly exploited.



Moulded plastic table

Plastics

During the oil glut of the 1950s and 1960s, petroleum-based plastics became readily available and inexpensive materials for designers to use. It was only in the mid 1960s, however, that plastic furniture really took off, as designers made full use of new forms that could now be achieved by moulding with these malleable new materials.



Detail of chair seat and back

Moulded plywood

Although bent plywood had become popular in furniture design in the interwar years, it was only in the 1940s that a technique for flexing the material in more than one direction was perfected. Charles Eames and Eero Saarinen worked together to become early pioneers of moulded plywood furniture, developing a style that used complex curves.



Detail of splayed-leg table

Splayed legs

In an attempt to distinguish their designs from the rigid creations of the Modernists, many furniture designers of the 1950s used splayed legs for their furniture. This stylistic detail, particularly prevalent among Italian furniture designs, gave desks, tables, and chairs an almost languid appearance that reflected the more relaxed mood of the post-war period.



Aluminium wastepaper basket

Aluminium

This versatile material was widely used in the interiors of military transport vehicles, particularly in fighter planes, during World War II, aluminium was in abundant supply during the 1940s and 1950s. Favoured by designers because it is both durable and lightweight, aluminium was a commonly used material in post-war furniture design.



Close-up of curved chair seat

Seats for slouching

The explosion of youth culture in the 1950s provoked an informal attitude in Western societies that was expressed in the way people sat. Younger generations no longer wanted to sit bolt upright, as their parents had encouraged them to do, and so started to slouch in their seats. Designers responded by creating chairs that users could drape themselves over comfortably.



Linear shelving

Horizontal lines

As lifestyles became ever more informal during the post-war years, designers echoed this trend in their furniture using long, horizontal lines. The more relaxed look this gave the furniture they created was embraced by a young buying public keen to forget the stiff, unyielding style of domestic design that they had grown up with.



Detail of abstract table base

Organic forms

New techniques for moulding plywood and the availability of thinner, more malleable rods of steel encouraged a rash of shapely forms in post-war furniture design. Also influenced by the art of the Surrealists and the Abstract Expressionists, as well as the amoebic shapes associated with science, designers made pieces that were increasingly sculptural in form.



Foam-rubber cushions

Padding

Rubber padding was pioneered in Italy in the 1950s as an offshoot of the tyre industry, while foam padding was developed at around the same time in Scandinavia. Produced by steaming polystyrene beads, which transformed into a foam under heat, the resulting substance could be applied to a framework and moulded into whatever shape was required.

CHARLES AND RAY EAMES

REVOLUTIONIZING FURNITURE DESIGN WITH THEIR INNOVATIVE USE OF MATERIALS, THE EAMESSES PRODUCED TIMELESS CLASSICS.

FEW NAMES LOOM larger in 20th-century furniture design than Charles and Ray Eames. This American husband and wife team, one an architect and former draughtsman, the other an abstract expressionist painter, produced work that perfectly and eloquently expressed Modernism's aim of marrying industry and art. In the years between their meeting in 1940, at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan, and Charles's death in 1978, the couple revolutionized furniture design with pieces that are, with few exceptions, still top sellers.

NOVEL USE OF MATERIALS

The materials used in Charles and Ray Eames' furniture reveal their mission of "getting the most of the best to the greatest number of people for the least amount of money", which is why they turned to moulded plywood, plastic, fibreglass, and aluminium. These materials were distinguished by their flexibility, affordability, and freshness.

Although Eames furniture is now considered timeless, the couple were ruthless innovators. It was a new technique for moulding plywood (developed by Charles and Eero Saarinen) that set them on the path to dominating mid-century American design. Many designers had used moulded plywood before, but none had been able to bend it in more than one direction.

A year after meeting, Charles and Ray moved to California to start the now-legendary Eames Office. Their first successful design was an unusual one – a leg splint, made from moulded plywood and developed for the US Navy in 1942. Their careers took off when they embarked, in 1947, on a lifelong collaboration with The Herman Miller Furniture Company.

In the 1950s, Charles was at the helm of the Eames Office. He met with clients, developed concepts, and kept a hawk-like eye on the studio. Ray spent her time sourcing pictures, fabric swatches, and materials to inspire designs. If Charles was the technical obsessive, Ray's input was broader.

THE EAMES STYLE

Although they kept up with furniture developments, Charles and Ray Eames looked beyond their discipline for ideas. Their approach was non-dogmatic; design was "a plan for arranging elements in such a way as to best accomplish a particular purpose". The roots of their democratic ideas can be traced to the Arts and Crafts Movement (see pp.330-31; pp.336-37), although

ESU-420N STORAGE UNIT

This storage unit is an early design by Charles and Ray Eames. The panels at the front are in beige, grey, black, and white masonite and fibreglass. The whole is supported on a steel frame in black. Made by the Herman Miller Furniture Company.

c.1951. H:148.5cm (58½in); W:119.5cm (47in); D:40.75cm (16in). R20



LAR (LOW ARMCHAIR ROD) CHAIR

The chair's seat is made from moulded, fibreglass-reinforced polyester and is raised on a painted, steel-rod base. Manufactured by the Herman Miller Furniture Company. 1950. H:61cm (24in); W:63cm (24½in); D:64cm (25½in). WKA



ROSEWOOD TABLE

In keeping with Charles and Ray Eames' desire to make multipurpose furniture, this table was sold as both a conference table and a dining table. It has a rosewood top and is raised on two chrome-plated steel columns terminating in splayed legs. The columns are joined by a flat stretcher. Manufactured by The Herman Miller Furniture Company. c.1955. W:98cm (38in). SDR

CRANBROOK ACADEMY OF ART

A PROGRESSIVE ACADEMY THAT ENCOURAGED EXPERIMENTATION, CRANBROOK DEEPLY INFLUENCED MODERN AMERICAN DESIGN.

Established in 1932, the Cranbrook Academy of Art turned out impressive graduates, including Charles and Ray Eames, Eero Saarinen, Harry Bertoia, David Rowland, Florence Knoll, and many others who were to make major contributions to Modern American furniture design.

The academy was founded by George and Ellen Booth. Both believed in the union of spiritual and artistic pursuits and spent considerable time and money developing an academic community in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, that survives to this day.

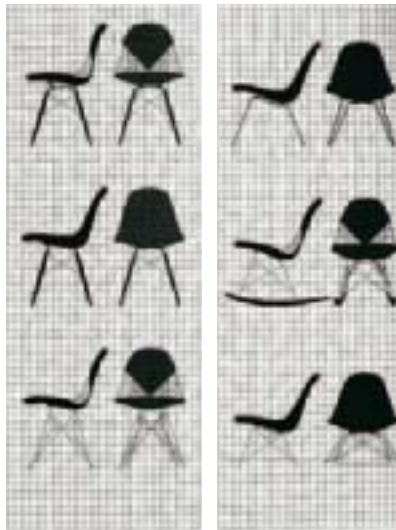
Cranbrook was first led by the Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen. Visiting lecturers included Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright. Saarinen also invited Charles Eames to study there, and Eames soon became a tutor.

Experimentation was encouraged, especially between disciplines. In 1940 Charles Eames and Eero Saarinen submitted moulded plywood designs to the Organic Design in Home Furnishing competition hosted by MoMA in New York and, to their great surprise, won. The victory marked their arrival into the world of American design.

The winning chair design Submitted by Charles Eames and Eero Saarinen for the Organic Design in Home Furnishing competition sponsored by MoMA, the chair has a moulded-plywood frame covered in foam rubber and upholstered in red fabric. The splayed legs are in wood. It was designed in 1940.



Charles Eames (centre) in the studio of the Cranbrook Academy of Art Having trained and worked as an architect, Charles came to Cranbrook to study and then went on to become a design instructor from 1939 to 1940. Ray studied weaving, ceramics, and metalwork at the academy. This photograph of Charles was taken in 1940.



VERSATILE DESIGNS

The designs of Charles and Ray Eames displayed an unprecedented versatility. The same chair base design could be modified to become a rocking chair or a stacking chair, and could have seats made from a number of materials, including moulded plywood and fibreglass-reinforced plastic.

LOUNGE CHAIR 670

The Eameses' interpretation of the English club chair is made up of three laminated-wood shells, which are attached to the metal frame. Each shell has a detachable, soft leather-upholstered cushion. The chair was (and still is) available with a matching ottoman. This original example is rosewood.

Although no longer made in rosewood, the chair is still available in cherry and walnut. Made by the Herman Miller Furniture Company.

c.1956. W:88cm (35in). DOR



the couple also admired Japanese architecture and Scandinavian design. Architects Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier also played a part in forming the Eames style.

Charles and Ray, who witnessed the Depression, were economical with materials, but never ignored comfort. Their Lounge Chair (1956) is perhaps the most convincing expression of comfort achieved by any seating design of the 20th century.

AN OPEN APPROACH TO DESIGN

Apart from furniture, Charles and Ray Eames also designed exhibitions and film sets. "What are the boundaries of design?" Charles was once asked, to which he replied, "What are the boundaries of problems?". This open approach to design was epitomized by their home near Santa Monica, California. Designed by Charles, Ray, and Eero Saarinen, the modular structure was intended to almost disappear; the aim was to accentuate the nature outside and the space within. Showcased in international magazines, it became the symbol of a new, unencumbered way of life.

It is easy to see why Charles and Ray Eames achieved iconic status. Their work was undertaken at a time before cynicism took hold, and optimism and invention pervade their designs. Ultimately, though, it was their ability to balance pragmatism and poetry that won them such an army of fans.

THE UNITED STATES

DURING THE FIRST half of the 20th century, the United States could rarely be described as being at the forefront of furniture design. By 1951, however, the British critic H.M. Dunnett was writing that there was “more evidence of a Modern Movement in America than there has been for 20 years”. Dunnett went on to note that “contemporary designs in all sorts of materials and combinations have appeared. Solid wood, plywood, laminated wood and fabric, tube and solid steel, aluminium alloys, glass, Perspex, and other plastics have all been used in a variety of ways [by American designers] to produce new forms”.

EMBRACING MODERNITY
The United States’ transformation from laggard to leading light in furniture design can be attributed to a fortuitous combination of factors, the most obvious of which was the country’s unrivalled wealth. Suffering nothing like the devastation seen in Europe during the two world wars, America’s industrial infrastructure remained robust throughout the 1930s and 1940s. This background of economic success fuelled a sense of self-belief, giving confidence to consumers and helping Americans to forge a new cultural identity that became the envy of their European counterparts. This

was an era in which Hollywood’s film industry blossomed and the abstract paintings and sculptures of American artists revolutionized the art world.

When it came to furniture design, it had taken the American consumer quite some time to warm to the Modern style (as H.M. Dunnett acknowledged). The catalyst for this acceptance was, firstly, the introduction of the softer, more approachable Scandinavian style of Modernism to the United States and, secondly, the arrival, in the late 1940s, of a new generation of homeowners.

A government scheme that subsidized the

buying of first homes created a new group of buyers who refused to fill their homes with the sort of reproduction furniture they associated with their parents.

Much was done to promote the Modern style, too, by institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City. MoMA had supported the designs of avant-garde European designers during the 1930s, and in the 1940s they pushed the idea of Good Design. Described in 1950 by Edgar Kaufmann, MoMA’s director, as a “thorough merging of form and function...revealing a practical, uncomplicated, sensible beauty”,



The deep bowl seat resembles a nest.

Wire mesh was an unusual material for the time.

The chair's base is made from bent and welded steel rod.

BIRD CHAIR AND OTTOMAN

The Bird chair, so called because it resembles a bird with spread wings, has a high back and a diamond-shaped seat above a plastic-coated, steel-wire frame. It is fully upholstered with a removable, black, padded slip cover. The

ottoman has a rectangular pad on a wire frame of the same construction. Developed from the iconic Diamond chair, this chair and ottoman illustrate the sculptural quality of Bertioia’s work. 1952. Chair: H:99cm (39in); W:99cm (39in); D:86.5cm (34in). Ottoman: H:43cm (17in); W:61cm (24in); D:43cm (17in). Bk



SLIPPER CHAIR

This chair is upholstered in a striped-silk fabric in yellow, orange, and green; the legs are bleached mahogany. Designed by Edward Wormley for Dunbar. H:76cm (30in). SDR



CYCLONE TABLE

This dining table has a white-laminated top raised on a chrome-plated steel-wire column and cast-iron base. Designed by Isamu Noguchi for Knoll International. H:122cm (48in). SDR



GRASSHOPPER ARMCHAIR

With a laminated-birch frame and an upholstered seat and back, this armchair was designed by Eero Saarinen for Knoll International in 1946. This 1960s model has floral upholstery. H:89cm (35in); W:74cm (29½in); D:89cm (35in). QU

The upholstery is unusual for a Bertioia wire-mesh design, which often used cushions.

Good Design was the focus of many competitions run by the museum.

Although open to designers across the globe, it was an American who made the most impact on these competitions. Charles Eames's first award in a MoMA competition was in 1940, for Organic Design in Home Furnishing, although he went on to win many more and, in 1946, secured a solo show at MoMA under the title New Furniture by Charles Eames.

DISTINCT AMERICAN STYLE

Charles Eames's work was way ahead of anything being produced in Europe. Along with Ray, his wife, and Eero

Saarinen, a friend from the progressive Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan, he breathed new life into the American furniture industry.

Among the first to realize the potential of his and Ray's designs was George Nelson, who, in 1946, had just been appointed design director of The Herman Miller Furniture Company. Nelson was an accomplished designer in the Modern style himself, and by the 1950s Herman Miller had established itself, through the designs of Nelson and Charles and Ray Eames, at the forefront of the American furniture industry.

Another important manufacturer of this period was Knoll International,

founded in New York in 1938. Hans Knoll, the son of the German furniture manufacturer Walter Knoll, came to the United States intent on introducing the sort of pared-down furniture he had seen so much of in his homeland and, at first, employed European designers exclusively. In 1945, however, Knoll met, and later married, Florence Schust, a graduate of the Cranbrook Academy of Art, who introduced him to the work of American designers such as Harry Bertoia and Isamu Noguchi. In deciding to produce their work, which used daring, sculptural forms and unusual materials such as metal rod, Knoll became a prominent force in the

furniture industry and helped to establish a distinctive, American style of Modern design. Florence also designed a number of significant pieces for Knoll.

Across the country, designers began to take a more functional approach to furniture design. Although not quite as innovative as the work of the Eameses or Eero Saarinen, the furniture of designers such as Edward Wormley (whose work was produced in Indiana), Baldwin Kingrey (from Chicago), and George Nakashima (based in Pennsylvania) was, nonetheless, beautifully produced and distinctively American in its use of fluid forms.



COFFEE TABLE

The top of this table is fashioned from one piece of solid walnut and has a split-knot, free-edge top. The table is supported on two legs, also made of solid walnut, and is asymmetrical

in both position and form. The wider end of the coffee table is supported on a free-form slab of walnut, and the narrower end is held up on a square-section, tapered leg. Designed by George Nakashima. 1965. W:127cm (50in). SDR



CONFERENCE TABLE

The top of this conference table is made of rosewood. Rectangular in shape, the table top has slight bows to the long edges, making it somewhat wider at the centre than at the edges. The table is supported

on round steel legs, which are joined at each end by a metal stretcher and reinforced in the centre by trestle-type supports. The conference table was designed by George Nelson for The Herman Miller Furniture Company. W:236cm (103½in); D:110cm (43¼in). FRE

HERMAN MILLER FURNITURE CO.

A CUTTING-EDGE FURNITURE-MAKER IN THE UNITED STATES, THE HERMAN MILLER FURNITURE COMPANY HELPED TO CREATE A DISTINCT AMERICAN STYLE.

The years between 1945 and 1960 were the glory days of 20th-century American furniture design, and no manufacturer was more prominent at the time than the Michigan-based Herman Miller Furniture Company. Founded as the Star Furniture Company in 1905, the company's name was changed in 1923 (after the chairman, D.J. De Pree, received a generous donation from his father-in-law, Mr Herman Miller).

The company made furniture that imitated whatever historical style was in vogue. It was a precarious existence, and one that required De Pree to second-guess consumer tastes.

De Pree needed to change direction, and did so in 1930 when he staked the company's future on the Modern style, an aesthetic promoted by the Museum of

Modern Art for its timeless, universal appeal. Designer Gilbert Rohde was given the task of re-invigorating the company, which he did with great success.

By 1946, the new design director, George Nelson, was pushing for cutting-edge style. Designers such as Charles Eames and Isamu Noguchi were employed to meet De Pree's demands for "durability, unity, integrity, and inevitability".

It is a testament to the standards of De Pree, who saw that innovation was worth little without quality, that many Herman Miller designs of the 1940s and 1950s still remain in production today.

Action Office Developed by Robert Propst and George Nelson in the 1960s, this was the world's first open-plan office system. Elements could be combined and recombined as needs changed.



AUSTRALIA

LIKE MUCH OF Europe and the United States, Australia enjoyed economic growth in the 1950s and 1960s. Industrial expansion was the driving force behind this era of affluence, and more and more Australians enjoyed the luxury of a disposable income.

Keen to capture some of these riches, canny entrepreneurs began to import the latest furniture designs from Europe and the United States and sell them to this new breed of consumer. Realizing that there was a thirst for cutting-edge products, a number of Australian designers also began to work in the Modern style that was such a success overseas.

A NEW GENERATION

One of the first Australian designers to look to the future for inspiration was Douglas Snelling. His Saran chairs, launched in 1947, incorporated parachute webbing and ushered in a new, experimental era in Australian furniture design. From 1947 to 1955, Snelling worked with the Sydney-based company Functional Products to produce furniture that was spare in style and concise in craftsmanship.

More flamboyant in his approach to design was the Melbourne designer Grant Featherston. Featherston's designs for a House of the Future in 1949 declared his intention to take Australian

furniture into uncharted territory. His plywood Contour chair of 1951 was so advanced that no local manufacturer could put it into production, forcing Featherston to make it himself. Featherston created different versions of the chair, giving it arms, a rocking base, and leather upholstery. Clearly influenced by the designs of Charles and Ray Eames, the Contour chair became an icon of Australian design.

THE USE OF PLASTICS

In 1966, Featherston began to collaborate with his wife, Mary, a

designer from Britain focusing on the use of plastics. Their chair for the Australian pavilion at the 1967 Montreal Expo was a polystyrene shell covered in polyurethane foam. The Expo Mark II Sound chair was so named because it had speakers in the back, although when it went on the market, this feature had gone. In the 1960s and early 1970s the Featherstons contributed as much to the field of plastic furniture design as any European or American designer.

Also based in Melbourne was Kjell Grant, a designer whose cantilevered Montreal chair (designed for the Montreal Expo) was, he claimed, inspired by tractor seats, although many



Buttons not only tighten the fabric but also perform a decorative function.

The high back gives the chair a sense of grandeur.

The curved seat and back are designed to make the user feel enclosed.

The chair base is made of solid wood.

The tapered legs of the base are typical of the period.

R152 CONTOUR CHAIR

Devoted to promoting a philosophy of good design, Grant Featherston designed the R152 Contour chair. This striking chair offered a comfortable but sleek alternative to the overstuffed, bulky lounge suites popular during the pre-war era. The flexibility of the plywood frame

provided Featherston with the opportunity to experiment with bending wood without compromising on strength, and this chair clearly demonstrates how seating furniture can be moulded to accommodate the human form. This example is covered in the original blue vinyl fixed with buttons. The chair was manufactured by Emerson Brothers. c.1952.



EXPO MARK II SOUND CHAIR

The Expo Mark II Sound chair is made of a polystyrene shell covered in polyurethane foam. It was designed by Grant and Mary Featherston and made by Aristoc Industries, Melbourne. 1967.



RONDO CHAIR

Originally designed for an Olivetti showroom in 1956 and still in production, this Rondo chair has splayed legs. Versions with a tulip base or a six-star base are also made. The moulded shell base is covered in foam. By Gordon Andrews.



COFFEE TABLE

This maple wood coffee table has a free-form table top with rounded, organic curves; there are no right angles on the piece. The four legs of the coffee table, also in maple, are splayed and tapered, which adds to the elegance of the piece by lifting the focus away from the ground. The piece was designed by the architect and furniture designer Douglas Snelling and manufactured by Functional Products of Sydney. 1955.

saw its springy form as reminiscent of the kangaroo. Selected by the Museum of Modern Art in New York for its permanent collection, the Montreal chair was one of the first Australian designs to attract worldwide attention.

SPARKING INTEREST AT HOME
In Sydney, the interior designer Marion Hall Best was introducing locals to the

delights of Modern design. In the late 1950s and 1960s, Hall Best opened a showroom stocked with works by Charles and Ray Eames, Joe Colombo, Eero Aarnio, and Harry Bertoina, as well as by Sydney-born Gordon Andrews.

Andrews was a furniture designer and a graphic designer (he designed Australia's first decimal currency notes in 1966) who had worked

in Europe as a commercial artist in the 1930s. In the 1950s, he struck up a relationship with the Italian firm Olivetti to design its showrooms. It was while working on this project that he produced his most celebrated pieces – the Rondo chair (1956) and the

Gazelle chair (1957). Keen to pare furniture down to its most essential, Andrews complemented his Rationalist principles with a keen eye for proportion. Of all the Australian designers of this period, Andrews was the most original.



SPIDER CHAIR

The Spider is a beautifully proportioned swivel chair. The four-star base is in a brushed stainless steel. The chair also came in a lower seat height, for use as a casual chair for the home or office. Designed by Gordon Andrews. 1961.



GAZELLE CHAIR

Called the Gazelle because of its thin, tapering gazelle-like legs, this chair is made of laminated plywood and cast aluminium. It is upholstered in a bright, woollen fabric. Designed by Gordon Andrews. 1957.



SIDE CABINET

The largely plain front of this side cabinet has a simple, square wooden door handle and four drawers with slightly angled fronts. The wooden legs of the piece are splayed and taper towards the bottom. The cabinet was designed by Douglas Snelling. c.1954.



LOUNGE CHAIR AND STOOL

Made from wood, metal, and synthetic Saran webbing, the chair is lightweight, because of the materials, and versatile, because of its simple colour scheme and timeless fashioning. The Saran webbing distributes weight and tension evenly over the surface area and creates support

without an upholstered or solid surface for the seat and backrest, showing that ergonomics were considered. Designed by Douglas Snelling for Functional Products. c.1957.



TOWNHOUSE SUITE

Comprising a two-seater sofa and two single, matching armchairs with splayed legs, the Townhouse Suite is upholstered throughout in the original red, geometrically patterned fabric. This suite won an award in "The Australian Home Beautiful Second National

Furniture Design Competition". The pieces were designed by Grant Featherston and manufactured by Emerson Brothers. c.1956.

SCANDINAVIA

IN THE YEARS AFTER World War II the profile of Scandinavian design soared. It is little surprise that such a brutal war had left people weary of the hard edges of early Modernism and more comfortable with the gentler forms of the Scandinavian style.

TRADITIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP

It was something of a paradox that designers from the leading nations of furniture design in the immediate post-war period – Finland, Sweden, and, in particular, Denmark – worked primarily with traditional, rather than cutting-edge, manufacturing techniques. “Technically there was

nothing new in our work”, reflected one of Denmark’s foremost designers of the period, Hans Wegner, in 1983. “The philosophy behind it was not to make the process more complicated than necessary, but to show what we were able to do with our hands; to give the work a sense of spirit and make it look natural.”

The aim for Scandinavian designers of the period was to distil design to its purest form. This is evidenced by the fact that the outstanding feature of Scandinavian furniture design in the late 1940s and early 1950s is the unsurpassed quality of its craftsmanship.

TEAK-STYLE FURNITURE

Scandinavians had long held a deep reverence for wood, as it not only provided for them financially, through exports (Scandinavians often referred to their forests at this time as “green gold”), but was also the material from which the iconic items of their culture – such as ships and skis – had been hewn.

Ironically, though, it was not an indigenous wood, but one from the Far East, that came to define Scandinavian design of the 1950s. Teak was inexpensive and readily available as a by-product of the military clearing exercises taking

place in Thailand and the Philippines during this period. The wood was hardy, easy to work with, and could be given an attractive satin finish. This propensity for working with teak wood is the reason why Scandinavian design of the post-war period was often referred to as the Teak style.

Finn Juhl, in particular, produced masterful examples of teak furniture in the late 1940s and early 1950s, often in a sculptural style that can be recognized as uniquely his. Inspired by the work of abstract painters and sculptors, his furniture designs have a freedom of form that distinguishes his output from the rather more

Right angles are kept to a minimum, as curves dominate the chair's appearance.

The muscular forms of the chair were inspired by primitive art.

Generous, convex armrests offer the user an image of comfort.

A slight swelling of the struts of the chair adds to the sculptural effect.

The chair's seat and back are detached, giving the illusion that the back is suspended in mid-air.

The front and back legs are turned.

CHIEFTAIN CHAIR

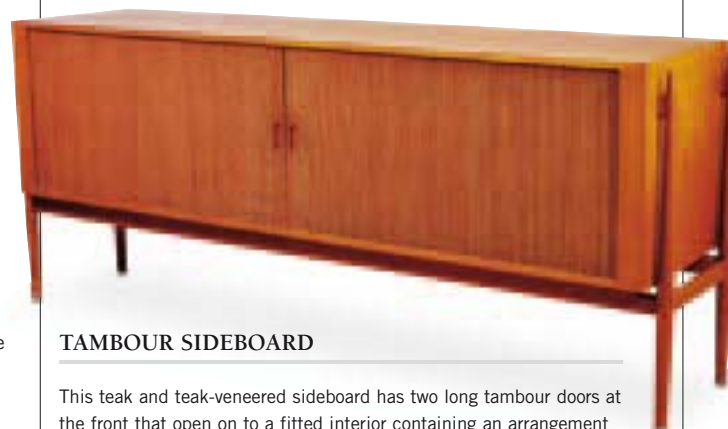
This chair is constructed from a teak frame and has a shaped-leather seat and back. The overall shape is largely curvaceous, with very few right angles. The back rail joins two dowel uprights, which also form the back legs. The armrests span the distance between the front and back

legs and the elbow rests are also of sculpted leather. The upholstered components of the chair are separated from its exposed frame – an idea that stemmed directly from the Modernist concepts of furniture design seen in the works of Gerrit Rietveld and Marcel Breuer. Designed by Finn Juhl for Niels Vodder, Denmark. 1949. H:96.5cm (38in); W:86cm (34in); D:99cm (39in). SDR



TEAK CABINET

The top section of this cabinet has twin sliding doors enclosing open, shelved compartments. The deeper case beneath contains six long drawers, two of which are lined for silverware. The whole is supported on turned teak legs. Designed by Hans Wegner for Ry Møbler, Denmark. H:180.5cm (71in). FRE



TAMBOUR SIDEBOARD

This teak and teak-veneered sideboard has two long tambour doors at the front that open on to a fitted interior containing an arrangement of compartments and eight drawers. The sideboard is supported by a frame that has tapering legs attached to the outside of the case. Designed by Finn Juhl for Arne Vodder, Denmark. 1950s. W:208cm (81 1/2in). DOR

rigorous furniture designs produced by his contemporaries.

DEBT TO THE PAST

With the exception of Finn Juhl, the predominant Scandinavian approach to design in the post-war period was one of updating older forms of furniture. This was a trend initiated by Kaare Klint at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in the interwar years and continued with zeal by his students and followers. The Shaker chair (1944) by Borge Mogensen and the Chinese chair (1947) by Hans

Wegner are two famous examples of Scandinavian furniture that clearly illustrate how the designers borrowed forms from bygone cultures.

No designer, though, was more diligent in his studies of past furniture types than Ole Wanscher. A student of Kaare Klint who eventually took over Klint's job at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Wanscher compiled numerous books on the subject, including *Furniture Types and History of the Art of Furniture*. His designs were, unsurprisingly, heavily inspired by and indebted to past eras of furniture

design, with 18th-century English and Egyptian furniture being of particular interest to him.

INTERNATIONAL APPEAL

The international acclaim bestowed upon Scandinavian furniture designers was due in large part to the timeless quality of their designs and the skill with which these designs were executed. In 1951, Finland took home the majority of medals at the Milan Triennale (an event that would later be referred to by the Finns as the Milan

Miracle), while in the United States an ambitious exhibition entitled *Design in Scandinavia* proved so popular when it was first mounted in 1954 that it continued to tour the country (and Canada) for the next three years. The reason for the initial, and lasting, popularity of Scandinavian designs can be summed up by four words: integrity, reliability, beauty, and craftsmanship. Clearly, Scandinavian design represented to the public much that the world had been thirsting for after such a traumatic period in its history.



FLAG-HALYARD LOUNGE CHAIR

The tubular-steel frame is strung with flag halyard, and the chair has a sheepskin throw. By Hans Wegner. 1950. H:81cm (31½in); W:104cm (41in); D:112cm (44in). BonBay



OAK DAY BED

This day bed has a simple, rectangular oak frame raised on bracket legs. The single seat cushion and two back cushions are upholstered with buttoned fabric. Designed by Borge Mogensen for StoleFabrik, Denmark. 1950s. H:76cm (30in); W:195.5cm (77in); D:84cm (33in). R20



WALNUT ARMCHAIR

This ladder-back armchair has outswayed arms on turned supports. The dish seat has a squab cushion covered in ribbed fabric; the seat is raised on turned legs joined by stretchers. By Ole Wanscher for Fritz Hansen. 1946. BonBay

THE CHAIR BY HANS WEGNER

ALTHOUGH IT INSPIRED COUNTLESS IMITATIONS, HANS WEGNER'S MODEL NO. JH 501 CHAIR REMAINS THE EPITOME OF FORM MEETING FUNCTION.

Despite its unassuming appearance, Hans Wegner's Model No. JH 501 chair (1949) enjoys a legendary reputation. It is often simply referred to as *The Chair*, and many commentators on Modern design have described it as the ultimate blend of function and form, and the era's most accomplished achievement.

First declared the most beautiful chair in the world in the late 1950s by the influential American magazine *House Beautiful*, *The Chair* was chosen by CBS to provide seating for the televised presidential debate in 1960 between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon.

The Chair's reputation was further enhanced by an exhibition in the 1970s that displayed it alongside 30 of the many imitations it had spawned. The copies were some way off matching the subtle refinement of the original, thus confirming once and for all the chair's superiority over all competitors.



Hans Wegner

The chair The teak chair's back rail elegantly joins the armrests, as though all pieces are one. 1950-60. H:76cm (30in); W:58.5cm (23in); D:53.5cm (21in). Bk



ARNE JACOBSEN

CREATING AN AESTHETIC THAT COMBINED SOFT LINES WITH STRICT ATTENTION TO DETAIL, ARNE JACOBSEN DESIGNED SOME OF THE HIGHEST-SELLING PIECES OF THE 20TH CENTURY.

ARNE JACOBSEN RECEIVED his first international award for furniture design at 23, picking up a silver at the 1925 *Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* in Paris. On his trip to France he also saw the *Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau* by the architect Le Corbusier. The minimalism of the building, and the way in which it eschewed craft in favour of technology, was to inform Jacobsen's designs for life.

Trained as a stonemason in Denmark, Jacobsen found the rigorous approach of Le Corbusier and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (whose work he saw at *Die Wohnung* in Stuttgart in 1927) a revelation. "Clear, sane, readily comprehensible", was how he described their approach.

By the 1930s, Jacobsen had established himself as an architect in Denmark – his greatest achievement of this period being the Bella Vista estate in Copenhagen (1932–35) – but it was only after World War II that he asserted himself as a furniture designer. While most of his early designs were derived from Mies, Le Corbusier, and the Swedish Functionalist Gunnar Asplund, Jacobsen finally found his own style in the 1950s.

EXACTING DESIGN

The now-familiar Jacobsen aesthetic that emerged in the Ant chair (1952) was a combination of fluidity and precision. The defining feature of the Ant was its construction; it was made from two clearly defined parts: a base of three tubular-steel legs and a plywood seat shaped by steam. This logical approach made the chair easy to mass produce. Designed for a factory canteen, the Ant's basic form would be referred to again and again by Jacobsen.

The influence of Eero Saarinen and Charles and Ray Eames is clear in the construction of the Ant's seat. Although not a pioneer of plywood designs, Jacobsen was as much a master of the material as the Eameses.

After completing the Ant, Jacobsen began work on his Series 7 chairs. Although similar in construction to the Ant, they had four legs, not three, and came in many styles. All with a curvilinear plywood seat, the Series 7 chairs were – and are – available with arms (3207), a swivelling base (3117), or both (3217), among other variants. The most successful chair is the most basic, the 3107, which by the end of the 20th century had sold over six million, making it, by some estimates, the most popular chair ever designed.



EGG TABLE

The egg-shaped top of this table is supported on three steel-rod legs with trestle supports and black rubber-capped feet.

Manufactured by Fritz Hansen.

W:114cm (45in). BonE

DROP CHAIR

The sculptural, polyurethane shell of this chair is covered in leather-upholstered foam and stands on copper-coated, tubular-steel legs. Manufactured by Fritz Hansen. 1958.

H:84.5cm (33¼in); W:46cm (18¼in); D:55.5cm (21¼in). QU



SWAN SOFA

This aluminium-framed sofa is upholstered in orange woollen fabric and has trestle bases with plastic-capped feet. Designed by Arne Jacobsen for Fritz Hansen. 1957. W:148cm (59¼in). L&T

BIOGRAPHY



Arne Jacobsen

1902 Born 11 February in Copenhagen.

1925 Awarded a silver medal for his chair design at the *Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* in Paris.

1927 Travels to Stuttgart, to visit *Die Wohnung* exhibition.

1932–35 Designs the Bella Vista apartment complex and Bellevue recreation centre on the outskirts of Copenhagen.

1952 Designs the Ant chair.

1955–61 Designs the Series 7 range of chairs.

1956–65 Designs the building and interior furnishings for the SAS Royal Hotel, Copenhagen.

1959 Designs the AJ lamp for Louis Poulsen.

1960–63 Designs the building and interior furnishings for St Catherine's College, Oxford.

1961–78 Designs the Danish National Bank (completed after his death).

1971 Dies 24 March in Copenhagen.

THE COPENHAGEN SAS ROYAL HOTEL

COPENHAGEN'S FIRST SKYSCRAPER, THE JACOBSEN-DESIGNED SAS ROYAL HOTEL IS KNOWN AS MUCH FOR ITS INTERIOR DESIGN AS FOR ITS ARCHITECTURE.

Many of Arne Jacobsen's most celebrated designs, from the Egg chair to the AJ pendant lamp, were designed for the SAS Royal Hotel in Copenhagen. Commissioned by SAS (Scandinavian Airlines System) and completed in 1960, the hotel was the Danish capital's first major skyscraper. The building consists of a two-storey horizontal plinth attached to a 19-storey tower. Such is the subtlety of Jacobsen's design that the tower appears to hover above the base.

Although admired for its architecture, the hotel is today rightly remembered for its interior design. With a legendary eye for detail, Jacobsen insisted that every element meet his strict standards – this is presumably why he designed so many of the fittings himself.

As well as the famous Egg, Swan, and Drop chairs, he also designed the curtains, cutlery, and light fittings. So fastidious was he that he even designed the door handles.

Today, many of Jacobsen's designs for the SAS Royal Hotel are available to buy. Sadly, the hotel has been stripped of many of its original fittings, although one room, 606, is still kept exactly as Jacobsen designed it.

The exterior of the SAS Royal Hotel Designed by Arne Jacobsen in 1960, the hotel highlights the fact that Jacobsen was not only an inspired interior designer, but also one of the great architects of the 20th century.

Room 606 in the SAS Royal Hotel Room 606 is on the sixth floor of the hotel and is the one remaining room in the building that has been left as Jacobsen intended. It gives an insight into the colours and shapes that were integral to Jacobsen's 1960s masterpiece.



PRACTICAL APPROACH

Although Jacobsen's designs were considered to epitomize the spirit of the new age, the designer himself was a remarkably conservative character. A lover of antiques, fine wine, and good cigars, he led a quiet life. His House of the Future, designed in 1929 with architect Flemming Lassen, might have been intended to cause a stir (it had a helicopter landing pad on the roof), but, generally, Jacobsen considered himself a practical, rather than progressive, designer.

Almost all of Jacobsen's furniture designs were conceived for a specific space. The Ant, as mentioned, was designed for a canteen, while the Egg, Swan, and Drop chairs were made for the SAS Royal Hotel (see box feature). The latter three employed a new production technique, pioneered in Norway and licensed to Fritz Hansen, the manufacturer of Jacobsen's furniture designs. The technique involved steam-moulding polystyrene beads – which transformed into foam under heat – onto a fibreglass base. The new process allowed Jacobsen to take his organic style to greater lengths, as the foam was as pliable as clay (or the wet plaster that he often used to make full-scale prototypes).

Jacobsen's last project to inspire a rash of furniture designs was his work on St Catherine's College, Oxford (1960–63). Only available commercially since the 1980s, his designs displayed the same instinct for proportion, integrity of materials, and practicality of his previous work.

For the last decade of his life, Jacobsen concentrated on architecture and hardware design, although he did not abandon furniture design altogether. Never afraid to work with new materials and technology, he was, at the time of his death in 1971, designing an all-plastic office chair.

SERIES 7 CHAIR

The seat and back of this chair are made from a single sheet of shaped and moulded plywood in black. The seat is supported on a tubular-steel base with rubber-capped feet. Designed for Fritz Hansen. H:76cm (30in). SDR



SCANDINAVIA: SECOND GENERATION

BY THE MID 1950S, the so-called Second Generation of Scandinavian designers had begun to make their mark. Whereas the First Generation – designers such as Hans Wegner, Borge Mogensen, and Ole Wanscher – had developed their distinctive style largely in isolation during World War II, the Second Generation enjoyed far greater exposure to developments

elsewhere in the world, and this impacted greatly on their work.

INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCES
The experiments undertaken at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan, by Charles Eames and Eero Saarinen (who moved to the United States from Finland at the age of 13) were of critical interest to a young group of Scandinavian designers that included Arne Jacobsen and Poul Kjaerholm from Denmark, and Ilmari Tapiovaara and Antti Nurmesniemi from Finland. Some older designers, too, such as the lighting specialist Poul

Henningsen, were also invigorated by what they saw happening overseas, prompting a change in tack for Scandinavian design.

What these designers saw in the work of their American counterparts was a more playful approach to form that inspired a new sculptural strain in Scandinavian design. Also of interest to the Scandinavians was the development of innovative techniques for moulding plywood, which opened up possibilities for more sophisticated, sleeker shapes than were allowed by older, cruder techniques. Solid-wood furniture, it seemed, was losing its standing in Scandinavia.

The use of metal in furniture design had also been revolutionized by the Americans. Whereas the early Modern designers of Europe had flaunted their use of steel, the American designers of the 1940s and 1950s used it sparingly and only where strictly necessary. The development of thinner steel rods also made it easier for designers to be more subtle in their use of metal, as designers such as Poul Kjaerholm proved. Earlier Scandinavian designers had rejected metal as too cold and clinical, but



Stretched fabric over the chair's internal skeleton creates a soft silhouette.

The armrests curve subtly to create a soft, rounded outline.

The bright fabric shows that the chair was designed for a public space.

The slightly angled back legs of the chair give it greater steadiness.

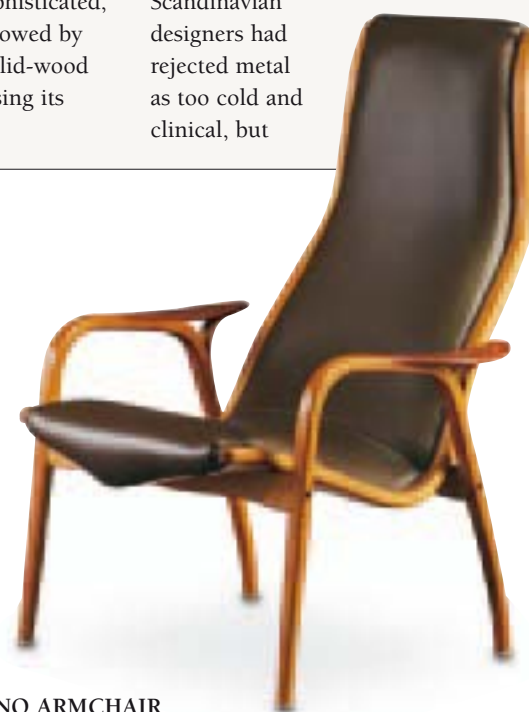
The legs are made of laminated birch, which is abundant in Scandinavia.

The crossbeam adds extra support to the chair's structure.

LULU CHAIR

The shell of this chair is made of case plastic. It is upholstered in a stretch fabric in bright orange-red; the slightly angled legs are made of birch and a crossbeam adds extra reinforcement and stability. The chair was

designed for the restaurant of the Marski Hotel in Helsinki around 1960, but it was never mass produced, as the manufacturing process was too labour-intensive and, thus, made the chair too expensive for the wider market. Designed by Ilmari Tapiovaara for Asko, Finland. *R20*



LAMINO ARMCHAIR

This ergonomically designed armchair has a bent, laminated frame made of oak and teak; the chair is upholstered in brown leather. An ottoman was available in the same design. Designed by Yngve Ekström for Swedese, Sweden. 1956. *H:101cm (39½in); W:69cm (27¼in); D:75cm (29¼in). SDR*

HAMMOCK CHAISE LONGUE

Called the Hammock for its obvious similarities, this elegant chaise longue has a woven-cane seat and back supported by a polished-steel frame. The headrest is in black leather. Designed by Poul Kjaerholm for Fritz Hansen. 1965. *BonE*



the Second Generation of designers saw that, shorn of its totemic value, steel used in moderation was immensely practical.

The work of the Second Generation is distinguished by svelte forms and experimentation with new materials. One can also point to the diminishing importance of hand-crafting, as new manufacturing techniques came to the fore. Where designers like Hans Wegner and Ole Wanscher were renowned as craftsmen (and were often referred to generically as cabinet-makers), Second Generation designers were categorized as industrial designers.

This shift was a reflection of a change in Scandinavian society as a whole. Industrialization had come late to the region, and it was only during the 1950s that Scandinavians acclimatized to life as an industrial, rather than a rural, society.

LARGE MANUFACTURERS

While small craft workshops had long formed the bedrock of the Scandinavian furniture industry, the late 1950s saw larger manufacturers play an ever-more important role. Fritz Hansen, based in Copenhagen, was the most notable of this more ambitious and advanced breed of companies and it was to produce

much of the work by Arne Jacobsen and, later in his career, Poul Kjaerholm.

When appraising the work of the leading Scandinavian designers of the 1950s and 1960s, it is interesting to note that only Ilmari Tapiovaara can be considered to have truly applied himself to the cause of low-cost, standardized furniture, a mission that many designers elsewhere in Europe and in the United States were pursuing. This fact is best explained by the relative affluence of Scandinavian countries during the second half of the 20th century.

Another factor of Scandinavian society that gave a further facet to their furniture design was the

advanced notions held, particularly in Denmark and Sweden, of sexual equality. In the United States and Europe, women furniture designers rarely rose to prominence during the post-war period, and if they did, they were often perceived to be riding on the coat-tails of their male partners (Ray Eames being an obvious example). In Scandinavia, however, female designers such as Nanna Ditzel and Grete Jalk (both Danish) acquired respectable reputations during the 1950s. In the mid 1950s, Ditzel became renowned for her designs for children's furniture, for which there was a particular need thanks to the post-war baby boom.



COFFEE TABLE

This two-tiered occasional, or coffee, table is made of teak. It has a rectangular top with slightly raised sides which create a dished effect. It is otherwise free of ornament or design; its simplicity

highlights the beauty of the wood's natural grain. The table's top is raised on tapered dowel legs that are joined by a stretcher shelf underneath. The nine horizontal cross slats form the open storage shelf. The table was designed by the Danish furniture designer Grete Jalk. *c.1960. W:161cm (63½in). FRE*



LOUNGE CHAIR

Made of "folded" rather than bent plywood, this pine-laminate chair is constructed from two parts, which are secured together by two pairs of steel bolts. The piece was designed by Grete Jalk and produced by Poul Jeppeson. *1963.*



ARTICHOKE LAMP

This lamp takes its name from the several layers of overlapping, brushed-copper, leaf-like elements that make up its form. Designed by Poul Henningsen for Firma Poulsen. *1958. H:78cm (30¼in); W:80cm (31½in). WKA*



PIRKKA DINING TABLE

The rectangular top of this dining table is made from two pieces of solid, varnished pine and is raised on solid-beech, black-lacquered dowel legs. The legs taper slightly and are joined by stretchers; trestle supports provide extra

reinforcement. Designed by Ilmari Tapiovaara for Asko Ltd & Laukaan Puu Ltd, Finland. *c.1955. H:67.5cm (26½in); W:150cm (59in); D:70cm (27½in). DOR*



PK-41 FOLDING STOOL

This folding stool has a stretched-canvas seat pulled taut between two criss-crossed legs that are turned slightly to resemble propellers. The legs are formed from two rectangular pieces and are made from

stainless steel. Designed by Poul Kjaerholm for E. Kold Christensen, Denmark. *1960s. H:42.5cm (16¾in); W:58.5cm (23in); D:44.5cm (17½in). Bk*

ITALY

OVER THREE MILLION HOUSES were destroyed in Italy during World War II. The impact on the country's factories, however, was not quite so devastating, and in the aftermath of the war, Italian industry, and its growing band of industrial designers, wasted little time in rebuilding a broken nation.

With the fall of Fascism, a new Socialist coalition government rose to power, and its ideologies were reflected by the Italian design industry. A 1946 exhibition by RIMA (*Riunione Italiane Mostre per l'Arredamento*) addressed concerns about how to furnish small living spaces, how to work with the limited

materials available in the post-war period, and how best to take advantage of recent developments in serial production. Architects and designers such as Franco Albini, Ernesto Rogers, and Studio BBPR all took their roles of providing for the impoverished working classes seriously; The Problems of the Least Privileged was the theme of the 1947 *Milan Triennale*.

A NEW CONFIDENCE

The 1950s, however, ushered in a new era for Italy. Thanks to generous aid from the United States and the commitment of a number of industrial

entrepreneurs, Italy was enjoying something of a boom. The Socialist government was dismantled and replaced by the capitalist Christian Democrats, and a new confidence buoyed both the country's producers and its consumers.

Designers responded to this new mood by bringing a more elegant, expressive edge to the Rationalist style that had dominated Italian design since the 1930s. Where architecture had been the most inspirational art form for designers before the war, it was now sculpture that dominated. *Domus* magazine, edited by Gio Ponti, ran large

features on Henry Moore, Alexander Calder, and other artists who employed an organic, abstract aesthetic.

Also much discussed in the pages of *Domus* magazine was the work of American designers such as George Nelson and Charles and Ray Eames. It was their experimentation with materials and forms that, as much as anything, prompted Italian designers to move on from the reductivist style of their predecessors.

This desk is modular, which makes it possible for the user to attach the lower table section to either side of the upper one, depending on preference.

The sheet steel of the desktop has been enamelled to provide visual coherence.

Structural steel struts form the bulk of the desk, emphasizing the industrial nature of the design.

Drawer units are suspended, using the cantilever principle, to give a visually arresting effect.

The gentle concave form of the seat is intended to make the chair more comfortable.

The legs are made of steel rods, which were commonly used in furniture design of the 1950s and 1960s, largely replacing tubular steel.

Rubber fittings attached to the desk's legs give greater adhesion to the floor.

The chair's design is unusual in that the arms are attached to the seat, rather than the back.



LADY CHAIR

This upholstered armchair has a wooden frame and is covered in a red velour fabric. The foam-padded seat and back are raised on brass legs. Designed by Marco Zanuso for Arflex, Milan. 1951. H:78cm (30 $\frac{3}{4}$ in). DOR



SIDE CHAIR

The frame is made of stained and lacquered wood. With shaped uprights and a velour-covered, padded seat and back, the chair is raised on splayed, tapered legs. Designed by Carlo di Carli for Cassina. 1950. H:84cm (33 $\frac{1}{2}$ in). DOR

ARCO DESK AND CHAIR

This writing desk and matching chair are part of a modular office system designed for Olivetti. The desk has wood-effect plastic table tops with moulded edges. The smaller table top is designed to hold a typewriter. Grey-enamelled, sheet-steel cabinets with filing drawers are suspended below the table tops; the cabinets are attached to the outer

leg supports of the desk. The angular frame of the table is made from black-enamelled sheet- and structural-steel, and supports the desk on three pairs of splayed legs. The padded back, seat, and armrests of the chair are covered in a grey fabric; the whole is raised on an enamelled, steel-rod frame. Designed by Studio BBPR for Olivetti and marked OLIVETTI ARREDAMENTI METALLICI. 1963. Desk: H:78cm (31 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); W:180cm (72in); D:78cm (31 $\frac{1}{2}$ in). QU

Such was the beneficial economic situation and upbeat mood in Italy during the 1950s that a number of furniture manufacturers emerged who were willing to take risks with their designs. Firms such as Cassina, Zanotta, and Gavina gave designers like Ponti, Carlo di Carli, and the Castiglioni licence to develop their own signature styles. These collaborations resulted in a fresh, adventurous language of design that was distinctly Italian.

FROM TYRES TO FURNITURE
Of all the unusual materials that were employed by the Italians during this period, it was perhaps rubber that best came to represent the country's new-found optimism and sense of daring. Used in vast quantities in the automobile industry, which was reaching its zenith in Italy at this time, it was a logical step that designers would begin using rubber in their furniture designs.

In 1950, Pirelli, the tyre manufacturer, started an offshoot company called Arflex, which was dedicated to making furniture that used foam rubber in its construction.

Marco Zanuso was the most important designer to work for Arflex, and his Lady chair (1951) – whose forms were clearly inspired by abstract artists such as Calder and Jean Arp – gave elegant expression to an overtly industrial product.

Oswaldo Borsani was another designer who exploited the flexible qualities of rubber in his furniture designs. He founded his own company, Tecno, in 1953 and a year later he produced his famous P40 chair.

Technically advanced – rubber struts made it possible for the user to adjust the chair into over 450 positions – but also generously cushioned, the P40 chair was typical of the design of the era, being industrial and at the same time luxurious.



P40 RECLINER

This P40 recliner chair has a metal sectional frame with a polyurethane-foam seat and back; the padded seat and back are upholstered in a yellow fabric. Within the frame of the chair is a patented mechanism that makes it possible for

the user to increase or decrease the angle between the seat and the backrest to suit his or her preference. The recliner can be set in an incredible 486 different positions. Designed by Osvaldo Borsani for Tecno. 1954. H:149cm (59in); D:89.5cm (35½in).



Adjustable shelf



SHELVING SYSTEM

Made of walnut and rosewood, the sections of this shelving system, model LB7, are held together by brass fittings. Four uprights support the three sections, two of which have one door cabinet each. The cabinets open onto internal,

adjustable shelves. There is a drop-front cabinet, which becomes a writing table when opened, and ten adjustable shelves in total (seven are shown here). The system was designed by Franco Albini for Poggi. 1957. H:284.5cm (112in); W:340cm (134in); D:35.5cm (14in).

CARLO MOLLINO

A HIGHLY ENERGETIC AND CHARISMATIC MAN, CARLO MOLLINO CREATED UNIQUE PLYWOOD FURNITURE DESIGNS IN THE TURINESE BAROQUE STYLE.

The success of Carlo Mollino's work in Italy during the 1950s can be attributed to two factors. Firstly, one can point to the rise of a new generation of wealthy furniture buyers who were willing to purchase his bold, daring designs, and secondly – perhaps more importantly – the sheer force of Mollino's personality.

Such was Mollino's drive to succeed that not only did he become one of Italy's foremost furniture-makers during the 1950s, but he also went on to become a champion racing car driver, a stunt pilot, a pioneer of modern skiing techniques, and a celebrated photographer of erotic nudes.

Mollino's interest in the female form is clearly demonstrated in his curvaceous

furniture designs, which were often made from bent plywood. All made by artisans in Turin, his biomorphic furniture conformed to a sumptuous style that later became known as Turinese Baroque.



Carlo Mollino

Minola apartment interior
The sensual, organic furniture designs are an excellent example of Mollino's idiosyncratic and dramatic style. 1944-46.

Day bed This piece is upholstered in velvet and has shaped and carved ebonized legs. 1944. H:67cm (26½in); W:168cm (66in); D:82cm (32in).



GIO PONTI

IN A LONG AND VARIED CAREER, GIO PONTI MANAGED TO CREATE WORKS IN MANY STYLES AND ACROSS A RANGE OF DISCIPLINES.

THE CAREER OF GIOVANNI “Gio” Ponti spanned 60 years and encompassed many design styles. Evading attempts to pin him down to a particular movement, Ponti turned his considerable energy not only to design, but also to architecture, painting, journalism, and teaching. Although Ponti exerted significant influence during every period in which he worked, it was in the 1950s that his powers were at their peak.

A NEW OUTLOOK

In the aftermath of World War II, Italian architects and designers focused on revitalizing their exhausted nation. While many argued for the dogmatic, Rationalist approach of the 1930s, Ponti believed that a new outlook was needed. “I want works without labels or adjectives”, he wrote. “I want real, true, natural, simple, and spontaneous things.”

In 1952, Ponti answered his own call with perhaps his most famous design, the *Superleggera* (or Super-

BIOGRAPHY



Gio Ponti

1891 Born in Milan.

1923 Becomes artistic director of Richard Ginori ceramics.

1928 Co-founds *Domus* magazine.

1933 Made artistic director of the company Fontana Arte.

1936 Begins teaching at the *Politecnico di Milano*.

1936 Completes the Montecatini building in Milan.

1940 Meets Piero Fornasetti.

1945 Founds *Stile* magazine.

1948 Designs his celebrated espresso coffee machine for La Pavoni.

1950 Begins his association with Cassina, the manufacturer of the *Superleggera* chair (1952).

1953 Designs sets for La Scala opera house.

1954 Presents a desk design for Altamira in New York that he proclaims his masterpiece.

1955 Completes the Villa Planchart in Caracas.

1956 Collaborates with Pier Luigi Nervi on the Pirelli tower in Milan.

1972 Designs Denver Art Museum, Colorado.

1979 Dies in Milan.



DINING TABLE

This walnut dining table has a rectangular top that is raised on turned, tapering legs, which terminate in brass caps. The legs are joined by an H-stretcher. Designed by Gio Ponti for Singer and Sons. 1954. W:162.5cm (64in). LOS



GABRIELA SIDE CHAIR

This side chair has an exaggerated form, with its tall, curved, and reclining back and its shortened seat. The black seat and back are supported on a simple metal frame; the legs of the frame are slightly bowed and arched. Designed by Gio Ponti and manufactured by Walter Ponti. 1970. BonBay.



FLOOR LAMP

An early design, this floor lamp is made of a tall, rectangular glass case and ten light bulbs spaced in pairs and at intervals. It stands on a round brass base. c.1935. H:168cm (66½in). DOR



SIDEBOARD

This exotic wood veneer sideboard has asymmetrical open shelves surrounding a drop-front cabinet. The cabinet base has four doors and tapered legs. W:200cm (78½in). SDR



SUPERLEGGERA CHAIR
This is Gio Ponti's take on the rustic chair. The frame has horizontal back slats between two uprights that continue to form the back legs. The dowel legs are joined by stretchers.
1952. H:81cm (32in); W:43cm (17in); D:40.5cm (16in). SDR



THE COVER OF DOMUS MAGAZINE.
Along with Gianni Mazzocchi, Gio Ponti founded this popular and influential architecture and design journal, which he edited from 1938 to 1941, and from 1948 until his death in 1979. The magazine featured the works of leading designers of the time.

Light) chair, which he described as “a chair-chair, an ordinary, modest, unqualified chair”. Adapted from a rustic design he spotted in an Italian fishing village, the *Superleggera* is at once unpretentious and entirely civilized. In many ways the chair provides a parallel with Ponti's most celebrated architectural work of the 1950s, the Pirelli tower in Milan, a building he designed with the acclaimed engineer Pier Luigi Nervi. Nervi later wrote that he and Ponti, “hunted out all superfluous weight”, to achieve the final, sleek design. No doubt the same approach was taken with the *Superleggera* chair, as, at just 1.7kg (3½lb), it was the lightest chair in the world at the time.

Ponti produced the *Superleggera* for Cassina, a company with whom he collaborated for many years. Owner Cesare Cassina and Ponti shared a similar outlook on design, which Ponti described as “based on the most modern mechanical equipment blend with the human system, which ensures that people retain their predominance over machinery”. It is a confusing aspect of Ponti's career that he embraced with equal measure the craft-based techniques of Italy and the industrial techniques of Germany and the United States. Indeed, he was as much at home designing car bodies for mass production as he was making one-off pieces in ceramic.

PONTI AND FORNASETTI

MANY OF PIERO FORNASETTI'S DESIGNS WERE USED IN GIO PONTI'S FURNITURE AND INTERIORS.

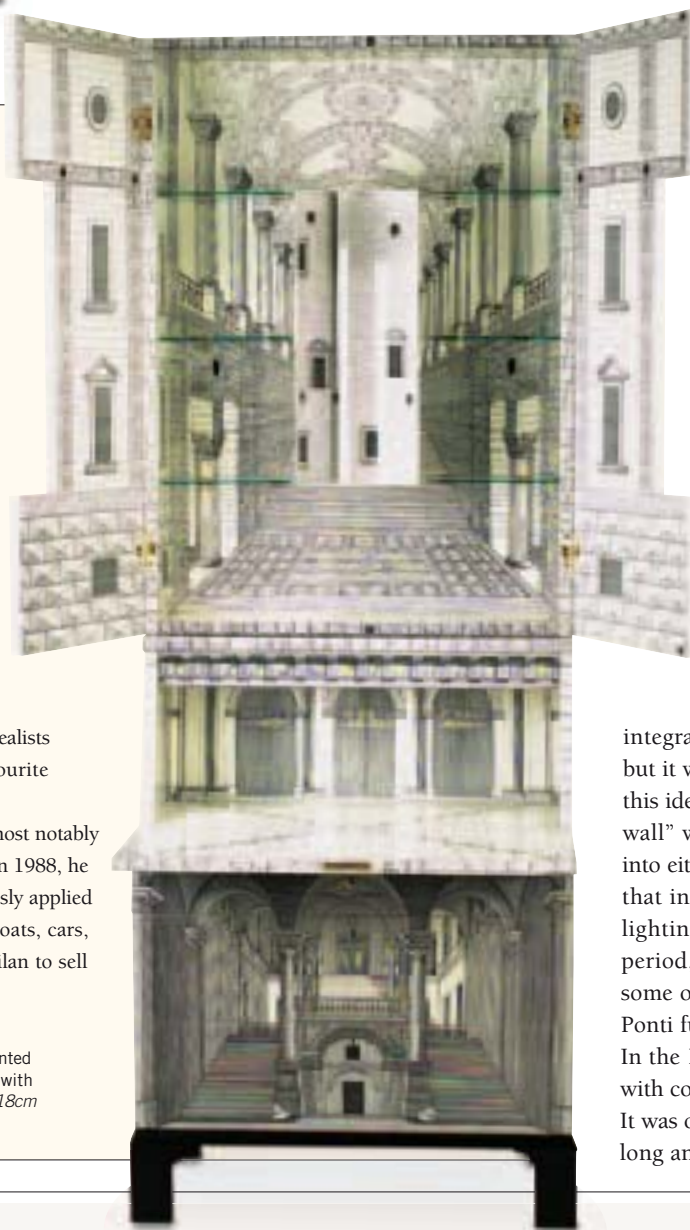
Piero Fornasetti (1913–88) was a child prodigy who displayed a remarkable talent for painting and drawing. At 17 he went to the *Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera* in Milan, but was soon expelled for rebelling against the school's strict, academic approach.

Fornasetti, however, continued to draw, and in 1940 his work caught the eye of Gio Ponti, who asked Fornasetti to produce patterns for his furniture. Modernism had, until this point, adhered to a policy of anti-decoration. When Ponti's works – richly embellished by the restless hand of Fornasetti – were presented, they caused a stir in the design community.

Fornasetti's designs drew from many sources, although he was clearly inspired by Classicism and the Surrealists (Giorgio de Chirico, in particular). Illusionism was a favourite theme, and many designs employed a *trompe l'oeil* effect.

Ponti and Fornasetti also worked together on interiors, most notably the Casino San Remo in 1950. By the time Fornasetti died in 1988, he had produced over 11,000 designs, all of which were variously applied to furniture (some by Ponti), ceramics, umbrellas, waistcoats, cars, bicycles, glass, and more. In 1970, he opened a shop in Milan to sell his work, and his son, Barnaba, runs it to this day.

A wood and metal bureau-bookcase The piece is decorated with a printed architectural scene in black on a cream background and finished with transparent lacquer. By Piero Fornasetti and Gio Ponti. c.1950. H:218cm (87½in); W:80cm (32in); D:41cm (16½in). QU



LINEA ITALIANA

Credited with creating the concept of the *Linea Italiana*, a sophisticated idea of Italian design that was disseminated around the world, Ponti was also responsible for introducing the work of international artists, architects, and designers to Italy. In *Domus*, the journal he founded with Gianni Mazzocchi in 1928, Ponti published features on the furniture of Charles and Ray Eames and Arne Jacobsen, the art of Ben Nicholson and Jean Arp, and the architecture of Oscar Niemeyer and Luis Barragan. Under Ponti, *Domus*, which spoke to the enthusiast rather than the scholar, was a design journal whose influence was unprecedented.

In the late 1950s, Ponti's designs became even more ambitious. He had believed that furniture should be integrated into architecture as much as possible, but it was only later in his career that he explored this idea to the full. The concept of the “organized wall” was a particular favourite. This translated into either in-built or sprawling pieces of furniture that incorporated different types of shelving, lighting, and, often, drawers. His beds of this period, which have many in-built features, are some of his best-known designs, although other Ponti furniture from this era is equally impressive. In the 1960s and 1970s, Ponti continued to work with considerable zeal, shifting his style occasionally. It was only his death in 1979 that put an end to a long and fruitful career.

BRITAIN

IN 1948, THE MODERN British furniture industry received a welcome boost when Clive Latimer and Robin Day's storage unit won the high-profile International Competition for Low-Cost Furniture Design run by the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Unfortunately, the jury's enthusiasm for their design was hardly reflected in their home country, where the public remained suspicious of the Modern style. The 1950s proved marginally better for Modern design in Britain, but it was not until the 1960s, with the emergence of an affluent youth market, that newer forms of furniture became more fashionable.

UTILITY FURNITURE

During the war years, people in Britain were given a taste of the stark Modern style through the government's scheme for Utility furniture. Run by designer Gordon Russell, the scheme promoted basic furniture designs that could be made in any number of available materials. Any company could put the designs into production and sell them at tax-free prices. Often made from low-grade hardboard, the only material plentiful during the era of rationing, they met with a mixed reaction from the public. While some admired Utility furniture for its practicality, others saw it as drab and dispiriting.

In the years immediately after the war, the British government attempted to raise the nation's spirits by staging an upbeat exhibition offering a gleaming vision of Britain's future. Britain Can Make It, staged at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London in 1946, drew huge crowds keen to see something fresh and new after years of enforced frugality.

One of the most talked about designs on show was the BA chair (1945) by Ernest Race. Die-cast from surplus aluminium (a material used during the war to make bomb casings), over a quarter of a million BA chairs were sold.

Ernest Race went on to take a starring role in the 1951 Festival of Britain, an ambitious event organized in part by the recently established Council of Industrial Design (COID). Race produced innovative designs for the Festival, as did Robin Day and A.J. Milne. The broad range of Modern furniture designs created for the occasion proved that British designers had caught up with their American and European contemporaries in the bold use of metal rod and moulded plywood.

Unfortunately, the popularity of the Festival of Britain proved something of

FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN, 1951

IN A COUNTRY STILL SUFFERING THE AFTEREFFECTS OF WAR, THE FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN PROVIDED A CHANCE TO LOOK FORWARD TO THE FUTURE.

Between May and September 1951, many British citizens found themselves participating in the nationwide Festival of Britain. The event was intended to raise the spirits of a nation still reeling from the war. Across Britain, new buildings were erected and old ones spruced up as exhibitions were mounted to present ideas on how to take Britain forward.

The focus of the festival was the South Bank of London's River Thames, where the Royal Festival Hall was built from concrete to a design by Leslie Martin. The Hall was furnished with designs by Robin

Day, while the South Bank's outdoor spaces were dotted with Ernest Race's steel-rod and plywood Antelope chairs.

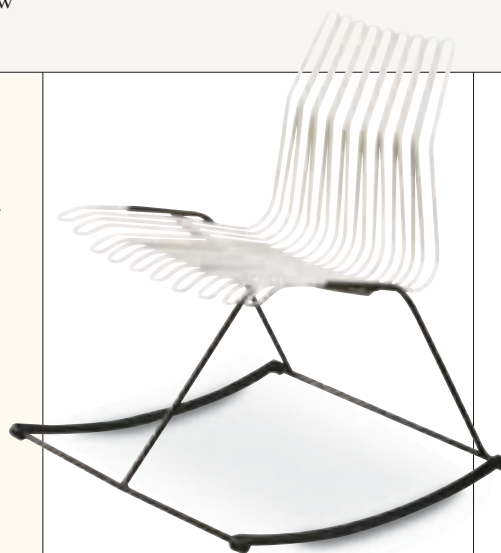
As Britain attempted to put the austerity of the war years behind it, many stores put on special festival displays that eagerly embraced the event's forward-thinking spirit. Although originally intended to celebrate the centenary of the Great Exhibition of London, the Festival of Britain was an event that prompted people to consider the opportunities of the future, rather than the achievements of the past.

Chigwell armchair By Robin Day for the Festival of Britain, this chair is made of plywood and wood veneer. 1950. H:66cm (26in); W:89.5cm (35½in).



The Dome of Discovery Located on London's South Bank, the Dome is lit up for the Festival of Britain, which took place in 1951.

Emblem of the Festival of Britain This emblem was chosen from several that were submitted in a competition.



KANGAROO ROCKING CHAIR

The seat and back of this rocking chair are made of painted, bent-and-moulded steel rods; it has a steel-rod and steel-strip frame. Designed for outdoor use by Ernest Race. 1952. H:72.5cm (28½in); W:56cm (22in); D:60.5cm (23¾in).



BA CHAIR

This chair has an elegant, cast-aluminium frame with tapered legs. Among the first pieces of furniture to utilize war-surplus materials, it is by Ernest Race. 1945. H:73cm (28½in); W:44.5cm (17½in); D:41.5cm (16¼in). RAC



PLYMET PROTOTYPE CABINET

This sideboard has two cupboard doors on each side of a bank of drawers; the frame is birch veneer. The case is raised on splayed, aluminium legs. The use of cast- and sheet-aluminium gives a futuristic look. 1945-46. H:86cm (33¾in); W:135cm (54in); D:40cm (15½in).

a false start for Modern furniture in Britain, with the public seeing the style more as a novelty than as anything significant. Some manufacturing firms, such as Hille and Morris, did make a respectable profit selling Modern designs, but it seemed that the British public associated the style too closely with the Utility furniture imposed on them during the war. Indeed, as soon as an alternative to the Modern style arose, it was met with keen enthusiasm.

CHEAP AND CHEERFUL

In 1959, Morris Motors launched the distinctive, Alec Issigonis-designed Mini, an impish-looking car that

became wildly popular, especially with young buyers. An undeniably contemporary (but approachable) design, it seemed to stimulate a suppressed desire among consumers for new, eye-catching objects that were far removed from the functional items of the past. By the mid 1960s, Carnaby Street, the King's Road, and Kensington in London had been colonized by colourful fashion boutiques such as Biba and Mary Quant, while a new homewares store, Habitat, offered a glimpse into the Continental lifestyle.

Furniture designers, too, responded in force to this new demand for cheap, cheerful goods (much to the irritation

of the COID, which was still trying to enforce a Modern style). The young RCA graduate Peter Murdoch developed a range of disposable paperboard furniture, while Bernard Holloway manufactured his Tom-o-Tom range in chipboard to make it "cheap enough to be expendable". Aligning itself with the brash aesthetic of the Pop movement, furniture design became colourful and cartoon-like. British artist Richard Hamilton gleefully described the characteristics of the Pop style as "popular (designed for a mass audience), transient (short-term

solution), expendable (easily forgotten), low-cost, mass-produced, young (aimed at youth), witty, sexy, gimmicky, glamorous, big business".

This ebullience, however, was not to last long as, in the 1970s, much of the energy and excitement drained from the furniture industry in the face of increased economic difficulties.



TRUNDLING TURK

This armchair has a lacquered wooden frame with chromed tubular-steel supports. The back, seat, and arms are upholstered and covered in fabrics of primary colours reminiscent of Modernist designs. The whole is raised on casters. Designed by Alison and Peter Smithson. 1953. H:59cm (23½in); W:87cm (34¼in); D:83cm (32½in). TEC



DINING TABLE

The rectangular top of this dining table is made from Formica, which has been decorated to give it the appearance of grained wood. The table is supported by four grey-painted legs, which form a T-section and taper slightly. Designed by Ernest Race. W:114cm (45in). DN

LOUNGER ARMCHAIR

The angular seat and back of this armchair are upholstered in green tweed and supported on a painted, steel-rod frame. It has a small cushion headrest and two mahogany elbow rests. Designed by Robin Day for S. Hille & Co. 1952. H:90cm (35½in); W:90cm (35½in); D:86.5cm (34in). MOU



Black glass adds an element of sophistication to a warm and unpretentious design.

The solid beech links the design to many Scandinavian sideboards of this period.

The slim, rectangular shape of the drawers echoes the overall shape of the sideboard.



The use of mahogany for the sideboard's frame is a distinctly British detail.

The colour of the brass fittings blends with the golden tones of the wood.

The frame has the same specifications as Latimer and Day's winning design.

SIDEBOARD

This solid, veneered, and inlaid beech and mahogany sideboard is part of a dining suite. An upper section contains three compartments behind sliding doors. Below is a glass shelf with two sliding drawers to one side of four short drawers. Designed by Robin Day for S.Hille & Co. 1949. H:126cm (49½in); W:185cm (72½in); D:47.5cm (18½in).

JAPAN

BETWEEN 1945 AND 1970, Japan underwent a radical transformation, changing from a predominantly rural nation into a formidable industrial superpower. The products most readily associated with industrial Japan are cars and electronic consumer goods, but the sweeping changes also affected the country's furniture industry.

A traditional Japanese home had contained relatively little furniture, with most people sitting on tatami mats and using minimal storage space. This lifestyle was typical until the 1950s, when Western ways, primarily learnt from the American troops that occupied Japan between 1945 and 1952, began to exert an ever-increasing influence on Japanese society. "During the first few years of the occupation", historian Nobutaka Ike noted, "Japan was probably subjected to more Western influence than during the several decades that preceded it".

In the aftermath of World War II and the horrific devastation suffered by Japan during the war, attempts were made to revitalize the country. In particular, the government concentrated on the export market, and companies were encouraged to make their products more attractive to overseas markets. Before the war, Japan had made a name for producing competitively priced, but poorly made, imitations of Western products. In the post-war years a concerted effort was made to develop a more respectable reputation for both design and manufacturing, and to do this, it was acknowledged that the country needed to learn from the West.

BIRTH OF A JAPANESE STYLE

In the 1950s, the Japan Export and Trade Organization (known as JETRO) sent design students to Europe and the United States to study, on the understanding that they would return to work for Japanese companies. JETRO also flew in American and European designers to hold workshops in Japan as a distinctive, hybrid design style, which drew upon influences from both Japan and the West, began to emerge.

One of the earliest champions of this new aesthetic was Isamu Kenmochi, a Japanese designer who spent the late 1940s and early 1950s travelling across Europe and the United States (and keeping extensive journals). Although

taken by what he saw in the West, Kenmochi was also keen to maintain Japanese craft-based traditions. Creating furniture designs that owed an obvious debt to contemporary American and Scandinavian design, but which still utilized Japanese construction techniques, Kenmochi's work met with considerable success.

In 1957, Kenmochi became one of the first recipients of the G-Mark prize, an award system created by the Japanese Promotions Council of the Ministry of Trade that was heavily reminiscent both of the Good Design scheme run by the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the *Compasso D'Oro* awards of Italy. The G-Mark system made it clear that the Japanese authorities favoured a type of design that was based on the Rationalist principles of European Modernism. In order to promote this essentially Western style, a number of design schools based on the Bauhaus model were set up across Japan.

EAST MEETS WEST

By the end of the 1950s, several Japanese furniture designers had begun to exploit the "East meets West" style with success. Sori Yanagi, who designed one of the first tape recorders for Sony, was one of the most prominent proponents of the style, and time has shown his Butterfly stool (1954) to be the most successful Japanese design of the period. Marrying advanced techniques for moulding plywood and a particularly Japanese feeling for poetic form, the Butterfly stool still sells in its thousands every year.

The 1960s was a boom time for the Japanese electronics and automobile industries, but it was not a particularly distinguished time for furniture design. A relative late-comer to Modern design in the Western mould, Japan was hardly ready to embark on an exploration of new materials and forms in the way that countries such as Italy had done during the 1960s. Instead, the Japanese furniture industry consolidated its knowledge of design and manufacturing by continuing in the vein that it had established in the previous decade. It was not until the 1980s that Japanese design would be invigorated in the way that it had been in the post-war years.



The shape of the stool's seat resembles a butterfly in flight.

The stool's simple construction makes it easy to dismantle and transport.

The calligraphic shape of the stool also resembles a Japanese pictograph.

BUTTERFLY STOOL

The simple design of this butterfly stool is made from two sheets of laminated and moulded beechwood, which are finished in a rosewood veneer. The two pieces are joined

together by a single stretcher. The shape of the stool is said to have been inspired by a Japanese pictograph. Designed by Sori Yanagi in 1954, this example is a 2004 re-issue from Tendo Mokko. *H:38.75cm (15½in); W:42cm (16½in); D:31cm (12¼in).* TDO



ZAISU

This light, stackable, legless seat is made from beech with a zelkova veneer. A single piece of moulded plywood forms an organic curve. The hole in the seat serves two purposes: firstly, to stop a cushion from sliding and secondly, to prevent the wood from warping. Designed by Kenji Fujimori in 1963, this example is a 2004 re-issue from Tendo Mokko. *H:40cm (15½in); W:33cm (13in); D:49cm (19¼in).* TDO



PINE BENCH

This low bench in a light pine has a simple rectangular seat, which is moulded and slightly curved in the middle to make it both more elegant and more comfortable to sit

upon. The seat is supported at each end by gently tapered leg supports that have a groove down the centre. Made of solid pine, the bench was designed by Riki Watanabe and produced by Tendo Mokko. *W:175cm (70in).* FRE



KASHIWADO CHAIR

This armchair, named after a famous sumo wrestler, is made from blocks of cedar trunk; the surface is finished with a sanding technique that reveals the wood's grains. Originally designed by Isamu Kenmochi in 1961, this 2004 model is from Tendo Mokko. *H:63cm (24½in); W:85cm (33½in). TDO*



LOW TABLE

A modern take on a traditional Japanese form, this low beech table with a rosewood veneer has an indentation around the edge, called a *mizukaeshi* (water embankment). Designed by Isamu Kenmochi in 1968, this 2004 model is by Tendo Mokko. *H:33.5cm (13¼in); W:140cm (55½in). TDO*



SPOKE CHAIR

This oak chair has a rectangular rail above a tapering back. The spindles are supported on turned legs. The low seat is in line with traditional Japanese furniture. Designed by Katsuei Toyoguchi in 1963, this 2004 model is from Tendo Mokko. *H:83cm (32½in); W:81cm (31½in); D:68cm (26¾in). TDO*

TENDO MOKKO

THE FIRST FURNITURE COMPANY IN JAPAN TO PRODUCE PLYWOOD FURNITURE, TENDO MOKKO INTRODUCED THE WORLD TO THE JAPANESE STYLE OF MODERNISM.



Fujitaro Oyama, president Tendo Mokko 1944-68

Most of the forward-thinking Japanese furniture designers of the 1950s worked with the fledgling manufacturer Tendo Mokko. A specialist in the use of plywood (*mokko* means woodwork), Tendo produced Sori Yanagi's Butterfly stool (1954), Isamu Kenmochi's Kashiwado chair (1961), and even a chair by Charlotte Perriand (1955), the French designer, who was a regular visitor to Japan.

Tendo Mokko started as little more than a co-operative of carpenters and cabinet-makers who came together in 1940 to make ammunition boxes and

wooden decoy planes during the war. After the fighting ended, the group turned the cutting-edge skills they had developed towards manufacturing furniture. Since they were the only furniture company in Japan at the time willing to work with plywood, it is little surprise that their services were sought after by a generation of young designers keen to utilize the manufacturing processes favoured in Europe and America.

By the mid 1950s, Tendo Mokko was a thriving company with a strong export trade, especially to the United States. Indeed, it was Tendo's furniture collections of this decade that alerted the West to the fact that the Japanese could do Modernist design.

A German article on Japanese design, 1960s Proof that Japanese furniture designs were popular at the time in Western countries, this German design magazine featured furniture by Tendo Mokko in an issue from 1966.



MURAI STOOL

This stool is made of laminated, moulded beech with a teak veneer. It has a minimal, geometric design. Designed by Reiko Tanabe in 1961, it received first place in the Tendo Concur Design awards. This is a 2004 model from Tendo Mokko. *H:36cm (14¼in); W:45cm (17¼in); D:43.5cm (17¼in). TDO*



FRANCE AND GERMANY

DESPITE BEING NEIGHBOURING nations, France and Germany displayed stark differences in their attitudes towards Modern design. It was in Germany that Modernism started after World War I, while across the border new developments were met with deep-seated suspicion. Although the polarity of these attitudes was not as pronounced in the post-World War II era (many of the key figures of the Bauhaus had, after all, fled Germany), telling disparities remained.

In France, the appeal of Modernism had had little impact by the start of the 1950s. The country's Ministry of Commerce attempted to stimulate

interest in Rational design, in much the same way as Good Design was promoted in Britain and the United States. The government sponsored, for instance, the annual *Beauté de France* award, but such efforts inevitably failed. Jacque Tati's celebrated film *Mon Oncle* (1958) sums up the attitude of most French people to Modernist architecture and design, with its uproarious mockery of the style as pretentious, awkward, and uncomfortable.

DESIGNS FOR THE ELITE

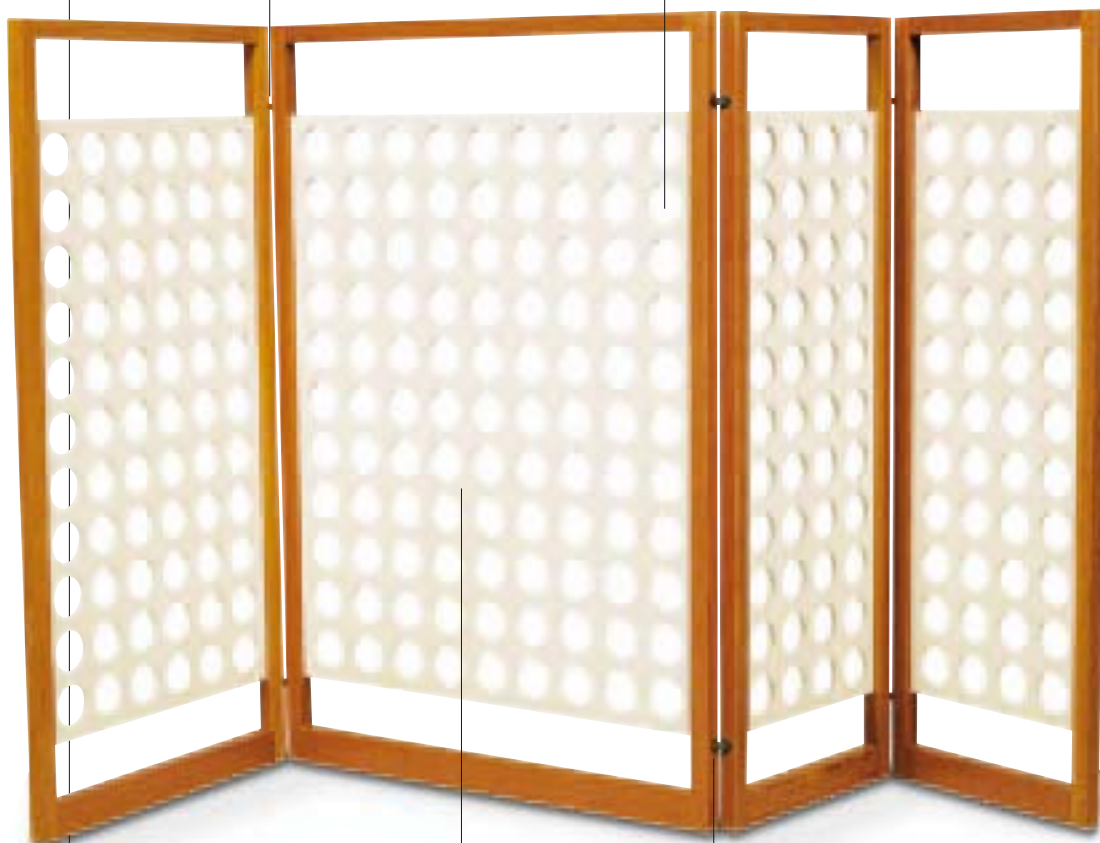
Perhaps the main reason that Tati so mercilessly lampooned Modernism was because the style was so closely

associated with the bourgeoisie. French designers of the 1940s and 1950s adopted the minimalist Modern look not to provide inexpensive furniture for widespread use, as its pioneers had originally intended, but to sell to an affluent, educated elite. Designers such as Jacques Adnet, Jean Royere, and Serge Mouille had their designs made, often by hand, at great cost to clients who had reassuringly deep pockets. Adnet furnished luxurious ocean liners and presidential apartments, while Royere opened showrooms in the oil-rich nations of the Middle East.

The concern of French designers for the aesthetic, rather than the ideological, is apparent in the decorative effects that were incorporated into their designs. Displaying a prettiness rarely associated with Modernism was the work of Mathieu Matégot and Janette Laverrière, designers who did not cater strictly for an elite clientele, but who certainly ignored the needs of the poor. Matégot used perforated sheet metal to enliven his designs, while the Swiss-born Laverrière frequently produced work in enamelled iron.

Hinged sections make it possible to fold the screen up for storage.

The circles have been made by punching holes in the plywood screen panel.



The circular motif transforms a relatively ordinary object into one of great visual appeal.

Small hinges were specifically chosen as they cause minimal disturbance to the overall appearance.

FOUR-PANEL SCREEN

This folding screen is made up of four separate panels, each of which is enclosed by a simple frame made of stained wood. The panels are of varying widths and are linked together with the use of small, unobtrusive hinges, so the screen can be folded flat easily for transport and

storage. The plywood panels that make up the screen have been perforated with symmetrical, round holes at regular intervals adding to the visual attractiveness of the piece. All of the panels have a matt finish in white lacquer. The screen was designed by Egon Eiermann for the Chamber of Deputies in the Bundestag in Bonn, Germany. 1968. H:142cm (56in). DOR



COFFEE TABLE

This coffee table has a square table top in rosewood; the table's tapering legs are made of hammered wrought iron. The legs are united by a tier underneath that is formed from pierced wrought iron. Designed in the style of Mathieu Matégot. H:45cm (17½in); W:50cm (19½in); D:50cm (19½in). CSB



SIDE TABLE

This ash side table has a rectangular top above a single drawer with angle-cut sides. The table top is raised on square, tapering legs; the legs are joined by stretchers and united below by an undertier with a V-shaped magazine rack. Designed by Jean and Jacques Adnet. c.1950. H:61cm (24in); W:72.5cm (28½in). CAL

THE ULM SCHOOL

While designers in France were developing a luxuriant approach to Modernism, many of their German counterparts wanted to reduce design to its bare bones. In 1950, the *Hochschule für Gestaltung* (High School for Design) opened in Ulm, with Max Bill as its director. Following the lead of the Bauhaus (where Bill had studied), the Ulm school taught its students a clear, simple, functional style of design that aided mass production. Representative of this approach was Bill's Ulm stool (1954), an object so elementary in its construction that it hardly seems to have been designed at all.

The Ulm school was established largely with finances provided by the United States as part of the Marshall Plan. The influence of American money and American culture on Germany in the 1950s was to prove immensely important. Hollywood movies and American car culture captivated German youth, not least because of the stark contrast they provided to the archaic ideals of the Third Reich.

American furniture design was also a source of inspiration for German designers who found themselves indifferent to the strict, Rationalist principles being taught at Ulm. The more organic tendencies of Charles and Ray Eames, George Nelson, and others can be seen in the work of German designers such as Georg Leowald and Egon Eiermann and in-house designers of the Walter Knoll company.

It was Eiermann who was the most successful of these designers. Indeed, his smoothly shaped folding chair, the SE18, launched in 1953, became one of the biggest-selling wooden chairs of the decade. Also in demand as an architect, Eiermann proved that there was more to German design than austere Functionalism, a fact confirmed by the experimental designs produced in Germany during the 1960s.

**ULM STOOL**

Designed by Max Bill for the Ulm school, this rectilinear design with a simple stretcher could be used at whim as a stool, a table, a shelf, or a portable tray. 1954. H:44cm (17½in); W:39.5cm (15½in); D:29.5cm (11½in).

**DESK CHAIR**

This chair has a moulded plywood seat and back and is raised on a cast-metal pedestal that has a mechanism for adjusting the height. The inward-curving metal legs have rubber-padded feet. Designed by Egon Eiermann. c.1950. *BonBay*

**TULIP ARMCHAIR**

This chair's one-piece seat and back has armrests that bend outwards. It has a revolving metal base and detachable leather upholstery. Designed by Jorgen Kastholm and Preben Fabricius for Alfred Kill. 1964. H:87cm (34½in). *HERR*

**BARREL CHAIR**

The back and seat of this chair are made of one piece of alder bent plywood. It has a lacquered-beech frame with splayed legs. The added cushion is red. Designed by Pierre Guariche for Steiner, Paris. c.1954. H:75cm (29½in). *DOR*

**WRITING DESK**

This writing desk has a bamboo frame and rattan trellis panels; the writing surface is made of lacquered wood. The piece is designed by Jean Royere. c.1952. H:89cm (35in); W:104cm (41in); 52cm (20½in).

**CONSTANZE BENCH**

This is an early 1960s sofa bed with polished-steel, splayed-metal feet. The foam-padded seat and back are upholstered in buttoned, sand-coloured fabric. The piece has a patented mechanism that allows it to be changed from a sofa into a bed. Designed by Johannes Spalt for Franz Wittman. H:70cm (27½in); W:175cm (68½in); D:70cm (27½in). *DOR*

EXPERIMENTS IN SEATING

BY CREATING NEW, INFORMAL SEATING THAT GAVE THE USER FLEXIBILITY AND FREEDOM, POST-WAR DESIGNERS REDEFINED THE CHAIR.

THE POST-WAR YEARS were a time of great experimentation. In 1946, the American designer Eero Saarinen began work on his Womb chair (see p.500). Commissioned by Hans and Florence Knoll, the Womb chair was one of the first designs that did not dictate how to sit. The user could sit on it, curl up in it, or slouch in it with his or her legs over the side. “The necessity of changing one’s position is an important factor often forgotten in chair design”, Saarinen pointed out, and for the next 25 years designers would become increasingly concerned with informal approaches to seating. Forms, materials, and processes were experimented with in a way that completely altered the topography of seating design.

Not long after the Womb chair went on the market in 1947, Charles Eames designed his own take on free-form seating. Eames was a collaborator of Saarinen’s and there was surely some friendly one-upmanship when he presented his La Chaise. Eames’s biomorphic design was far more explicit in its suggestion of multiple seating positions than the Womb, and even did away with upholstery. Named after the French-American sculptor Gaston Lachaise, the design unashamedly celebrated the naked shape of its curvaceous fibreglass seat.

FORM FOLLOWS FUN

The malleability of fibreglass prompted many designers to explore more adventurous forms for furniture, and the strictly Rationalist principles that had guided Modern furniture design began to wane. George Nelson’s Coconut chair (1955) was an early example of form following fun, rather than function. Resembling a cracked coconut shell, it pre-dated the representational furniture that became popular a decade later, the most famous of which was the baseball-mitt-shaped Joe chair (named after baseball star Joe DiMaggio) by Gionatan De Pas, Donato D’Urbino, and Paulo Lomazzi.

This Italian trio also designed the inflatable Blow chair, another icon of the era. Portable, disposable, and inexpensive, the Blow – as well as the many cardboard chair designs of the period – was a rebellion against centuries of tradition that said furniture should be a carefully crafted and enduring feature of the home.

In 1967, Cesare Leonardi and Franca Stagi presented their celebrated Dondolo design, a sinuous, fibreglass chaise longue that rocked. An object best approached with caution by all but the bravest, the Dondolo was an intentional affront to accepted ideas of seating.



COCONUT CHAIR

Nelson’s Coconut chair has a moulded-plastic, fibreglass-reinforced shell that is raised on a four-legged, tubular-chrome base. The foam seat is upholstered in red fabric. Designed by George Nelson for The Herman Miller Furniture Company.

1955. H:84cm (33in); W:44cm (17½in); D:84cm (33in). SDR



HARP CHAIR

This chair has a solid ash frame with three curved legs and is reminiscent of Viking ships. The seat and back are made from taut flag line, which lends the chair a sculptural quality. Designed by Jorgen Hovelshov for Christensen & Larsen.

1968. H:131cm (51½in). SDR

LA CHAISE

The seat and back of the chair are made from moulded fibreglass and are supported on five polished-steel rods that rise from an oak, cross-shaped base. Designed by Charles Eames.

c.1948. H:150cm (41½in). DOR



The lack of upholstery emphasizes the sculptural shape.

The seat comprises two fibreglass shells separated by a rubber disc.

Five iron rods attach the chair’s seat to its base.

The chair’s lightness is underscored by the hole in the back.

UP5 CHAIR

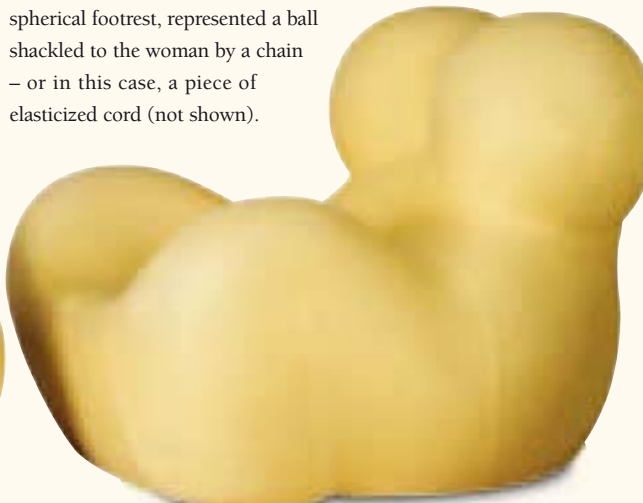
WITH ITS FORM REPRESENTING THE SHAPE OF A WOMAN, THE UP5 CHAIR WAS RADICAL NOT ONLY IN APPEARANCE, BUT ALSO IN THE WAY IT WAS MADE AND PACKAGED.

Italian designer Gaetano Pesce's UP5 chair (1969) was not only radical in its peculiar, bulbous appearance, but was also ground-breaking in the way it was made. First formed from high-density polyurethane foam and covered in stretch nylon, the chair was then put into a vacuum chamber and shrunk to 10 per cent of its original size. The resulting form was then quickly heat-sealed

between two airtight vinyl sheets and packed into an easily transportable box. Once the box was taken home by the buyer, he or she would cut open the vinyl covering and watch as air seeped back into the chair, restoring it to its original voluminous shape.

The UP5 chair was one of a series of furniture items that Pesce designed for B&B Italia

utilizing this extraordinary process. Often referred to as *La Mamma* or *Donna*, the chair's shape "expressed my idea of woman", said Pesce. The UP6, a spherical footrest, represented a ball shackled to the woman by a chain – or in this case, a piece of elasticized cord (not shown).



The Gaetano Pesce UP4 sofa This sofa is comprised of a stretch-fabric cover over a single piece of polyurethane foam, which forms the base. It was designed for B&B Italia in 1969, and this model was produced from 1970 to 1973. H:63.5cm (25in); W:162.5cm (64in); D:86.5cm (34in). R20

La Mamma (or Donna) foam lounge chair and matching ottoman Each piece is fully upholstered in a yellow, stretch-nylon fabric, which covers the polyurethane-foam structure. Both pieces bear the B&B Italia label. 1969. H:110.5cm (40in); W:106.5cm (42in); D:173cm (68in). SDR

MALITTE SEATING SYSTEM

This seating system is made up of five sculpted polyurethane-foam blocks that stack up to a square wall when not in use. Four of the blocks are individual seats, while the fifth one serves as an ottoman. Designed by Roberto Matta. 1966. H:160cm (63in); W:160cm (63in); D:65cm (24½in). WKA



LIFESTYLE SEATING

Designers of the 1960s often saw themselves as pioneers of a new, progressive lifestyle – a key reason for their experimentation with modes of seating. Andrea Branzi, a radical Italian designer, explained that his colleagues' work "undermines traditional relationships with the house and instead proposes objects with autonomous functions that should promote new types of behaviour".

Roberto Matta's Malitte system (1966) was just the sort of autonomous object Branzi was referring to. Essentially a carved-up block of polyurethane foam, the Malitte separated into five ambiguous-looking elements, all of which could be sat on in various positions. Matta's Malitte was a long way from the conventional perception of the chair as an object with four legs, a seat, and a back.

"Followed to its extreme, furniture design would be a series of versatile, interchangeable, multi-purpose cushions", mused British designer Max Clendinning at the beginning of the 1960s, and by the end of the decade his vision was close to becoming reality. The economic downturn of the 1970s, however, put an abrupt end to the idealistic experiments of avant-garde designers. While chair design would continue to prove an expansive playground for many, never again would there be such focus on sprawling, slouching, and slumping as there was in the 1950s and 60s.

DONDOLO

This rocking chair is made from a single strip of moulded, fibreglass-reinforced polyester. It is one of only about 50 that were designed by Cesare Leonardi and Franca Stagi. 1967. H:76cm (30½in); W:170cm (68in); D:37.5cm (15in). QU

1960s SCANDINAVIA

ON VISITING AN EXHIBITION of Scandinavian design in 1959, Danish designer Poul Henningsen declared that there were “many skills and much elegance” on display, “but not one dangerous object”. Henningsen might have been infamous for his outspoken criticism of fellow designers, but there was some truth in his suggestion that much Scandinavian design of the late 1950s was produced purely with the aim “of being sold to America”.

By the late 1950s, Scandinavian design had, in many ways, become a victim of its own success. So well-received was it worldwide that the furniture industry was unwilling to tamper with a winning formula. Luckily, a new generation of designers was emerging that was prepared to upset the status quo. Chief among them was the Dane Verner Pantan.

A NEW GENERATION

In the early 1950s, Pantan worked for Arne Jacobsen, and by the end of the decade he had taken his employer's tentative studies in sculptural form (chairs such as the Egg and the Swan) to new extremes. Pantan's first solo project, a daring interior for a restaurant on the Danish island of Funen, where he grew up, was completed in 1958. Described by one newspaper as “the most untraditional restaurant in Denmark”, it signalled the start of a new era in Scandinavian design.



Throughout the 1960s, Pantan pushed the boundaries of design, both in terms of form and materials. His most outstanding achievement of the period was the Pantan chair, a design that took over ten years to realize. This S-shaped cantilever chair, which was launched in 1967, used the new technique of injection moulding and was manufactured by Vitra in Switzerland, where Pantan was to move in the mid 1960s.

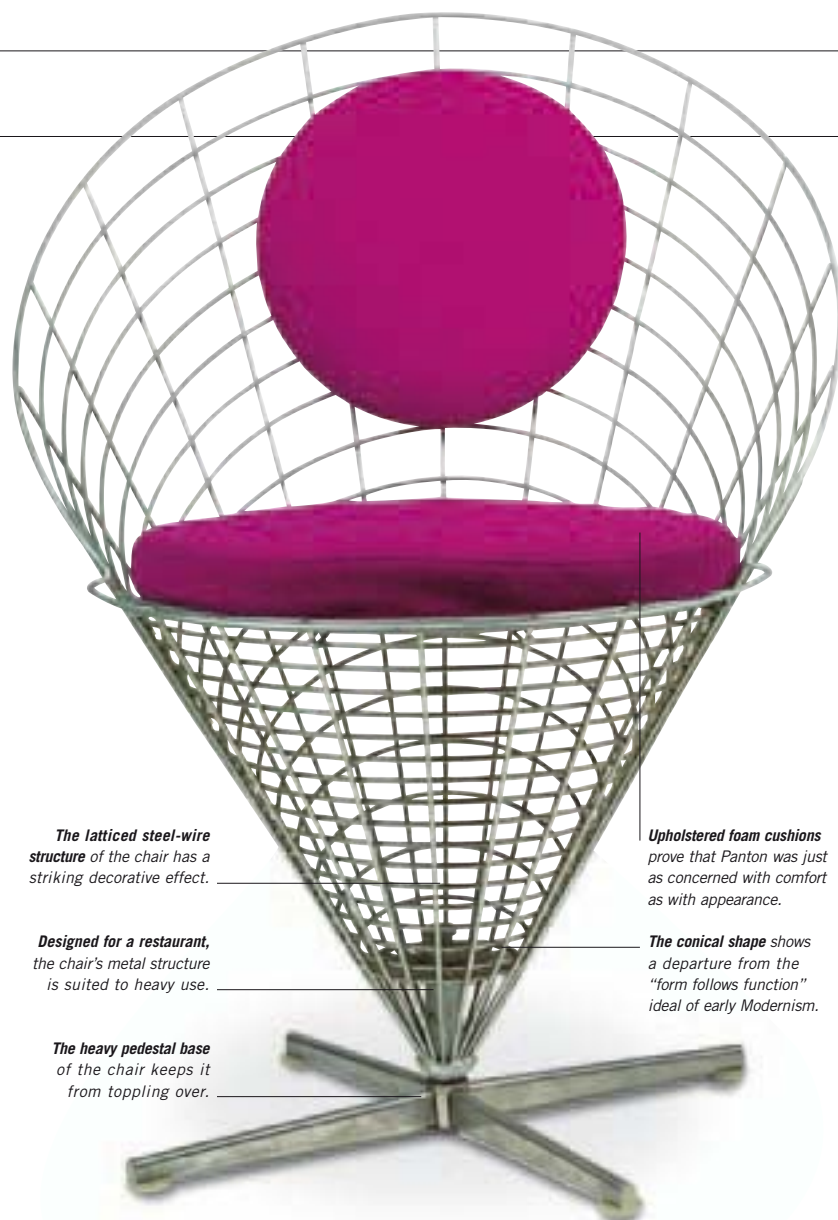
Working along similar lines was the Finnish designer Eero Aarnio. Like Pantan, Aarnio was equally attuned to the brash demands of Pop culture and the more refined virtues of harmonious form and durable construction that traditionally characterize Scandinavian design. Aarnio's series of shapely seating designs, completed in the 1960s, have since become icons, appearing in many films and photographs. His fibreglass Ball chair (1966) was even the subject of a feature in *The New York Times*, confirming the cultural and commercial success of his designs.

Yrjo Kukkapuro was another Finn who, like Aarnio, preferred plastics and fibreglass to wood. Kukkapuro's most distinguished design, the Carousel chair of 1964, was reputedly envisaged by the designer after he had fallen asleep in a bank of snow, having had one too many vodkas. On awakening, Kukkapuro realized how comfortable he had been and immediately took a mould of the impression his body had left in the snow, using the shape to make the Carousel chair.

THE LOST YEARS

Pantan, Aarnio, and Kukkapuro were all fortunately supported by manufacturers who believed in their bold designs. Manufacturers like these were few and far between in Scandinavia during the 1960s, with most firms sticking to tried-and-trusted forms of furniture. In Sweden, for instance, it seems that no one was willing to take a chance on the audacious work of young designers, which is why the 1960s are now often referred to as the “lost years” of Swedish design.

The dining room of Verner Pantan's home, Switzerland
Verner Pantan was a prolific designer whose commissions included a number of interiors. This room from his own home in Binningen is testament to the Pop style that was prevalent in the 1960s.



The latticed steel-wire structure of the chair has a striking decorative effect.

Designed for a restaurant, the chair's metal structure is suited to heavy use.

The heavy pedestal base of the chair keeps it from toppling over.

Upholstered foam cushions prove that Pantan was just as concerned with comfort as with appearance.

The conical shape shows a departure from the “form follows function” ideal of early Modernism.

WIRE CONE CHAIR

The chromed, steel-wire frame of this chair is of conical form, centred at the chair's base and fanning out as it rises to make the seat and chair structure. The chair's seat and back

have circular foam pads, which are covered in pink upholstery. The chair has a swivel action and stands on heavy cross-shaped feet made of chromed steel that form a sturdy base. Designed by Verner Pantan for Plus-Linje, Denmark. c.1960. H:75.5cm (29½in).



SHELL FUN LAMP

This lamp is of mother-of-pearl-type discs hung from a ceiling fixture by metal chains. Designed by Verner Pantan for J. Lüber, Switzerland. 1965. H:110cm (43¼in); D: 56cm (22in). DOR



DRINKS TROLLEY

This lacquered wood, rolling bar has swivelling compartments for accessories, glassware, and bottles. Designed by Verner Pantan. 1963. H:74cm (29½in); D:39.5cm (15½in).



CONE TABLE

This occasional table is made from formica, steel, and fabric. It is named for its cone-shaped support. Designed by Verner Paton and manufactured by Plus-Lijne, Denmark. c.1958. H:70cm (27½in); Diam:81cm (31¼in).



ROUND TABLE

This green, circular table is made out of moulded polyester; it is raised on a moulded pedestal base made of the same material. Designed by Eero Aarnio for Asko Lahti, Finland. 1967-68. H:75cm (29½in); Diam:130cm (51¼in). DOR



PONY CHAIR

This is an adult-sized chair that has been moulded to resemble a pony. The chair has a foam body, feet, and ears over a tube frame. The entire piece is upholstered in black stretch fabric. Designed by Eero Aarnio. H:87cm (34¼in); W:107.5cm (42½in); D:59cm (23¼in). SDR



BUBBLE CHAIR

Influenced by imagery of the Space Age, the frame of this chair is made from a hollow, transparent-plexiglass half-bubble attached to a chrome hoop and suspended from the ceiling by a metal chain. The grey leather-upholstered

seat and chair back fit snugly within the half-bubble frame. Because the chair is made from transparent plexiglass and is fixed to the ceiling at a single point, it creates the impression that the user is floating in mid-air. Designed by Eero Aarnio for Asko Lahti, Finland. 1968. D:85cm (33¼in). DOR



CAROUSEL ARMCHAIR

The white fibreglass shell of the Carousel armchair's seat is raised on a swivel base, which is also made of white fibreglass. The chair has a moulded seat and back that is upholstered and covered in a brownish-

coloured leather. The chair's edges are all slightly rounded. The chromed-steel spring to the rear of the seat connects the shell with the four-pronged base, and the chair has a rocking as well as a swivelling motion. The piece was designed by Yrjö Kukkapuro and produced by Haimi of Finland. 1965. BonE

1960s FRANCE AND GERMANY

WHILE THE 1960s saw a backlash against the functionalism of Modern design in both France and Germany, the reaction was particularly vociferous in Germany.

Where 1960s French designers such as Pierre Paulin and Olivier Mourgue applied a contemporary twist to well-worn Rationalist principles, their German counterparts – such as Luigi Colani, Peter Raacke, and Helmut Batzner – were more forceful in breaking new ground. In 1968, Werner Nehls, a Munich architect, wrote of a “protest against the past, with its mechanistic, rational, puritanically utilitarian, soulless, inhuman way of forming the environment”.

At the annual furniture fair in Cologne, experimental environments were constructed that offered fantastical visions, often inspired by spaceships, of the future. The most celebrated were the *Visiona* installations by the Dane Verner Panton, but many German designers presented similarly outlandish schemes.

German furniture design of the 1960s was not entirely based on fantasy. In 1966, Helmut Batzner accomplished the very real achievement of creating the first chair from a single piece of plastic. Called the Bofinger after the company that produced it, the chair had sold in its hundreds of thousands by the end of the decade.

SEX AND FURNITURE DESIGN

Although most of Europe and the United States was in the grip of a sexual revolution in the 1960s, Germans were particularly enchanted by free love. The German sex educationalist Oswald Kolle became a popular figure, and the influence of his ideas extended even to furniture design. Although it had a short lifespan as a genre of furniture, the love seat – on which one was supposed to do more than sit – was for a time the focus of many German designers’ attentions.

French designers were also letting their libidos drive designs, with Pierre Paulin creating a range of chairs sheathed in elasticated jersey – an

idea inspired by the tight swimming costumes favoured by women on the Cote d’Azur.

Paulin’s Mushroom (1963) and Tongue (1967) chairs were both without legs. The low-lying seats of these curvaceous chairs were supported by a frame of tubular steel and covered in foam and stretch fabric. Influenced by the organic shapes of American and Scandinavian designs of the 1950s, the chairs took the sculptural aesthetic to new heights.

The height and width of the chair’s back envelop the user, shutting out the surrounding environment.

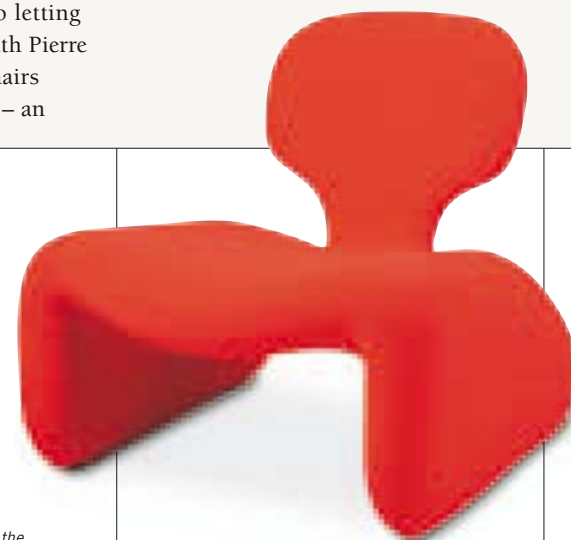
The glossy surface of the chair adds to the eye-catching nature of the chair’s design.

The sculptural form of the chair shows that Rancillac was primarily an artist, rather than a furniture designer.

The chair’s base is necessarily heavy to counterbalance the weight of the user.

The part of the chair intended to support the legs mimics the trunk of an elephant.

Undulations in the surface provide support for the body and showcase new techniques for moulding plastics.



DJINN CHAIR

The seat and back of this chair are of fabric stretched over a polyurethane-and-metal frame on metal runners. Designed by Olivier Mourgue for Airborne and originally produced in 1965, this example is a later issue. c.1970. *BonBay*



TULIP CHAIR

This armchair has a padded back, a seat with upswept arms, and a swivelling, aluminium, cross-shaped base. It is upholstered in teal snakeskin vinyl. Designed by Pierre Paulin for Artifort. H:76cm (30in). *SDR*

ELEPHANT CHAIR

Titled the Elephant, because of its obvious resemblance to an elephant’s head and trunk, this lounge chair’s body is formed from a single piece of bright scarlet fibreglass. The armrests bear a witty resemblance to an elephant’s ears and the leg supports of the piece clearly mimic the trunk. Sculpturally fanciful but still functional, the

chair’s sturdy base is made of painted steel and is particularly heavy in order to provide a good sense of balance when used. Designed in 1966 by Bernard Rancillac and made in very limited quantities, this piece is a clear forerunner of the Pop-inspired pieces of the following decade. This version is one of a limited 1985 re-issue that was manufactured by Michel Roudillon in France. H:150cm (59¼in); W:150cm (59¼in); D:200cm (78¾in).



Living room of the Bubble Palace (Le Palais Bulles)
Decorated in blues, the palace, with futuristic, round rooms and rotating floors, is on the French Riviera. By Pierre Cardin and Antti Lovag. 1970.

Similar to Paulin's pieces were the 1960s designs of Olivier Mourgue. Mourgue's 1965 Djinn series (seen in the 1968 film *2001: A Space Odyssey*) reflected his view that functionalism was not the only goal of design, since "one must pursue visual poetry too".

In 1968, inspired by the solidarity of the student riots in Paris, Mourgue

produced his Bouloum chaise longue. Its anthropomorphic design, based on the outline of a friend, was an early expression of wit in Modern design and brought the discipline closer to art.

It was in the 1960s that many artists began to experiment with furniture design as a means of artistic expression. Pop artists Claes Oldenburg, Eduardo Paolozzi, and Bernard Rancillac all included furniture within their *oeuvre*, as the association of furniture with functionalism began to fade.

LUIGI COLANI

A DESIGNER WHO WOULD ANTICIPATE THE CULT OF CELEBRITY, LUIGI COLANI EMBODIED THE ANTI-RATIONALISM OF THE 1960S.



Luigi Colani

much German design in the 1960s.

Born Lutz Colani in Berlin in 1928, Colani changed his name from Lutz to Luigi in an effort to make himself sound less German. It is not surprising, therefore, that Colani studied and lived abroad. He studied aerodynamics at the Sorbonne in Paris, and then worked for the Douglas Aircraft Company in California for a short time.

In the late 1950s, Colani returned to his homeland, where he immediately caused a sensation with his futuristic automobile and motorbike designs. Widely published (but rarely built), these sleek, pod-like vehicle designs

Gleefully pointing out to anyone who would listen that he always refused to use a ruler, Luigi Colani epitomized the anti-Rationalist spirit that was characteristic of

reflected Colani's twin fascinations with space travel and the female form.

It was not until the mid 1960s, however, that Colani turned his restless talents to domestic designs. Always keen to operate at the very cutting edge, Colani used the latest forms of plastic available at the time to produce his eccentrically shaped furniture. In 1968, Colani created a ball-shaped kitchen capsule for Poggenpohl, and in 1973 he designed his most famous piece of furniture, the Colani seat, which can be sat upon in a variety of different ways.

Colani's idiosyncratic design style, which he has applied to a wide range of products from everyday objects such as teapots and chairs to quirky jewellery and small jet aeroplanes, allied to his carefully crafted public persona, anticipated the cult of the celebrity personality that would become commonplace within the design community in the decades to come.

TV-Relax couch This couch by Luigi Colani has a buttoned seat and back that are of an organic form, stretching out to create a leg rest. The piece is upholstered in a saffron-coloured stretch fabric. 1969. W:170cm (67in). DOR



WRITING DESK

This desk has a top made of fibreglass-enforced plastic. Made in one piece, the surface has been moulded to provide a flat surface for writing at the front and compartments for equipment at the back. The rectangular top is raised on a white-

painted metal frame. Designed by Marc Berthier for FDAN, France. c.1967. H:67cm (26½in); W:109cm (43in); D:27.5cm (10in). DOR



SINGLE-PEDESTAL DESK

This single-pedestal desk has a free-form top that is made of laminate and extends over a bank of drawers. The entire piece is raised on a tubular, black-painted metal frame, while the desktop is supported by a single

pedestal. Simple, unobtrusive grooves in the tops of the drawers serve as drawer handles. The piece is designed by Pierre Paulin for Mobilor. H:74.5cm (29½in); W:119.5cm (47in); D:61cm (24in). SDR

POP INTERIOR

CONTRASTING SHAPES, TEXTURE, AND COLOUR WERE VITAL COMPONENTS OF INTERIORS OF THIS PERIOD AND RESULTED IN FRESH, FUN, FUNCTIONAL, AND STYLISH SPACES.

FROM THE LATE 1950S, European design was dominated by a reaction against the dogma of the Modernists. Pop, and its successor Postmodernism, share an irreverent sense of irony that infused the interior design of this period with humour.

OPEN-PLAN LIVING

A preference for open-plan living developed in the 1960s as large loft and warehouse spaces in New York and London were reinvented as housing developments. Inhabitants of these large formless spaces used portable screens and panels to sub-divide space into manageable sections and furniture was positioned to create wall-less boundaries within the living spaces. Zones could also be demarcated by texture or bold colours, which were inspired by Pop Art, as well as clever lighting that made use of lamps and ceiling lights to illuminate specific areas.

Rooms of this period also benefited from technologies developed for the war effort, which resulted in new materials such as fibreglass. As these materials became available to the consumer market, they gave designers more scope to experiment and create surprising interiors.

COLOUR, SHAPE, AND TEXTURE

This Normandy farmhouse was built in the 1970s and furnished with pieces from the 1960s and 1970s. The owner moved to the area from San Francisco, and brought the cutting-edge tastes of the United States to this quiet corner of rural France. The pieces in this room sum up the move away from the functional designs of the Modernist era in favour of bold, sculptural, fun shapes. Primarily monochrome, the room takes its colour from the bold yellow and red of the seating. The bright red Alfa sofas are by Zanotta. The ceiling provides a focal point as the chaotic contours interrupt light from the recessed lamps and conceal multicoloured lights. The white plastic dome of the side lamp is echoed in the table base, the wall lamp, and even the metal sculpture that stands in the far corner of the room, providing some sense of continuity.



Pantella table lamp Designed by Verner Panton for Louis Poulsen in Denmark, this lamp has a white, half-spherical acrylic lampshade above a white-lacquered, trumpet-shaped base. *H:70cm (27½in); Diam:50cm (19½in).*



Womb chair and ottoman Designed by Eero Saarinen for Knoll International, these pieces have moulded fibreglass-reinforced polyester upholstered with red latex covered foam, supported on tubular steel frames. *1948–1950. H:89cm (35in); W:100cm (39in) (chair). WKA*





1960s ITALY

BY THE BEGINNING of the 1960s, Italian design had become synonymous worldwide with sophisticated style. The terms *Bel Designo* and *Linea Italiana* had emerged to define the practical but elegant designs of figures such as Gio Ponti and Marco Zanuso. The 1964 Milan Triennale's theme of Leisure (in 1947 the theme was "The Problems of the Least Privileged") summed up the comfortable, assured attitude of the Italian furniture industry at the time.

ANTI-DESIGN EMERGES

The industry was hit by a rude shock in 1965. Trade unions demanded significant wage rises for workers and export trade began to suffer. At the same time, a small group of designers, who saw the prevailing notions of taste and luxury as elitist and out of touch with everyday life, began to question the self-satisfied nature of the industry.

From the mid 1960s, a rebellion revolutionized the Italian design industry, as designers turned towards more populist aesthetics. The work of the American Pop artists began to exert a major influence, and the use of plastic – a new, inexpensive material – was embraced wholeheartedly.

Chief among the exponents of Anti-Design, or Radical Design as it came to be known, were Archizoom and Superstudio, two groups of architects and designers who formed in Florence in 1966. That they preferred a group

identity to using their individual names showed their distaste for the egotism and money-grabbing that they perceived to be gripping the industry.

Not quite as extreme as these groups, but still intent on injecting a more democratic, inclusive element into Italian design, was Joe Colombo. Although his designs were still rooted in the Rationalist principles of Functionalism, they also showed a desire by Colombo to communicate with, as opposed to dictating to, his users. Other designers such as Anna Castelli Ferrieri and Vico Magistretti also took this tack during the 1960s, often employing plastic, a material that inspired new and playful forms.

MOVING FORWARD

By the end of the 1960s, with the Italian economy near collapse, much of the unity and confidence of the country's design industry had dissolved into disharmony. Advocates of *Bel Designo* were being challenged by those involved with Anti-Design, resulting in something of a crisis of identity. A period of great creativity, however, arose from this chaos that enabled Italy to maintain its status as the most important European nation in the field of design.

Apartment of Joe Colombo, Milan The interior has two co-ordinated living machines, Rotoliving and Cabriolet bed, which synthesized day-time and night-time environments. They were the result of Colombo's research into living habitats. 1969–70.



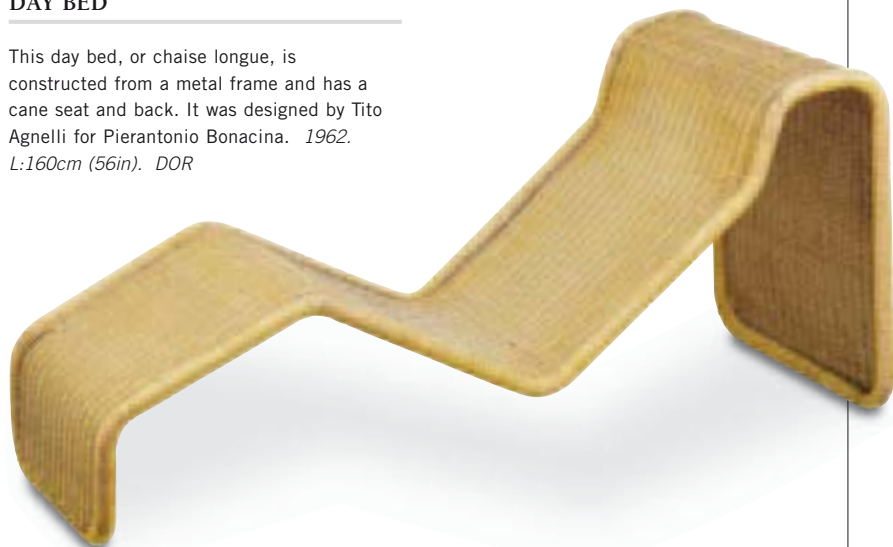
ORGANIC LAMP

This large, sculptural hanging lamp is organic in form, which explains where it received its name. The body of the lamp, which looks as if it could take its shape from

nature, is made from a stiff fibreglass shell that is suspended on a wire frame. The cream-coloured pendant lamp was designed by the renowned lighting designers Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni. c.1968. DOR

DAY BED

This day bed, or chaise longue, is constructed from a metal frame and has a cane seat and back. It was designed by Tito Agnelli for Pierantonio Bonacina. 1962. L:160cm (56in). DOR



SELENE CHAIRS

Each of these stacking chairs has been formed from a single piece of injection-moulded plastic; a camouflage-type colour scheme has been used. The square-section

legs have indents to give them greater strength. These three chairs were originally part of a set of four. Designed by Vico Magistretti for Studio Artemide, Milan. 1967–68. H:75cm (29½in); W:47cm (18½in); D:50cm (19½in). DOR

The six bays of this seating design encourage the sitters to be sociable.



The fibreglass base of the seating "livescape" has been painted white to give it a more immediate visual impact.

SAFARI LIVINGSCAPE

This modular, so-called "livescape" has a fibreglass frame in four sections, which fit together to make a large, square-shaped seating area lined with textile-covered latex

upholstery. Each individual seat is a petal of a flower-shaped form and is covered in fake leopard skin, as is the floor of the structure. Designed by Archizoom Associates for Poltronova. 1967-68. H:75cm (29½in); W:214cm (84½in); D:254cm (100in). DOR

The fake leopard skin is a conscious use of kitsch and was intended as an affront to "good taste".

The sheer size of the seating design makes it almost architectural in appearance.

THE ELDA CHAIR

IN THE BRIEF TIME THAT HE WORKED AS A FURNITURE DESIGNER, JOE COLOMBO CREATED MANY TREND-SETTING AND TECHNICALLY ADVANCED PIECES, THE MOST NOTABLE OF WHICH IS THE LEATHER-AND-FIBREGLASS ELDA CHAIR.

Although Joe Colombo died tragically of heart failure in 1971, at the age of just 41, he produced an astonishing number of ground-breaking designs during his short career. The Elda armchair, designed for his wife of the same name, is one of Colombo's most recognizable pieces of furniture design and is typical in being both technologically and aesthetically advanced.

Cocooning the user in his or her own private world, the chair's sheer presence was a radical leap from the polite designs of his

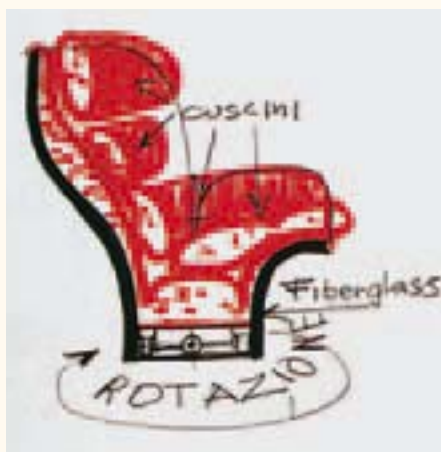
predecessors. Made from fibreglass, it was also the most ambitious use of this material that the furniture industry had seen.

The chair's thick, twisting cushions, which add to its womb-like appeal, are designed to hook on to the fibreglass base, so that they can be removed easily for cleaning. A further feature of the chair is the rotating base that enables the user to have a 360-degree view of his or her surroundings.

The futuristic styling of the chair has brought it to the attention of numerous film-set dressers, and, perhaps most notably, the Elda chair crops up more than once in villains' lairs in James Bond films. Although Colombo never lived to see his designs on the big screen, he would no doubt have approved as, when younger, he changed his given name of Cesare to Joe because he thought it made him sound more like a Hollywood film star.



The Elda chair The chair has a moulded, fibreglass-reinforced plastic shell with a black leather-upholstered seat. 1963-65. H:100cm (39½in); W:100cm (39½in); D:93cm (36½in). WKA



One of Joe Colombo's sketches of the Elda chair This drawing illustrates how the rotating mechanism allowed the user to make a full 360-degree turn. WKA



COMPONIBILI STORAGE UNITS

This sectional system works in any home or office environment. The units have a base, door, and top. Designed by Anna Castelli Ferrieri for Kartell. 1969. H:58.5cm (23in); Diam:32cm (12½in).



POKER CARD TABLE

The table top of this card table is white plastic, covered in green baize with a leather trim. The legs are stainless steel. Designed by Joe Colombo in 1968; this example is a 2004 Zanotta re-issue. H:70cm (27½in); W:98cm (38½in). ZAN

CASTIGLIONI BROTHERS

THE CASTIGLIONI BROTHERS CREATED A STYLE THAT COMBINED A REVERENCE FOR EVERYDAY OBJECTS, PROVOCATIVE WIT, AND A RATIONALIST APPROACH TO FUNCTION.

BORN THE SONS of a sculptor in Milan, the Castiglioni brothers – Livio, Pier Giacomo, and Achille – grew up to dominate post-World War II Italian design. Designing everything from vacuum cleaners to table lamps and restaurants, the prolific brothers provided a bridge between the hard-edged Rationalists who came before them and the playful Postmodernists who were to follow.

It was the youngest brother, Achille, who would eventually gain the greatest prominence, but it was the eldest, Livio, who first brought the family to the public's attention, when he created, along with Luigi Caccia Dominioni and Pier Giacomo, the first Italian radio made using Bakelite.

By 1945, Achille, like his brothers, had graduated from the *Politecnico* in Milan and all three were working in the same studio. A modest door handle and a set of plywood hotel furniture were their first projects. Although trained in architecture, the brothers always favoured furniture and industrial design.

BIOGRAPHY



Achille, Pier Giacomo, and Livio Castiglioni

1939 Livio and Pier Giacomo collaborate with Luigi Caccia Dominioni to create the Bakelite Phonola radio.

1945 The three brothers begin working together.

1947 Achille exhibits at the Milan Triennale and is involved in the exhibition until his death in 2002.

1952 Livio stops working with his brothers.

1956 The three brothers become founding members of the *Associazione per il Design Industriale* (ADI).

1957 Exhibit *Colours and Forms of the Home Today*.

1960 Splügenbrau restaurant in Milan designed.

1962 Arco and Toio floor lamps designed for the lighting manufacturer Flos.

1969 Livio designs the Serpentine Boalum lamp with Gianfranco Frettini.

1970 Achille begins teaching at *Turin Politecnico*.



ALLUNAGGIO STOOL

This stool was designed for outdoor use and has a grass-green-painted, aluminium-alloy seat supported at the centre of three wide-spreading steel legs terminating in natural polyethylene feet. Designed by A. and P.G. Castiglioni in 1965. This example was re-issued by Zanotta in 2004. H:74cm (29½in); W:152cm (59½in); D:42.5cm (16½in). ZAN

SERVO RANGE

These pieces are from the A. and P.G. Castiglioni Servo range: the Servopluvio umbrella stand is on the left and the Servofumo ashtray on the right. Other items include a coat stand, a towel stand, a book stand, and a service table. 1961–1986. ZAN

JOY SHELVING

This shelf unit comprises a number of honeycomb core uprights and shelves, with steel reinforcements inside. Each “limb” can be rotated individually, giving the piece a sculptural as well as functional quality. The shelves are finished in stained oak with steel supports. Designed by A. Castiglioni. 1989. H:190cm (74½in) (max); W:96cm (37½in) (max); D:30cm (11½in). ZAN



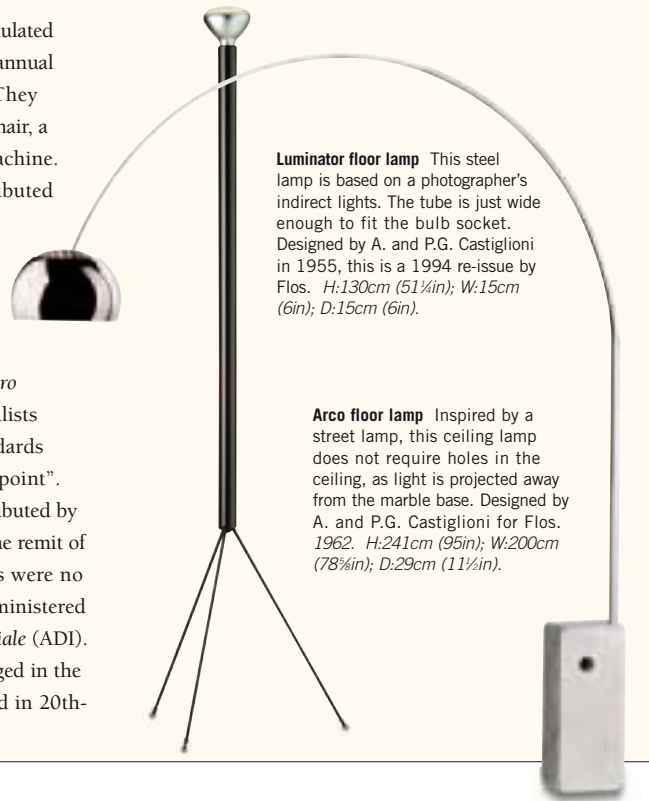
COMPASSO D'ORO AWARDS

CREATED BY GIO PONTI AND ALDO BORLETTI, THE *COMPASSO D'ORO* AWARDS BECAME THE MOST COVETED AND PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS IN 20TH-CENTURY FURNITURE DESIGN.

Between 1955 and 1994, the Castiglioni brothers accumulated nine first prizes and 13 special mentions at the annual *Compasso d'Oro* (Golden Compass) awards. They collected awards for – among other things – a chair, a hospital bed, headphones, and an espresso machine.

The *Compasso d'Oro* awards were first distributed in 1954 and were soon to become the foremost accolades in Italian design, generating international attention for the products selected. The idea of designer Gio Ponti and Aldo Borletti, owner of *La Rinascente* department stores in Milan, the *Compasso d'Oro* awards were intended “to encourage industrialists and craftsmen to raise their production standards both from a technological and aesthetic standpoint”.

Although initially only products sold or distributed by *La Rinascente* qualified, it was not long before the remit of the awards was widened. By 1967, the awards were no longer associated with *La Rinascente* at all, administered instead by the *Associazione per il Design Industriale* (ADI). Although their credibility was somewhat damaged in the 1980s amid accusations of cronyism, no award in 20th-century design was more prestigious.



Luminator floor lamp This steel lamp is based on a photographer's indirect lights. The tube is just wide enough to fit the bulb socket. Designed by A. and P.G. Castiglioni in 1955, this is a 1994 re-issue by Flos. H:130cm (51½in); W:15cm (6in); D:15cm (6in).

Arco floor lamp Inspired by a street lamp, this ceiling lamp does not require holes in the ceiling, as light is projected away from the marble base. Designed by A. and P.G. Castiglioni for Flos. 1962. H:241cm (95in); W:200cm (78½in); D:29cm (11½in).

CASTIGLIONI STYLE

The first time a distinctive Castiglioni style emerged was in 1950, with the design of the Leonardo and Bramante trestle tables. Fashioned after craftsmen's tables, they were an early example of Achille's magpie eye. Spotting the practical qualities of the trestle table, the Castiglioni brothers tinkered with the archetypal design to make it their own. Naming the functional tables after two great figures of the Renaissance was a typical touch of wit – reminding us that even great accomplishments begin as sketches made on the humble trestle table.

In 1952, Livio parted company with his brothers. Around this time, too, Achille and Pier Giacomo's talent for lighting design began to gain full expression. In 1955, their Luminator standard lamp won a *Compasso D'Oro* award, while the Bulbo hanging lamp of 1957 showed a poetic use of industrial processes.

Perhaps the highpoint of their career in lighting design was 1962, when two of their most celebrated lights were produced by Flos. The Arco floorlamp, inspired by streetlights, has become an icon of 20th-century design, while the Toio lamp is a great example of the brothers' invention and resourcefulness. Though workman-like in appearance, the lamp's ingenious application of car headlights and fishing-rod rings is a homage to the beauty of everyday designs.

OBJETS TROUVÉS

Pier Giacomo and Achille's reverence for anonymous objects was such that their studio was littered with such items, and Achille even had a wooden eel-fishing boat in his apartment. “I put it there as an *objet trouvé*,” he explained, referring to the tradition initiated by Marcel Duchamp when he combined a stool and a bicycle wheel in an artwork in 1913.

The Castiglioni brothers' most celebrated works in this tradition were shown to a shocked public in 1957. In an exhibit entitled *Colours and Forms of the Home Today*, they filled a room with “old” designs (such as Thonet bentwood chairs) and the latest Castiglioni creations. The latter included the Mezzadro stool, which incorporated a tractor seat, and the Sella stool, which had a leather bicycle seat. Although humorous, provocative designs, they were accomplished with such finesse, and with such a sober, Rationalist approach to function, that the joke is entirely convincing.

Pier Giacomo's death in 1968 left Achille to work on his own. His designs always inspired outrage and admiration in equal measure, and no design polarized opinions more than the Primate stool (1970). Demanding an Eastern seating position of folding the calves under the thighs, the Primate was praised by some for its daring, ergonomic approach and damned by others for its odd, toilet-like appearance.

“A design stems from the urge to create a rapport with the unknown person who will use the object”, wrote Achille in 1992, and, love them or loathe them, Castiglioni designs always touch a nerve.



MEZZADRO STOOL

This stool has a shaped and perforated aluminium-alloy seat on a single, chromium-plated steel stem, with a steam-treated beech footrest. Designed by A. and P.G. Castiglioni in 1957, this example was re-issued by Zanotta in 2004. H:51cm (20in); W:49cm (19½in); D:51cm (20in). ZAN

PRIMATE STOOL

The user sits on the top section of this stool with his or her knees resting on the lower section. The pieces are joined by a stainless-steel arm. The base of the stool is made from painted polystyrene. Designed by Achille Castiglioni in 1970, this example was re-issued by Zanotta in 2004. H:47cm (18½in); W:50cm (19½in); D:80cm (31½in). ZAN

1960s UNITED STATES

WHILE THE FORGING of a strong, coherent identity characterized American furniture design of the 1950s, the next decade was far foggier. The Rational, yet sculptural, style developed by Charles and Ray Eames, Eero Saarinen, and others in the 1950s would continue to meet with success during the 1960s, although there were also dissenters who tried to break the hegemony of the aesthetic referred to today as Mid-century Modern.

Critically and commercially, companies such as The Herman Miller Furniture Company and Knoll were riding high at the start of the 1960s. From humble beginnings they had risen to international prominence and, understandably, were unwilling to jeopardize this. The relentless invention of the early 1950s waned in the 1960s, as many American furniture companies attempted to consolidate their success by concentrating on the contract (or business) market and exports.

Figureheads of the 1950s turned their talents towards such areas as office furniture (George Nelson's Action Office range, 1964) and airport seating (the Eames Tandem system, 1964). A number of young designers took the corporate path, with David Rowland producing the triumphantly Rationalist 40/4 chair in 1964 (a stack of 40 stood 4 feet tall) and Charles Pollock (brother of Jackson) creating a range of stylish, if sober, executive seating.

American design was becoming stifled, it seemed, by the size of its furniture companies, which were unable to respond to the immediate demands of the market. While many European nations, whose furniture industries often consisted of networks of small companies, were turning out furniture in garish colours and outlandish shapes, this was rarely true of the United States.

FREE-FORM STYLE

The urge to explore a decorative, abstract style was not entirely absent in the United States, however. The work of designers such as Isamu Noguchi (IN50 coffee table), George Nelson (Coconut chair), and Eero Saarinen (Pedestal range) had, to a large extent, cleared the way for the loose, free-form style that swept the furniture world in the 1960s.

Perhaps the most eloquent exponent of the more whimsical style of the 1960s

was Warren Platner. His collection of steel-rod furniture for Knoll, called simply the Platner range, was launched in 1966 to great acclaim. "I felt there was room for the kind of decorative, gentle kind of design that appeared in a period style like Louis XV... but with a Rational base", Platner wrote, summing up his own take on furniture design.

American designers wanting to employ a daring and idiosyncratic style were, as a rule, ignored by the large manufacturers in the 1960s. Dismissed as superficial, designers such as Wendell Castle, Vladimir Kagan, and Erwine and Estelle Laverne had to produce their designs themselves, or seek out small companies with whom they might collaborate. Castle's amorphous furniture designs, made from fibreglass and plastics, were eventually put into limited production by Beylerian of New York, while the Lavernes' work, often distinguished by the use of clear acrylic, was produced by their own company, Laverne Originals. In Los Angeles, Charles Hollis Jones was also experimenting with the decorative possibilities of clear acrylic, producing bespoke furniture and lighting for clients such as Frank Sinatra, Tennessee Williams, and Diana Ross.

POSTMODERNISM

While the world of American furniture design seemed confused during the 1960s, there was a growing school of thought that insisted that this should be celebrated. Writing about the discipline of architecture, Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown published "Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture" in 1966, a text that argued the case for pluralism. The idea that a clear, universal design style should be avoided at all costs, as Venturi and Scott Brown outlined, would provide the basis of Postmodernism, a style that was to develop fully in the next decade.



THE PLATNER RANGE

The round table has a plate-glass table top raised on a spindle-shaped base, which is made out of nickel-plated steel rods. The four chairs have walnut tops and padded seats

with removable, velvet-covered cushions. Designed by Warren Platner for Knoll, these pieces make up part of a range of furniture that is referred to simply as the Platner range. 1966. Table: H:71cm (28in); D:105cm (41½in). QU

The Castle chair's turret is a good place on which to rest a drink.

The chair's seat is nothing more than a depression in the plastic.



The non-slip layer at the base of the chair improves adhesion to the floor.

CASTLE ARMCHAIR

The designer, Wendell Castle, achieved the organic, amorphous form of the Castle armchair through the use of white, fibreglass-reinforced polyester. The base of the armchair is trimmed

in black rubber all around the base. The limited-edition piece was distributed by Beylerian of New York. This particular chair bears the artist's initials on the inside. 1969. H:86cm (33½in); W:118cm (46½in); D:90cm (35½in). QU



MAILBOX TABLE LAMP

The mailbox-shaped lampshade of this table lamp is made from a single, bowed piece of acrylic. The thin, tubular stand and the base are made of steel. The lamp was designed by Charles Hollis Jones. 1963. *H:58.5cm (23in); W:35cm (13½in); D:23cm (9in).*



CLOUD SOFA

This curvaceous, biomorphic sofa with a low back is fully upholstered in a finely woven fabric that has an undulating pattern in red, pink, and grey. Three matching scatter cushions complete the ensemble. The sofa is raised on casters. *W:294.5cm (116in).* SDR



LILY CHAIR

This is a lucite Lily chair, which was part of the Invisible Group series designed by Erwin and Estelle Laverne. The entire seat, including the moulded base, is transparent. A fuzzy, white seat-pad completes the chair. 1957. *H:94cm (37in); W:71cm (28in); D:68.5cm (27in).* SDR



GATELEG DINING TABLE

This wooden, drop-leaf, gateleg dining table is a 20th-century interpretation of a late 16th-century form and is a fine example of Vladimir Kagan's organic design style. The table has an oblong table top with rounded corners and is

supported by a seven-legged wooden base. The angular, splayed design of the legs is characteristic of Kagan's work, and is a feature that Kagan applied to his seating furniture as well as his table designs. *Fully extended: H:75cm (29½in); W:169cm (66½in); D:106.5cm (42in).* SDR



TWO-DOOR CABINET

This two-door, cherry-wood cabinet has contoured door fronts decorated with an ebony inlay. The doors open on to an interior fitted with a mirror, four shelves, and four small drawers, each of which has an ivory-enamelled pull. The case stands on black cylindrical feet. Designed by Vladimir Kagan. *H:86.5cm (34in).* SDR



OUTDOOR DINING CHAIR

The chair's die-cast frame is made of extruded aluminium and finished in an outdoor epoxy-polyester coating. The polyester mesh seats are impregnated with polyvinyl chloride (PVC) for outdoor use. Designed by Richard Schultz. 1966. *H:74cm (29in); D:62cm (24½in).*



40/4 STACKING CHAIR

One of the most famous and functional 20th-century chairs, this ultra-compact stacking chair was so named because the 40/4 stacks 40 chairs in 4 feet (1.2m). The chair has a chrome frame and a metal seat and back. Designed by David Rowland. 1964. *H:76cm (30in); W:49cm (19¼in); D:54.5cm (21½in).*

COFFEE TABLES

THE SUDDEN SURGE IN popularity of the coffee table in the post-war years can be directly attributed to the rise of the television. The presence of a television set in a house tended to pull families away from the dining room at mealtimes and into the living room, where the coffee table proved the ideal object on which people could place their plates.

Such was the increased traffic in the living room, thanks to the TV, that the most popular style of coffee table quickly became one on which you couldn't hurt your shins – that is, one without sharp corners. The classic coffee table with a curvaceous top – of which Isamu Noguchi's IN50 table (1944) is an early, and particularly eloquent, example – soon ousted the traditional dining table as the most gathered-around item of furniture in the house. More

conventional homeowners often preferred a rectangular table to one that had an irregular shape, but it was the novelty of the latter that attracted young buyers.

Also prized for its unusual appearance was the glass-topped coffee table. Making objects appear as if they were floating on air, the glass table top became a common feature of many coffee tables in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

As plastics began to be more widely used in furniture design of the mid 1960s, it was inevitable that plastic (usually fibreglass) coffee tables should appear on the market. By this time, however, the three-piece sitting-room suite that usually surrounded the coffee table was rapidly going out of fashion and, with it, went much of the appeal of the coffee table.

The plate-glass table top allows a good view of the table's sculptural base.

The table has two levels of glass in order to maximize the use of space.

Short legs raise the plywood from the ground, giving the table a poised appearance.

The sinuous curves of the base are typical of Mollino's idiosyncratic style.

A simple system of screws holds all the pieces of the table together.

The plywood frame is perforated to ensure that the table is both physically and visually light.

ARABESCO TABLE

This table has a perforated plywood frame, which has been veneered with varnished beech wood. The frame is bent to provide a magazine rack below the plate-glass table top. Both the table

top and lower glass shelf have an asymmetrical, sinuous form. The frame is fixed to the glass top by stainless-steel screws. Designed by Carlo Mollino in 1949, Italy. This example is a 2004 re-issue by Zanotta. *H:45cm (17 $\frac{3}{4}$ in); W:129cm (50 $\frac{3}{4}$ in); D:53cm (20 $\frac{3}{4}$ in).* ZAN



MOLAR TABLE

This black fibreglass table is reminiscent of a molar tooth. From a range designed by Wendell Castle, USA. *c.1969. H:39.5cm (15 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); W:101.5cm (40in); D:86.5cm (34in).* SDR 4



GLASS-TOPPED TABLE

This table has a thick, clear-glass, circular top above a patinated bronze, ribbon-like base. Produced by Dunbar, USA. 1965. *W:107cm (42in).* SDR 2



TABLE WITH DRAWERS

This coffee table has a birch top above three narrow drawers; it is raised on brass legs joined by brass stretchers. Designed by Paul McCobb for Calvin, USA. *W:167.5cm (66in).* FRE 1



DUNBAR COFFEE TABLE

This American-designed coffee table has a rectangular, 1-cm- ($\frac{1}{2}$ -in-) thick, smoky-glass top above a patinated bronze cruciform base. *c.1965. W:117cm (46 $\frac{1}{4}$ in).* SDR 2



ORGANIC SOFA TABLE

This cherry-wood table, with its curved table top, is raised on splayed legs. It is finished in black laminate. Germany. *c.1950. H:50cm (19 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); W:131cm (51 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); D:47cm (18 $\frac{1}{2}$ in).* DOR 2



AMOEBIC TABLE

This table has a free-form top in thick laminated wood. The table was so named because of its amorphous and amoeba-like shape. The table top is raised on four screw-in,

black dowel-legs. The table is signed by the American designer Lawrence Kelley. 1973. *W:163.5cm (64½in).* FRE 1



SLAB TABLE

The top of this coffee table is formed from a single slab of solid walnut. The table's most striking characteristic is its free-form, organic shape, which is in keeping with the choice of

material. The coffee table is supported by two, asymmetrically formed legs, which are positioned at different angles. The legs are also made of solid walnut. Designed by George Nakashima, USA. 1956. *W:132cm (56in).* FRE 2



COFFEE TABLE

The thin, rectangular top of this coffee table rests on square-section legs with brass caps. The legs are not situated one in each corner, but arranged at the corners of the rear edge and in the centre

of the front edge. Stretchers add stability. Designed by Edward Wormley for Dunbar, USA. c.1955. *W:152.5cm (60in).* LOS 3



WOOD AND BRASS TABLE

This American-made coffee table has a rectangular, wooden table top raised on four black-laminated, square-section legs, which terminate in brass caps. A brass frame, which

mirrors the dimensions of the table top, runs inside the four legs. Designed by Harvey Prober. c.1960. *W:179cm (70½in).* LOS 3



KNOLL COFFEE TABLE

Stark and simple in design, this black and white coffee table, which was manufactured by Knoll International of New York, is made with a rectangular, white-laminated table top.

The table top is supported on an angular metal base and metal legs. The base and legs are finished in a black enamelling. *W:114cm (45in).* SDR 1



DANISH ROSEWOOD TABLE

The rectangular top of this otherwise unadorned rosewood coffee table has a tile inset on one side. The tile is patterned in an abstract design in olive green and teal blue.

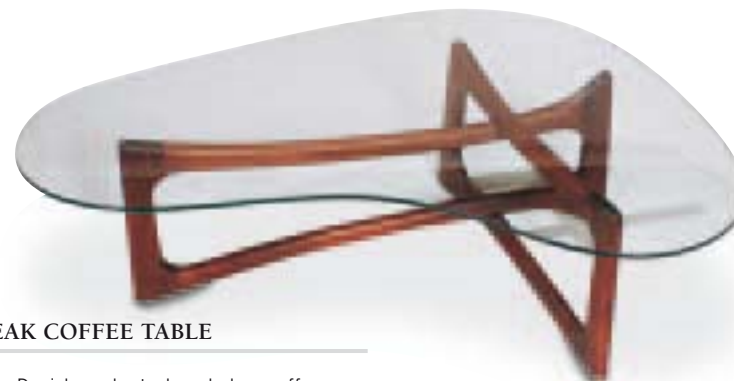
The table is raised on turned and tapering legs. Designed and manufactured by Georg Jensen, Denmark. *H:51cm (20in); W:150cm (59in); D:79cm (31in).* SDR 1



NOGUCHI IN50

This coffee table is made up of just three pieces: a 2-cm- (¾-in-) thick, three-sided, plate-glass top and two solid, curved, legs in ebonized wood. The legs interlock to form a

stable support. Designed by Isamu Noguchi for The Herman Miller Furniture Company, USA. 1944. *H:58.5cm (23in); W:113cm (44½in); D:101cm (39½in).* QU 3



TEAK COFFEE TABLE

This Danish-made, teak-and-glass coffee table is made from just three pieces. The base is formed from two conjoined, cruciform teak frames that are rounded and upturned

slightly at the edges. It supports a free-form, asymmetrically shaped glass table top. c.1960. *H:39cm (15½in).* FRE 1

SIDEBOARDS

SUCH WAS THE DESTRUCTION caused by machines during World War II that many designers instinctively turned their backs on industrial processes and embraced the more traditional values of craftsmanship instead. The sideboard was a piece of furniture particularly well suited to displaying what a talented craftsman could do, and so, during the late 1940s, the wooden sideboard emerged as a prominent form of furniture.

Sideboards and credenzas, rather than upright cabinets, were favoured during this period, as they fitted well with the current vogue for low-lying, clutter-free interiors. Their horizontal form, too, spoke of dynamism in a way that the towering storage units of earlier eras never did.

With applied surface decoration still frowned upon, designers of Modern sideboards made the most of the pleasing patterns of wood grains, with the composition of handles and doors

also adding to the overall visual effect. Popular woods of the time included teak, rosewood, oak, and palisander, with brass often employed for handles. Short, sometimes tapered, legs were a common feature at the base of sideboards, as they lent them a lightweight look (and reflected the widespread use of similar supports in architecture of the time).

It was sideboards by the Scandinavian designers that were initially much in demand after the war, although it wasn't long before American furniture designers – and, to a lesser extent, Italian and British designers – were also producing sideboards of note. With the onset of the 1960s, however, and specifically with the arrival of plastics, the sideboard fell from favour, as a new generation of designers rejected anything that they perceived of as being too old-fashioned.



TEAK SIDEBOARD

This teak sideboard from the Netherlands has a rectangular top above two sets of double doors, each of which encloses a shelved

interior, and two drawers. The case is raised on square-section, enamelled-metal uprights. Designed by Cees Braakman and produced by Patsoe as part of the U + N range of furniture. c.1959. W:229cm (90½in). BonBay 2



NAKASHIMA SIDEBOARD

This black walnut and grass cloth sideboard was made in the United States. The rectangular case has two sliding doors flanked by another

cupboard door, a fitted interior, and three walnut feet. Designed by George Nakashima. c.1966. W:213.5cm (84in). FRE 5

The horizontal shape of the unit is offset by the vertical grain of the wood.

Discreet circular recesses make it easy to slide the doors back and forth.



THIN-EDGE SIDEBOARD

This walnut-veneer sideboard has one walnut cabinet that flanks two cream-coloured sliding doors. The doors open to reveal three shelves. The case is supported by tapered, aluminium legs. Without any surface decoration, the

The façade of the sideboard is entirely free from applied surface decoration.

sideboard's only visual effect is the contrast between the wood and white sections and the natural effect of the wood grain. The piece was designed by George Nelson for The Herman Miller Furniture Company, USA. 1950s. H:84.5cm (33¼in); W:71cm (67¼in); D:30.5cm (12in). SDR 3

Cream-coloured panels give the sideboard a contemporary appearance.

The use of metal for the legs gives the sideboard a somewhat industrial look.

The contrast between the white and wood sections of the piece add visual effect.



TEAK SIDEBOARD

This teak, rectilinear sideboard has two doors and four graduated drawers. The handles are small, polished-steel pulls and the case stands on steel

supports. Designed by John and Sylvia Reid for Stag Furniture, UK. 1959. *H:170cm (27½in); W:137cm (54in); D:45.75cm (15in).* FRE 3



NINE-DRAWER BUFFET

This buffet has three long drawers flanked on each side by three short drawers, all with rosewood fronts and brass ring pulls. The

ebonized-oak frame is raised on short, square-section legs. Designed by Edward Wormley for Dunbar, USA. *W:176cm (69¼in).* SDR 2



FOUR-DOOR SIDEBOARD

This rosewood-veneer sideboard has a rectangular top above veneer doors: sliding outer doors and a hinged inner pair. Each door has a small indent

for a handle. Designed by Borge Mogensen, Denmark. c.1958. *W:238cm (93¼in).* DOR 3



WALNUT CREDENZA

The top of this Japanese walnut credenza has a free-form edge. Below is a rectangular case with two sliding doors, each with a recessed

rectangular pull. The interior of the cabinet has four drawers on one side and three adjustable shelves on the other. *W:183cm (72in).* SDR 2



TEAK SIDEBOARD

This teak-veneered sideboard has four drawers in a rectangular case and steel legs terminating in wooden feet. Attributed to Gianfranco Frattini,

Italy. 1950s. *H:53cm (21¼in); W:178cm (71¼in); D:42cm (16¼in).* QU 1



541 CABINET

This elm-veneer sideboard has a rectangular case and four sliding doors in matching veneer; the strap handles are in leather. The case

stands on six metal legs. Designed by Florence Knoll for Knoll International, USA. c.1952. *W:180cm (70¼in).* DOR 3



LACQUERED BUFFET

This ivory-lacquered buffet cabinet has five doors that conceal a set of interior drawers and shelves. The large ring pulls are in brass, and decorative brass studs are applied to the

front and sides of the piece, while the top is free of ornamentation. Designed by Tommi Parzinger, USA. *W:208 (82in).* SDR 4



WOVEN-FRONT SIDEBOARD

Made of oak and Brazilian rosewood, this Danish sideboard has two sliding doors. The doors are fronted with woven panels within a narrow frame and have recessed oval pulls. The leg supports

are rectangular. Designed by Hans Wegner for Ry Møbler. 1966. *H:78.5cm (30¼in); W:200cm (78¼in); D:49cm (19¼in).* Bk 2

LIGHTING

IN THE FIRST HALF of the 20th century, lighting design was a separate discipline to furniture design, with designers rarely straddling the boundary between the two. The post-war generation of designers, however, considered both to be branches of industrial design.

The greatest draw of lighting design was the scope for decorative expression it allowed. As Achille Castiglioni, one of the most celebrated designers of the period, put it, “the interest [in lighting design] was not so much centred on solving the problems of lighting...as on emphasizing the decorative qualities of fixtures when they are without light”. Italy led the way in post-war lighting, with companies such as O-Luce, Fontana Arte, and Stilnovo.

Initially, the preferred look was one of elegance, symmetry, and restraint. By the 1960s, however, the Space Age and science were influencing lighting design. Spherical forms (imitating planets, fusing nuclei, or DNA) became popular, and plastics were favoured. Many designers were so taken with the decorative possibilities of lighting design that they made little attempt to articulate the function of the objects they designed. Others followed the “form follows function” mantra of Modernism, but with tongues firmly in cheeks. An essentially functional area of design in 1945, electric lighting lost its aura of naivety as designers realized it could be exploited to great decorative effect.



The glass was specially blown to the designer's specifications.

The bulb is a bulb within a bulb.

The lamp was available with either clear glass (as shown here) or frosted glass.

The aluminium base has been polished for striking effect.

BULB FLOOR LAMP

This huge floor lamp in the shape of an electric light bulb is one of several designs on this popular theme – this particular example has a large, clear bulb of blown glass that

stands on a screw base made of polished aluminium. The wit expressed in the piece was typical of lighting designs of the 1960s. The lamp was designed by Ingo Maurer, Germany. 1966. H:54cm (21¼in); D:34cm (15¼in). DOR 2



KD24 TABLE LAMP

The orange plastic cover of this lamp stands on a white plastic base. The cover and base curves mirror one another. Designed by Joe Colombo for Kartell, Italy. 1968. H:14.5cm (5¾in). DOR 2



TABLE LAMP

This adjustable table lamp has a painted, anodized-aluminium and steel frame. Designed by A.B. Reid and manufactured by Troughton and Young, UK. 1946. H:48.5cm (19in).



ATOMIC CHANDELIER

This atom-shaped lamp has 12 opaque-glass bulbs mounted on chromium-plated metal tubes. Designed by J.T. Kalmar, Austria. 1969. Diam:64cm (25¼in). DOR 2



METAL CEILING LIGHT

This six-bulb light with opaque bulbs is mounted on a tube-metal, atom-shaped frame; it is brass-coated and patinated. Italy. 1950s. H:110cm (43¼in); Diam:60cm (23¾in). DOR 2



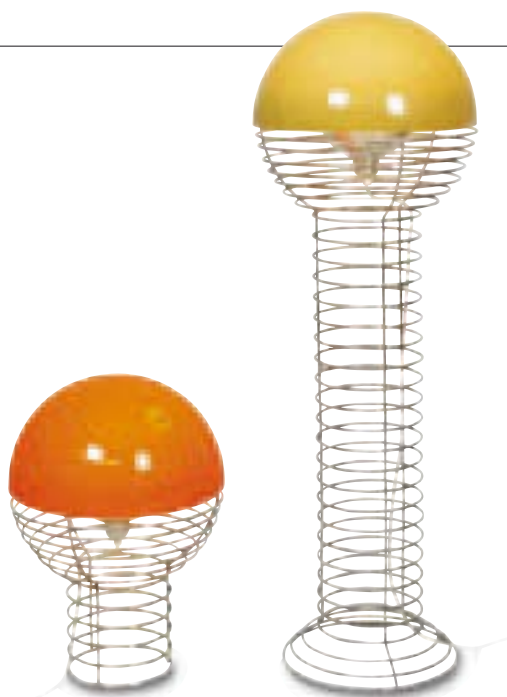
PIPISTRELLO TABLE LAMP

The four-section shade is methacrylate; the metal stand has a height-adjustable, telescopic steel rod. Designed by Gae Aulenti for Martinelli Luce, Italy. 1965–66. Diam:54cm (21¼in). DOR 2



ARTELUCE CEILING LIGHT

The grey-enamelled tin shade is suspended on a nickel-plated rod. The shades can be rotated to change the light's direction. Italy. c.1950. H:77cm (30¼in); Diam:58cm (22¾in). DOR 1

**TABLE LAMPS**

Each of these lamps has a brightly coloured, half-spherical plastic lampshade that sits atop a chrome-plated, spring-like wire base. Designed by Verner Panton for J.Lube, Switzerland. 1972. Small lamp: H:55cm (21½in); Diam:40cm (15½in). DOR 2

**RING LIGHT**

This plastic wall light has a series of brightly coloured, raised-and-moulded concentric circles set within a square plastic tile. Designed by Verner Panton for Louis Poulsen, Denmark. 1969–70. H:42cm (16½in); W:62cm (24½in); D:24cm (9½in). DOR 3

**TALL FLOOR LAMPS**

These tall floor-standing lamps have silk (left) and parchment (right) lampshades supported on three-legged, black-lacquered metal bases. Produced by Knoll International, USA. 1950s. H:125cm (49½in). DOR 1

**FLAMINGO FLOOR LAMP**

This lamp is made of flexible brass rods raised on a cast-iron stand. The aluminium shade is brown and aubergine. Designed by Karl Hagenauer, Austria. 1950s. H:127.5cm (50in). DOR 3

**WOODEN FLOOR LAMP**

This floor lamp has a white-lacquered wooden shade over a metal frame. Designed by Paolo Portoghesi for Casa Papanice, Italy. 1969. H:175cm (68½in). DOR 4

**SAN REMO FLOOR LAMP**

This lamp's ivory-coloured, enamelled metal stand sprouts plexiglass palm leaves. Designed by Archizoom Associates, Italy. 1968. H:160cm (85in); Diam:95cm (37½in). DOR 4

**GIUNONE FLOOR LAMP**

This white-lacquered, aluminium-and-metal floor lamp has four swivelling reflectors. Designed by Vico Magistretti for Artemide, Italy. 1970. H:206cm (81½in); Diam:70cm (42½in). DOR 3

CHAIRS AND STOOLS

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE chair in relation to other forms of furniture reached an all-time high in the post-war period. In 1953, George Nelson compiled his classic and economically titled *Chairs* and wrote in the book's introduction that "every truly original idea – every innovation in design, every new application of materials, every technical invention for furniture – seems to find its most important expression in a chair".

The key innovations to affect chair design at the time were, firstly, the breakthrough that made it possible to bend plywood in more than one direction and, secondly, the

development of protean forms of plastic. Both of these developments allowed designers to experiment with more expressive forms, the result being that chairs became increasingly sculptural in shape. A heightened interest in ergonomics also helped to usher in the era of organic seating design.

As furniture designers gained confidence in using new materials and techniques, they increasingly began to challenge established beliefs about chair design. The idea of a four-legged chair, for instance, became outmoded, as designers opted for either three legs, a pedestal base (innovated by Eero Saarinen), or, in the 1960s, legless chairs that sat low to the ground. While some of these designs were legitimate responses to changes in lifestyle – formal social occasions, for example, were on the decline – others were produced purely to provoke.

The combination of vinyl and chrome-plated steel is reminiscent of American car styling.

The seat rotates with automatic return, maintaining visual coherence within a bar.

The bottom-heavy shape is like a birillo (the Italian word for bowling pin), which gives the stool its name.

The X-shaped fibreglass base conceals fully rotating wheels.

A neat square of chrome-plated steel provides a footrest for the sitter.

The base is ringed in rubber to keep the stool from slipping or damaging the floor.

BIRILLO BAR STOOL

This unusual-looking bar stool has a chromium-plated, tubular-steel and steel-plate frame. The small, round backrest and the square seat are both upholstered and covered in black vinyl. A chrome-plated

footrest hangs from the front of the seat. The stool is raised on a single column that terminates in a black, cross-shaped base made of fibreglass. The piece was designed by Joe Colombo for Zanotta, Italy. 1969–70. H:105cm (41½in); W:47cm (18½in); D:50cm (19½in). DOR 2



STOOLS AND SIDE TABLE

Manufactured in the United States, each of the two stools of this three-piece set has a circular, polished-walnut seat that is fixed to a three-legged, black-enamelled metal frame.

The third part of the set is the matching table, which has a square, black-laminate table top that is supported on a frame similar to the chair frames. Designed by Florence Knoll for Knoll International. c.1950. H:38cm (15in). DOR 1



ROCKING STOOL

This rocking stool has a seat made of teak, which is supported by a chrome-plated wire shaft on a circular base. Designed by Isamu Noguchi for Knoll International, USA. H:29.5cm (11½in). SDR 1



LAMBDA CHAIR

This Italian chair has been made from a sheet of punched and moulded tin, which was then finished in red lacquer. The tapering legs terminate in rubber feet. 1963. H:76.5cm (39½in). DOR 3



TULIP CHAIR

This armchair has a moulded white-fibreglass shell on an enamelled white base; the seat's slip cover is of a woven red fabric. Designed by Eero Saarinen for Knoll International, USA. 1956. H:81cm (32in). FRE 1



PRETZEL CHAIR

The rail and arms are made from one piece of plywood bent into a pretzel shape. The seat has vinyl upholstery. Designed by George Nelson for The Herman Miller Furniture Company, USA. 1957. H:77.5cm (30½in). FRE 2

**VICARIO CHAIR**

Moulded from one piece of plastic, this chair has a squared back above a wide, rectangular seat; indents in the square-section legs add strength. Designed by Vico Magistretti, Italy. *c.*1970. *H:*63.5cm (25in); *W:*71cm (28in). *BonBay* 1

**CHINESE CHAIR**

This chair was so named because its design is based on that of ancient Chinese chairs. It has a light, oak-and-plywood frame with a woven-ropes seat. Designed by Hans Wegner for Fritz Hansen, Denmark. 1943. *H:*79cm (31in). *BonE* 1

**WISHBONE CHAIR**

The top rail of this chair curves round to form the armrests, while the backrest is of black leather. A wishbone-shaped back splat continues down to form a back leg. The seat is a glossy black. *c.*1960. *H:*73.5cm (29in). *LOS* 3

**FIBREGLASS CHAIR**

Part of the Fibreglass Group of chairs, this armchair has a free-form seat in ivory with a cut-out back, on a steel pedestal base. Designed by Erwine and Estelle Laverne, USA. *H:*75cm (29½in); *W:*61cm (24in); *D:*51cm (20in). *SDR* 2

**SIDE CHAIR**

This mahogany side chair has a slender, curved crest rail and two tapering backposts. The leather-upholstered seat cushion has a webbed seat support and is raised on tapering legs. Denmark. *H:*80.5cm (31½in). *DRA* 1

**SIDE CHAIR**

This side chair has a plywood seat and back supported on a painted metal frame that terminates in metal feet. The chair was designed by Egon Eiermann, Germany. 1948. *BonBay* 2

**ZITHER CHAIR**

The chair has several turned back rails between two tapering supports. The solid maple seat has moulded edges and rests on a wrought-iron base. Designed by Paul McCobb, USA. *H:*86.5cm (34in); *W:*45.5cm (18in); *D:*48cm (19in). *LOS* 1

**GRAND PRIX CHAIR**

This chair's seat and back are made from a single sheet of bent, laminated beech that is covered in black leather. The shaped and tapered legs are of teak. Designed by Arne Jacobsen for Fritz Hansen, Denmark. *H:*77.5cm (31in). *FRE* 1

**SWIVEL CHAIR**

The armchair has a seat shell of white plastic, protruding armrests, and a suspended chair back. The base is plasticized metal. Designed by Luigi Colani, Germany. *c.*1969. *H:*84cm (33in); *W:*65cm (25½in); *D:*57cm (22½in). *DOR* 2

**SKANDIA CHAIR**

This rosewood stacking chair has a seat and back made from a series of single slats moulded to fit the shape of the sitter. The legs are chromium-plated steel-rod. Designed by Hans Bratstrup for Hove Mobler, Denmark. 1957. *DN* 2

**POLYPROP CHAIR**

The body of this extremely popular stackable chair is a white, injection-moulded shell; it stands on tubular-steel supports. Designed by Robin Day and manufactured by Hille. 1962-63. 1

**NIKKE CHAIR**

This bent-plywood stacking chair is of teak veneer, and is raised on enamelled steel legs. Designed by Tapio Wirkkala, Finland. *c.*1950s. *H:*82cm (32½in); *W:*44cm (17½in); *D:*54cm (21½in). 1

LOUNGE CHAIRS

THE INCREASING DOMINANCE of the television within households meant that, more than ever, the living room had become the focus of many homes. With the fashion for fitted storage units forcing shelving into the background, coupled with the demise of the imposing dining table, it was left to the lounge chair to assume centre stage.

The lounge chair was produced in an incredible variety of shapes and sizes in the post-war years and made in a diverse range of materials. The early trend of the mid 1940s was for lounge chairs of modest, minimal form. The most celebrated of these was the LCW by Charles and Ray Eames. This was a moulded plywood chair that many consider to be the most complete achievement of the Modern era. A “completely integrated and harmonious expression of form, function, and materials” was how design critics Charlotte and Peter Fiell put it.

As the economic situation in countries across the globe brightened during the 1950s, however, the plush, generously proportioned armchair came back into favour. Colourful, and even patterned, upholstery became increasingly common, as people were eager to put the austerity of the war years behind them.

The development in the mid 1950s of foam and rubber padding offered new opportunities for designers, who could now make chairs that were soft, yet sleek. Stretch fabrics also increased the possibilities of lithe outlines, as the appearance of lounge chairs became increasingly refined. In the mid 1960s, the availability of new plastics blew the field of chair design right open once again, although this new material ultimately had less impact on lounge chairs than on other types of chair design.



The steel legs are brass-plated to give a richer visual effect.

Latex foam upholstery ensures that the chair is comfortable.

Balls stop the chair legs from slipping on or digging into the floor.

MARTINGALA SOFA

This two-seater sofa has a high, upholstered back and sculptural, down-swept arms. The low arms give the impression that the piece is compact and takes up very little space; the narrow, tapered legs also add to this overall sense of lightness. The sofa has a steel frame with band stretchers and foam upholstery that is

covered in red and black chequered fabric. The seat cushion is made from polyurethane foam and polyester fibre. The frame is raised on brass-plated legs that end in black-rubber, knobbed-shaped end fittings. Originally produced as a suite with two matching armchairs, the sofa was designed by Marco Zanuso for Arflex, Italy. 1954. H:86.5cm (34in); W:147.25cm (58in); D:81cm (32in). QU 5



WOMB CHAIR

The Womb chair takes its name from the womb-like form of the sculpted seat. The armchair's seat is made from a fibreglass shell, and the chair is upholstered in foam padding and covered in turquoise fabric.

The seat is raised on a varnished steel-rod frame. The armchair comes with a matching ottoman on a similar frame. The pair were designed by Eero Saarinen for Knoll International. 1950s. Armchair: H:96cm (37½in); W:84.5cm (33¼in); D:102.5cm (40½in). QU 3

The fabric has an eye-catching, hound's-tooth check pattern.

The chair's cover is attached to the base with buttons so that it can be removed.



WOODPECKER CHAIR

This armchair has a steel-rod frame with a coil-sprung upholstered seat. The black-painted legs have ball feet and support wooden armrests. Designed by Ernest Race. c.1952. H:66cm (26in); W:66.5cm (26¼in); D:57cm (22½in). R20



GILDA ARMCHAIR

This Italian armchair has an oak-dyed ash frame with bronzed-brass hardware and a leather seat and back. Designed by Carlo Mollino in 1954, this is a 2004 Zanotta re-issue. H:93cm (36½in); W:79cm (31in); D:113cm (44½in). ZAN

**SADIMA ARMCHAIR**

This armchair has a foam base and a removable stretch fabric cover. It is raised on an ivory-coloured polyester base. Designed by Luigi Colani and distributed by Sadima, Germany. c.1970. H:69cm (27 $\frac{1}{2}$ in). DOR 3

**P32 ARMCHAIR**

This armchair has an adjustable, swivelling frame on a black-painted steel base. The foam seat is upholstered in yellow-green wool fabric. Designed by Osvaldo Borsani for Tecno, Italy. H:83cm (32 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); W:82cm (32 $\frac{1}{2}$ in). WKA 3

**BOBO SEAT**

This monoblock seating unit is made from polyurethane foam. It was intended for use as either a lounge chair or a sofa when more than one piece was side by side. Designed by Cini Boeri, Italy. 1967. H:60cm (23 $\frac{3}{4}$ in). SDR 1

**RELAX ARMCHAIR**

This plush armchair has a spring seat-support; its frame and seat cushion are upholstered in brown mohair. The chair is supported on cylindrical, blonde-wood feet. Designed by Jean Royere, France. 1940s. H:101.5cm (40in). SDR 4

**EGG CHAIR**

This chair has a flattened ovoid form and is made of fibreglass. The hinged lid opens to reveal an upholstered seat. Designed by Peter Ghyczy for Reuter Produkts, Germany. 1968. H:98cm (38 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); W:76cm (30in); D:89cm (35in). L&T 2

**DIAMOND ARMCHAIR**

The chair's seat and back are made of sculpted, black-vinyl-coated wire mesh; they are raised on enamelled supports. Designed by Harry Bertoia for Knoll International, USA. 1952. H:71.75cm (28 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); W:140cm (45in); D:80cm (31 $\frac{1}{2}$ in). L&T

**PLATNER ARMCHAIR**

This chromium-framed armchair has a leather-padded back and arms and a mesh support. The leather cushion rests on a mesh base. Designed by Warren Platner for Knoll International, USA. c.1966. H:72.5cm (28 $\frac{1}{2}$ in). L&T 1

**PK-20 EASY CHAIR**

This easy chair has a cane seat and back on a cantilevered steel frame. It has a matt, chrome-plated spring-steel base. Designed by Poul Kjaerholm for Fritz Hansen, Denmark. 1967. H:84cm (33in); W:68cm (26 $\frac{1}{2}$ in). Bk 2

**HIGH-BACK AIRCHAIR**

This lounge chair has an angular seat and back, raised on flaring wooden legs. The upholstery is burgundy damask and the trim is brocade. Designed by Ico Parisi, Italy. H:120cm (44in); W:71cm (28in); D:89cm (35in). SDR 3

**NO 53 EASY CHAIR**

This chair has a teak frame with horn-shaped arms and brass hardware. It is upholstered in green fabric. Designed by Finn Juhl, Denmark. 1953. H:74.25cm (29 $\frac{1}{2}$ in); W:71cm (28in); D:63.5cm (25 $\frac{1}{2}$ in). SDR 2

**SUPERCOMFORT CHAIR**

This lounge chair has an unusual rosewood-faced plywood frame. Its padded seat, back, and removable armrests are covered in black leather. Designed by Joe Colombo and produced by Comfort, Denmark. c.1964. BonBay 3

**BAMSE ARMCHAIR**

The *Bamse* "Papa Bear" armchair has a high upholstered-and-buttoned back and down-sweeping arms. The square upholstered seat with a cushion is raised on splayed teak legs. c.1951. H:98.5cm (38 $\frac{1}{2}$ in). Bk 1

POSTMODERN AND
CONTEMPORARY

1970 ONWARDS



SOCIAL UNEASE

CHARACTERIZED BY INCREASED CYNICISM AND INDIVIDUALISM, THE LATE 20TH CENTURY ALSO SAW RAPID TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES, LEADING TO IMPROVED COMMUNICATION OF THOUGHTS AND IDEAS.

BY THE TIME THE 1970S arrived, the swinging 60s were losing momentum. Interest rates and inflation were rising, and unemployment figures were spiralling out of control. To add to the global sense of gloom, scientists were ringing warning bells about the damage that people were doing to the environment.

Against this backdrop, a crippling blow was dealt to the West by a group of oil-rich Arab nations. In 1973, in reaction to the West's support for Israel, oil supplies from the Middle East were cut, sparking a worldwide energy crisis. As the industries of the United States, Europe, and Japan struggled with the knock-on effects of the oil embargo, consumer confidence plummeted, and by 1975 a global recession was underway.



The utopian visions of a mechanized future, touted by Modernist architects and designers since the 1920s, were finally laid to rest during the 1970s, as a deep cynicism began to course through contemporary culture. Punks, conceptual artists, and satirical writers were all coming to the same nihilistic conclusions.

Such was the sense of disillusionment that when economies did begin to pick up again at the start of the 1980s, there was little of the communal spirit of optimism that characterized the boom years of the mid century. Rather, there was a more self-interested attitude of “grab what you can”. Such predatory instincts were only encouraged by the governments of Britain and the United States, led by Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan respectively, who made much of the economic necessity for a strong entrepreneurial and capitalist culture.

POSTMODERNISM COMES INTO FOCUS During the 1980s, the concept of Postmodernism – an idea that had been gaining momentum since the 1960s – came firmly into focus. The subject of much discussion by everyone from philosophers to fashion designers, Postmodernism was characterized by a loss of faith in the forward momentum of Modernism. Culture had reached a cul-de-sac, so

Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris The bright blue utility pipes and shiny metal frame give this Postmodern building a visually anarchic exterior. Completed in 1977, it marked a move away from the streamlined aesthetic that had dominated Modernism.

Postmodernists believed, and the only appropriate response was to plunder the past.

By the end of the decade, however, consumers had grown tired of the seeming anarchy of revivalist styles that

were rampaging across all areas of design, while the economic crash of 1987 had dealt a blow to the culture of greed. The discovery of a hole in the ozone layer and the Chernobyl disaster of 1986 forced environmental issues back onto the international agenda. The 1990s, then, were greeted with a rather chastened outlook.

Perhaps the most significant cultural trend of the 1990s was driven by advances in both the computer and telecommunications industries. Through portable phones and via the internet it now became possible to remain in close proximity to both home and office when physically distanced from them. The increased ease of communication also had the effect of turning the wheels of culture ever faster. With ideas and images being disseminated like quicksilver across the mass media, cultural developments seemed to come and go in the blink of an eye. Since the arrival of the new millennium, keeping up with current cultural trends has become increasingly onerous.



Table by Michèle de Lucchi This table, designed for Memphis, is animal-like in form. A circular, laminated table top emerges from the rectangular “body” on a thin, blue-painted steel “neck”. The four steel legs have flat feet. 1983. H:60.5cm (23 3/4in); W:47cm (18 1/2in); D:63.5cm (25in). MAP

TIMELINE 1970–2000

1970 Shiro Kuramata designs his Irregular Forms chest of drawers for Fujiko.

1973 Recession begins across Europe following OPEC oil-price rises.

1976 Mario Bellini designs the Cab chair; its steel skeleton and removable leather skin



Etторе Sottsass chair

signify a move away from the desire to achieve pure form. The Punk movement gains global attention and highlights young people's growing frustration and desire to dismantle the old order.

1977 Completion of the Richard Rogers- and Renzo

Piano-designed Pompidou Centre in Paris.

1980 The launch of MTV, a 24-hour music channel that gives voice to an energetic youth culture.

1981 Memphis, a design group led by Ettore Sottsass, shows its first furniture collection in Milan. Ron Arad, an Israeli designer, opens his studio,



Apple Mac

called One Off Ltd, in London and creates unique pieces of furniture using inexpensive, industrial materials.

1982 The first fax machines and domestic camcorders first become available in Japan.

1984 Apple launches its Mac computer with mouse, revolutionizing the industry.

St Martin's Lane Hotel French designer Philippe Starck has captured the energy, fun, and colour of the age in his design for the St. Martin's Lane Hotel, London – one of the Schrager group of hotels. The hotel lobby is an eclectic mix of Postmodern and period-style furniture and decor, creating a truly contemporary effect. Typical features of the age are the muted gold-beige colours with occasional bright splashes, combined with the free-form shapes of the furniture.



Felt Chair This armchair has a reinforced fibreglass body supported on a polished aluminium leg. It was designed by Marc Newson for Cappellini. 1994. H:86cm (34in); W:67cm (26½in); D:106cm (41¾in). SCP

1985 Driade, an Italian furniture manufacturer, produces the first chair designs by Philippe Starck. A hole is discovered in the ozone layer.

1986 A Soviet nuclear reactor at Chernobyl in Russia explodes.

1987 The American stock market crashes.

1989 The Vitra Design Museum opens in Germany: its collection is almost entirely made up of



Philippe Starck chair

20th-century objects. Terence Conran's Design Museum opens in London. Jasper Morrison's Plywood chair signifies a shift away from a brash, energetic aesthetic to something a little more restrained. The Berlin Wall comes down.

1991 The Single European Market lifts trade restrictions within the EEC.

1993 Droog, a Netherlands-based design collective, debuts at the Milan Furniture fair.

1994 The Channel tunnel opens between England and France.

1997 Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum opens in Bilbao, Spain. The first adult mammal – a sheep called Dolly – is successfully cloned. Microsoft becomes the most valuable company in the world.

2000 Issey Miyake's Parisian A-Poc store is designed by the French brothers, Ronan and



Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao

Erwan Bouroullec. The estimated number of worldwide internet users reaches 295 million.

POST-1970 FURNITURE

AS EARLY AS 1966, ROBERT VENTURI, an American architect and theorist, aired the ideas that would eventually become known as Postmodernism. In his influential text *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, Venturi wrote of his admiration for “elements which are hybrid rather than ‘pure’, compromising rather than ‘clean’, distorted rather than ‘straightforward’, ambiguous rather than ‘articulated’”. Venturi was boldly rebelling against Modernism’s zealous drive for refinement. It was not until the 1980s that Postmodernism became the dominant theme of design, however.

During the 1970s two broad strands of design existed. The first strand was widely labelled “Anti-Design”. Most prominently pursued in Italy, designers of this persuasion took furniture to ever more extremes in order to express their frustration with what they perceived to be a damagingly dysfunctional society. Although some designers, such as Studio 65, claimed their use of bright, clashing colours and kitsch, cartoon-like forms was an attempt to achieve popular appeal, others, such as Global Tools, insisted that the sheer oddness of their designs would deter buyers, forcing them to make furniture of their own.

The second strand of design to emerge during the 1970s was one that many people at the time referred to as “High Tech” (after a book of the same name by Joan Kron and Suzanne Slesin). This predominantly American trend was a return to the severe, rational principles of early Modernism, prompted by the belt-tightening going on within the furniture industry. Designers also claimed that their pursuit of timeless, durable designs would counter the culture of disposability that scientists had warned was destroying the earth.

THE HEYDAY OF POSTMODERNISM

The defining movement in furniture design of the early 1980s was Memphis. Although based in Milan, Memphis was a loose collective of international designers who nonetheless developed a highly distinctive style. Purposefully combining both expensive and inexpensive materials, as well as borrowing decorative motifs from various ethnic cultures and periods of history, the Memphis look was an attention-grabbing, highly eclectic (and entirely Postmodern) aesthetic that fitted well with



Little Beaver armchair and ottoman Both these pieces are made of laminated cardboard. Designed by Frank Gehry for Vitra, they form part of his “Experimental Edges” series, which exploited the expressive qualities of corrugated cardboard. This example is marked with a brass tag showing it to be No.54 out of the 100 made. 1987. Chair: H:81cm (32in); W:85cm (33¼in); D:96.5cm (38in). SDR

the 1980s trend for conspicuous consumption. Memphis products were part furniture, part art, and part fashion accessory. Any consideration for practicalities was purely perfunctory.

By the end of the decade, a new, rather more cool and calm look was beginning to emerge in furniture design. Designers from Japan, Belgium, Britain, and Italy all subscribed to the determinedly international style described variously as “New Minimalism”, “Late Modern”, or simply “Dematerialization”. Unadorned furniture designs became the order of the day, with materials such as clear acrylic and wicker finding favour. As the 1990s progressed, however, designers quickly recovered their sense of adventure as a healthy injection of humour entered the furniture industry. Droog, another loose collective of designers, led the way with a witty take on design that often incorporated the use of found objects.

In the 1990s, computers became an essential tool for many designers, who could now develop their work on-screen rather than going through the laborious process of drawing up designs and making models. Many furniture designs acquired the smooth, technical appearance that had long defined the look of electronic consumer goods but had only lately entered the lexicon of furniture design.



Delo-Lindo table A witty twist on an existing form, designers Delo-Lindo have incorporated two canvas magazine bags into the corner of their coffee table.

THE ROLE OF ART

Art and furniture design might have been bedfellows for centuries, but by the 1970s it had become, in some cases, virtually impossible to distinguish the two. “The main characteristics [of new design]”, wrote the designer and theorist Alessandro Mendini in 1978, “is to regard objects not in their functional capacity but to think in terms of their expressivity”. Four years earlier, Mendini had made the same point with actions rather than words, by setting fire to a chair placed on a plinth.

While designers at the end of the century were veering ever closer to the territories of art, a number of artists were flirting heavily with furniture design.

American Pop artist Claes Oldenburg was one of the first to adopt the language of furniture design for his sculptures, believing it would allow his art to communicate with a far wider audience.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, various artists produced functional furniture designs, the most prominent being the American artists Donald Judd and Richard Artschwager. In the 1990s, the trend continued as British furniture manufacturer SCP launched their “Please Touch” collection, a range of furniture designed by artists, including Rachel Whiteread, Julian Opie, and Richard Wentworth.

Mendini’s Lasso chair This archetypal chair form perched on top of a plinth was burnt for art’s sake by Mendini in 1974.



MODULAR COLOURED CUBES

Like many furniture designs produced in the final few decades of the 20th century, Massimo Morozzi's *Paesaggi Italiani* storage system (1996) is visually exhilarating (*Paesaggi Italiani* translates as "Italian Landscapes") but entirely rudimentary from a functional standpoint. It illustrates perfectly that it was aesthetic and conceptual concerns, as opposed to practical ones, that dominated the thoughts of many designers of this era.

During the late 1960s, Morozzi was a member of the radical architecture and design group Archizoom, a flamboyant, Florence-based collective that played

a pivotal role in the development of Anti-Design (see p.452). Attempting to puncture the high-minded idealism and restraint that had long been associated with Modernism, the pioneers of "Anti-Design" can be seen as proto Postmodernists.

Like many storage systems designed in the 1990s, the pixel-like *Paesaggi Italiani* is modular, meaning that it can assume innumerable shapes and sizes. The boxes, too, are available in a broad palette of colours, allowing the whims of the owner to dictate the ultimate appearance of the *Paesaggi Italiani*. This surrendering

of the design initiative to the consumer – who, theoretically, is an amateur – is a gesture entirely in keeping with the spirit of Anti-Design. The disco-lights effect of the coloured cubes can also be considered as a mockery of the stern, perfectionist streak that characterized much Modernist design.

***Paesaggi Italiani* storage system** This modular furniture system functions as a room divider on one side and as a storage system on the other. It is made of coloured, lacquered, translucent plastic and is available in up to 75 colours. It is also available in any arrangement of size and shape to order.



The bright array of colours used for the unit makes the design reminiscent of 1960s furniture designs.

The repeated cube motif of the system resembles children's building blocks, emphasizing the playful nature of the design.

The door panels are made from translucent plastic so that the contents of the storage units can be seen.

The small door handles are discreetly tucked into the corners of the door panels so as not to disturb the overall visual effect.

Vacant spaces emphasize the "building block" nature of this design.

Each cubic unit is the same size and shape, ensuring that extra units can be added or taken away at will.

ELEMENTS OF STYLE

The emergence of Postmodernism in the late 1970s led furniture designers of this period to become less concerned with function and structure and more fascinated by the communicative qualities of furniture's surface. With aesthetic and conceptual matters increasingly occupying designers during the 1980s and 1990s, materials and forms were often used for ornamental, rather than practical purposes. In an effort to divert attention towards the more ideological message of their work, many designers turned their backs on the ostentatious use of technologies, preferring to utilize rudimentary materials and construction techniques. Some designers (particularly those with a training in architecture) did embrace a more sophisticated, structural style that was variously labelled "High Tech" or "Matt Black". The 1990s also saw a return of interest in the technological aesthetic as the possibilities of computer-aided design and production became too enticing to ignore.



Injection-moulded chair

Injection-moulding

While designers had largely tired of using plastic during the 1970s and 1980s, the material did return to popularity in the 1990s as increasingly sophisticated techniques for moulding were developed. High-pressure injection-moulding enabled greater precision of forms and prompted a spate of sculptural designs similar to those seen in the revolutionary 1960s.



Easy Edges stool by Frank Gehry

Asymmetry

In order to demonstrate their rejection of the strict, rational ideals that had defined the Modern era, many Postmodern designers incorporated an awkward asymmetry into their work. Often this was expressed through colour, but more daringly it was also expressed through form.



MDF bureau plat

Humour

As designers' interest in structure and engineering waned during the 1980s, an increasingly mischievous streak entered furniture design. While Postmodern designers of the 1980s often made esoteric jokes – as in the table above, printed with an 18th-century table design – there was a growing seam of softer humour in the 1990s that often incorporated anthropomorphism.



Plastic-laminated cabinet

Plastic laminates

Widely used during the 1980s to cover wooden furniture, plastic laminates were often exotically patterned. Their attention-grabbing nature emphasized the fact that function was of minor concern to designers – it was surface decoration that they were interested in. Plastic-covered wood was a gleeful Postmodern riposte to the "truth to materials" mantra of earlier decades.



Detail of glass dining table

Minimalism

After the visually cacophonous Postmodern movement, many designers reverted to a quieter style of design at the end of the 1980s. Glass and clear acrylic became popular materials amongst designers during the 1990s, as did the use of untreated wood and brushed metals. This look was sometimes referred to as "Late Modern" by commentators.



Marble table base

Marble

Marble symbolized permanence, purity, and the high ideals of Classical antiquity to Postmodern designers, who frequently challenged such symbolism by combining it with more lowly materials, such as plastic, glass, or garishly painted wood. The attractive veining of marble was also appreciated at a time when surface decoration was once again in favour.



Comic table leg

Cartoon look

Cartoons were an important source of inspiration for Pop artists of the 1960s, who appreciated their popular, anti-intellectual appeal. Designers picked up on this influence in the early 1970s, and Postmodern designers of the 1980s enjoyed the provocative irony of translating an essentially two-dimensional cartoon-like look into a three-dimensional piece of furniture.



Rover car seat

Recycling

Increased awareness of environmental issues during the 1970s meant that by the 1980s recycling was a common and much-discussed activity. It was not only for environmental reasons, however, that designers of the 1980s and 1990s recycled found objects in their furniture. As with Ron Arad's car seat above, it was also a celebration of the defiantly anti-corporate DIY spirit.



CD chest

Casters

Casters became an increasingly common feature of office furniture from the 1970s onwards as the rigidity of office environments was steadily relaxed. Postmodern designers also applied casters to items of domestic furniture in an attempt to question the values of permanence and universalism preached by followers of Modernist principles.



Queen Anne back splat

Appropriation

As designers began to lose faith in the forward momentum of Modernism, they increasingly looked to the past for inspiration. Postmodern designers habitually borrowed motifs from bygone styles of furniture design, although, unlike many Modernists who did the same thing, they were not interested in their structural qualities, merely the symbolic message they conveyed.



Modular seating

Modular furniture

Modular seating systems had become fashionable during the 1960s. In the 1990s, designers tentatively returned to this theme, although it was in shelving design that modularity became an enduring feature. Modular furniture had always been associated with a technical aesthetic but by the 1990s designers had lent a degree of lyricism to the modular look in terms of colour and materials.



Detail of carved chest of drawers

Handcrafts

The demise of the Modern machine aesthetic, and the subsequent fall from favour of plastics, opened the door for a return of handcrafts in the late 1970s. Increased affluence in the 1980s also meant that many people in Britain and the United States had the disposable income to spend on laboriously wrought objects that were, more often than not, enormously expensive.



Brightly upholstered chair

Colour

During the 1980s, when communication became just as important as function in furniture design, designers became increasingly enthusiastic about the decorative use of colour in their pieces. This trend continued, in part, well into the 1990s, although designers of this decade toned down earlier Postmodern designers' exuberant use of pattern.

MEMPHIS AND ALCHIMIA

THE GROUP OF DESIGNERS WHO FORMED MEMPHIS IN 1980 BUILT ON THE IDEAS OF MENDINI'S STUDIO ALCHIMIA, TO DEFINE POSTMODERNISM IN FURNITURE DESIGN.

IN APRIL 1981, A MOTLEY GROUP of designers by the name of Memphis showed their work to the public for the very first time. The exhibition, held in a small showroom in Milan at a time when most of the world's furniture industry was in the city for the annual *Salone del Mobile*, was a sensation. Roadblocks choked the streets surrounding the showroom as thousands of people clamoured to catch a glimpse of what the Memphis group described as the "New International Style".

Led by Ettore Sottsass, a designer who had played an active role in the Anti-Design scene of the 1960s and 1970s, Memphis was the latest, and most persuasive, attempt by Italian designers to snuff out the flame of Modernism. "Memphis tries to separate the object from the idea of functionalism", said Sottsass. "It is an ironic approach to the Modern notion of philosophical purity. In other words, a table may need four legs to function but no one can tell me that the four legs have to look the same."

MULTICULTURAL MELTING POT

The appearance of Memphis furniture was frenetic, characterful, and saturated with colour. Although no explicit allusions were made to bygone, popular, or primitive cultures, it was obvious that the Memphis group had an enthusiasm for all three. Indeed, the name Memphis – taken from the title of a Bob Dylan song that was playing when the group first met – was chosen for its associations with both Rock'n'Roll and ancient Egypt (of which Memphis was the capital). The multicultural, melting-pot character of Memphis was asserted further by the fact that the group's designers, which included Sottsass, Michele de Lucchi, Michael Graves, and George J. Sowden, hailed from a broad range of nations – Italy, Spain, Japan, Austria, Britain, France, and the United States.

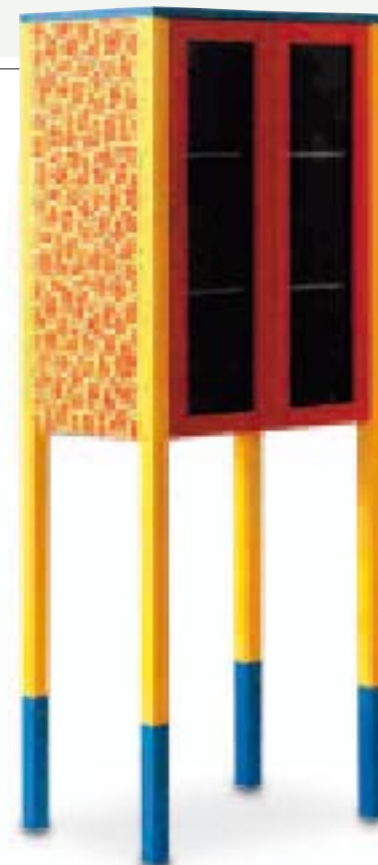
One notable absentee from the Memphis group was Alessandro Mendini. It was Mendini's Studio Alchimia, founded in Milan in 1976, that laid much of the ground on which Memphis was to build. In 1978, Mendini introduced a series of designs (or "redesigns" as he called them) to illustrate his ideas on "Banal Design" (see p.512), the most celebrated of which is the Proust armchair (1978). Mendini based his chair on an 18th-century French form, but covered it with dabs of colour similar to those in pointillist paintings.



SUPER LAMP

Designed by Martine Bedin, this moulded plastic light stands on four rubber wheels, so it can move around. The six naked light bulbs all screw into different coloured sockets.

1981. H:35.5cm (14in); W:61cm (24in); D:18cm (7in). MAP



D'ANTIBES CABINET

George Sowden's two-door cabinet has four tall, square-section legs. Made of plastic-laminated wood, it is brightly coloured, with red door frames, blue feet, and patterned panels on the sides. 1981. H:160cm (63in); W:60cm (23½in); D:40cm (15¾in). MAP



The slanted book ends are reminiscent of Aztec architecture.

The book shelves are laminated with brightly coloured plastic.

CARLTON BOOKCASE

Designed by Ettore Sottsass, this bookcase is one of the most iconic Postmodern pieces. The symmetrical unit has plastic-laminated shelves and compartments above a small central case with two drawers. It also works as a room divider. 1981. H:198cm (78in); W:190.5cm (75in); D:33cm (13in). MAP

POST-MEMPHIS

MANY OF THE ORIGINAL MEMBERS OF THE MEMPHIS GROUP WENT ON TO FORM THEIR OWN SUCCESSFUL COMPANIES, WHILE POST DESIGN CONTINUES TO KEEP THE MEMPHIS SPIRIT ALIVE.

By the time Memphis disbanded in 1988, the original members had become major players within the design industry and many went on to form their own companies. Ettore Sottsass and his Sottsass Associati company completed a number of private houses in locations as far-flung as Singapore and Hawaii. He also continued to work with great success on smaller-scale, more personal projects. Michele De Lucchi, meanwhile, adopted a more modest and rational style. Focusing on industrial design and architecture, De Lucchi went on to run the multi-award-winning company AMDL.

Michael Graves, whose ambitious and highly stylized aesthetic made him one of the most talked-about members of Memphis, continued to work as an architect and designer in much the same vein. At the end of the 1990s and into the 21st century, Graves's work once again came under the spotlight as his designs for Target, the American chain of low-cost homeware stores, met with great critical and commercial success. He now carries out regular commissions for Alessi.

Memphis Milano, the manufacturing arm of Memphis, continues to produce and sell the group's older designs. In 1997, Memphis Milano's managing director, Alberto Albrichi, founded Post Design, a company dedicated to keeping the Memphis spirit alive. In Post Design's prominent gallery space in Milan, exhibitions are held of new collections by Sottsass and other ex-Memphis members, as well as the work of younger generations of designers, such as Johanna Grawunder and Pierre Charpin, whose work developed from the Memphis style.

Pierre Charpin Bookshelf Designed for Post Design, this bookshelf is made of red-dyed maple, with an arrangement of open shelves and compartments. Although restrained in appearance, the influence of Sottsass's work is clear. 1998. H:226cm (89in); W:112.5cm (44½in); D:39cm (15¼in). MAP



Just as ancient alchemists attempted to turn base ingredients into gold, Mendini and his fellow members of Studio Alchimia (which included Sottsass for a short period) sought to transform elements of popular culture into products of high design. Studio Alchimia's "bau. haus" collection of 1979 was, of course, ironically titled as, rather than the refined, rational designs of the sort produced in Dessau, the furniture on show was a frenzied blend of Dada, Cubist, and Pop art influences.

IMPROVISATION AND COMMUNICATION

While Mendini's attitude towards design was essentially an academic one, Sottsass always espoused a more instinctive, sensual approach. The unorthodox forms of much Memphis furniture demonstrate the importance that the group placed on improvisation and free-association, as opposed to more rigorous, ideological thinking.

Sottsass has described Memphis design as "a way of discussing life", and communication was of far greater concern to Memphis designers than practicality. In an effort to create the maximum communicative impact with their furniture, Memphis designers often used eccentrically patterned plastic laminates (usually applied to a base made from chipboard).

Such was the attention-grabbing effect of Memphis furniture that it soon became an international phenomenon, proving particularly popular in the United States and Japan. Realizing the commercial potential of Memphis design, Ernesto Gismondi, the director of the Artemide lighting firm, financed the foundation of a manufacturing company dedicated to producing the group's furniture. This company, Memphis Milano, still exists to this day.



PROUST ARMCHAIR

Designed by Alessandro Mendini for Cappellini, this armchair was inspired by Louis XV furniture. The elaborately carved wooden frame is painted in the style of the French pointillist painter, Paul Signac, and upholstered in matching multicoloured fabric. 1978.



BRANZI'S STAZIONE SIDEBOARD

This sideboard has a rectilinear case supported at one end on four square-section legs and at the other by a single columnar leg. The piece combines a range of storage options: small drawers; top-opening cupboards; and D-end open shelves. 1979.

ITALY

IN 1972, THE MUSEUM of Modern Art in New York held the landmark exhibition “Italy: The New Domestic Landscape – Achievements and Problems in Italian Design”. A remarkably diverse exhibition, it was accompanied by a catalogue in which the curator, Emilio Ambasz, identified three emerging strands of Italian design: “Conformist”, “Reformist”, and “Contesting”. The “Contesting” trend (rooted in the late-1960s Anti-Design movement) dominated the 1970s, while the 1980s – with Ettore Sottsass and the Memphis group

attempting to stimulate and educate the Italian consumer – was labelled “Reformist”. The 1990s, a decade when professionalism reigned in Italian design, was described by Ambasz as “Conformist”.

By the time Ambasz’s exhibition was held in New York, groups such as Archizoom, Superstudio, and Gruppo Strum had already begun to question the central tenets of Modernism. Their brand of brash, provocative Pop design had been developed during the late 1960s, and had become increasingly confrontational.

BANAL DESIGN

The dominant voice in Italian furniture design in the latter half of the 1970s belonged to Alessandro Mendini. A tireless *agent provocateur*, Mendini introduced to the furniture industry the concept of “Banal Design”, in many ways a more cynical development of Anti-Design. With “Banal design”, Mendini posited the rather apocalyptic idea that, since the walls of Modernism were coming crumbling down, there would soon

Interior of the Una Hotel Vittoria in Florence Designed by Fabio Novembre, this hotel interior creates a welcoming atmosphere. The restaurant’s long, graceful “S”-shaped table and colourful Renaissance-inspired light invite guests to socialize. 2003.



The polyurethane foam is soft and gives when a person sits down.

The chair’s ridges give it a close resemblance to either a truncated Classical column or a machine cog.

ATTICA CHAIR

This simple chair was made by Gufram from flexible polyurethane foam. It is small in size, emphasizing the fact that it is a chair designed for perching on rather than lounging in. The polyurethane has been modelled to look like a fluted Ionic column and is cut on the diagonal to provide the backrest and

arms of the chair. The pure white colour of the foam chair makes it look as if it were made from heavy stone, marble, or alabaster and the elastic paint that covers the polyurethane makes the chair splash-proof, so that it can be washed easily. The chair’s name is taken from the ancient Greek territory of Attica, a reference to the chair’s columnar form. 1972. H:70cm (27½in); Diam:66cm (26in). Bonbay



QUADERNA SERIES

This console table and bench each have a honeycomb core frame that has been covered with white plastic laminate. The tile-effect design is a silk-screen print with a black grid pattern. Designed by Superstudio for Zanotta, they are still available. 1970. Table: H:84cm (33in); W:180cm (71¼in); D:42cm (16½in). ZAN



543 BROADWAY CHAIR

This chair has a bright orange translucent resin seat and back on a stainless tubular-steel frame. Each of the nylon feet incorporates a metal spring, which adjusts to the posture of the sitter. The chair was designed by Gaetano Pesce for Bernini. 1993. H:45cm (17¾in); W:50cm (19¾in); D:39cm (15½in). SDR

be only a vacuous world in which designers could operate. The task of furniture designers in the future, then, would comprise little more than buffing up old designs found in the rubble of the past.

Mellini's extreme theories can be defined as Postmodern, although his nihilism is somewhat at odds with the American Postmodern attitude, which was far more celebratory in its

appropriation of past styles. Soon, however, Mendini's dogmatic approach was eclipsed by that of the Memphis group (see pp.510–11). The sheer effusiveness of the Memphis furniture of the early 1980s signalled the end of the essentially destructive, antagonistic streak that had coursed through Italian design since the late 1960s.

GROWING COMMERCIALISM

At the start of the 1990s, much of the passion and excitement that had fuelled Italian furniture design for the last 20 years had abated as a

new wave of professionalism swept into the industry. Many companies that had operated at the cutting edge during the 1960s and 1970s (for example, B&B Italia, Poltrona Frau, and Cassina) had by now become thriving businesses and were accordingly less willing to court controversy. A few manufacturers, such as Cappellini and Edra, did continue to produce daring and flamboyant furniture but their collections were often dominated by non-Italian designers.

Perhaps the most successful Italian furniture designers of the 1990s were Piero Lissoni and Antonio

Citterio, both of whom adopted a succinct, technologically sophisticated style that favoured "precision" over experimentation. "Design should search for an unequivocal result based on the relationship between production techniques, form, and functionality," Lissoni has said.

By the beginning of the 21st century, Italy had become the undoubted commercial capital of the global furniture industry, with the annual *Salone del Mobile* in Milan established as the premier international event in the furniture design calendar. In terms of its creative reputation, however, Italy had sadly lost much of its gloss.



SISTEMA STORAGE SYSTEM

This very versatile range of storage units was designed by Piero Lissoni for Cappellini. It comes in modules, which can be stacked on top of each other or joined side by side. It is available in numerous finishes. *H:32–92cm (12½–36½in); W:30–90cm (11¾in–35½in); D:30–60cm (11¾in–23¾in).* VIA

REEF SEATING SYSTEM

This sofa has no armrests, but each end of the seat can be tilted in two different positions, converting them into head supports or armrests. Designed by Piero Lissoni for Cassina, the upholstered foam seat is raised on an exposed painted-steel frame. 2001. *H:60.5cm (23¾in); L:300cm (118in); D:84.5cm (33¾in).* CAS



CAB CHAIR

This armchair has an enamelled-steel skeletal frame over which the leather upholstery has been zipped. The leather functions as a supporting material. The padded polyurethane foam seat is also upholstered in leather. It was designed by Mario Bellini. 1977. *H:52cm (20½in); W:82cm (32¼in); D:47cm (18½in).*



TORSO ARMCHAIR

Designed by Paolo Deganello, this armchair has an asymmetric, fabric-upholstered back and a leather-upholstered seat, which rises at the sides to form arms. The seat is raised on short, enamelled legs. 1972. *H:150.5cm (45½in); W:90cm (43in); D:86.5cm (34in).* SDR



POLARIS TABLE LAMP

This rare Polaris table lamp has three azure glass balls on a chrome stand with a Carrara marble base. When the light is turned on, the balls appear to be white. It was designed by Superstudio for Design Centre and manufactured by Poltronova. 1969. *H:50cm (19¾in); D:50cm (19¾in).* DOR

FRANCE

THE 1970S WERE QUIET years for French furniture design. Pierre Paulin and Pascal Mourgue, two designers who had established their reputations during the 1960s, continued to produce their familiar, ribbon-like designs but beyond this, little of real consequence came to light.

One of the earliest significant events in French furniture design during the 1980s was the “New Barbarians” exhibition in 1981, a showcase of work by Elisabeth Garouste and Mattia Bonetti. Inspired by France’s colonial past, Garouste’s and Bonetti’s designs liberally employed tribal motifs and materials to imbue their furniture with a sense of exoticism. Labelled “neo-primitivism” at the time, it was not a look that lasted for long.

INNOVATIVE DESIGN

In 1981, the government set up VIA (*Valorisation de l’Innovation dans l’Ameublement*) to support innovations in French furniture design. One of the first beneficiaries was Martin Szekely. The Parisian designer’s cool, geometric designs, such as the Pi chaise longue of 1983, helped establish a more serene design style. Also resisting the excesses of the Postmodern style was architect Jean Nouvel. During the 1980s, Nouvel produced numerous furniture designs in a spare, unforbearing style.

Running counter to Nouvel’s strict, rational style was the work of a

“designer-maker” who met with considerable success during the 1980: André Dubreuil. A master craftsman who spent much of his time in London, Dubreuil lent an air of Gallic elegance to Britain’s “Craft Revival” scene (see p.518).

The 1980s was also the decade that saw the emergence of Philippe Starck, a designer who masterfully combined both the rational and more flamboyant tendencies of French design. Amazingly prolific in output, Starck’s design style was clear, concise, and, more often than not, came with a witty twist.

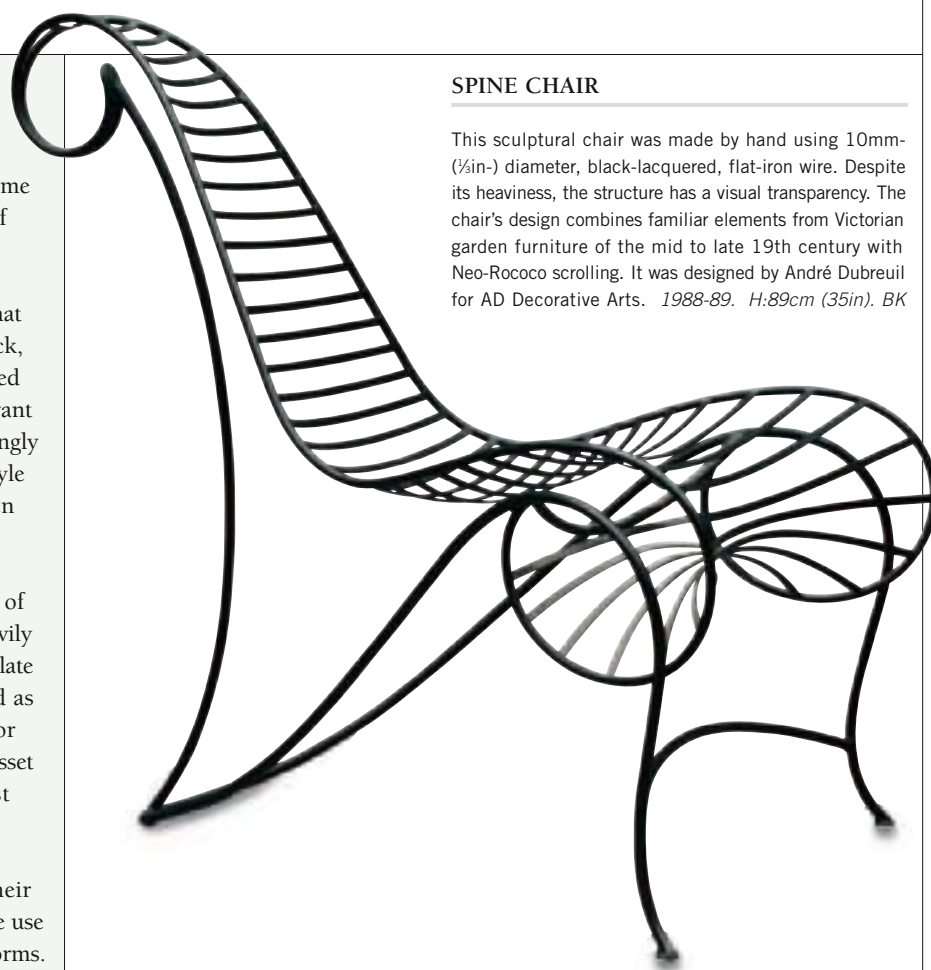
Such was Starck’s phenomenal worldwide success that by the end of the decade he was able to run a heavily peopled studio in Paris. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, this served as something of a finishing school for young French designers. Matali Crasset and Christophe Pillet are the most notable of Starck’s *enfants*. Both functionalists at heart, they go to considerable lengths to enliven their essentially practical designs with the use of energetic colour and engaging forms.

A NEW DIVERSITY

Having established such hegemony over the French design world, it was only natural that a small band of designers should rebel against Starck’s influence in the mid 1990s. Designers such as Pierre Charpin and Delo Lindo developed an instinctive, experimental style that brought a new diversity to the world of French design.

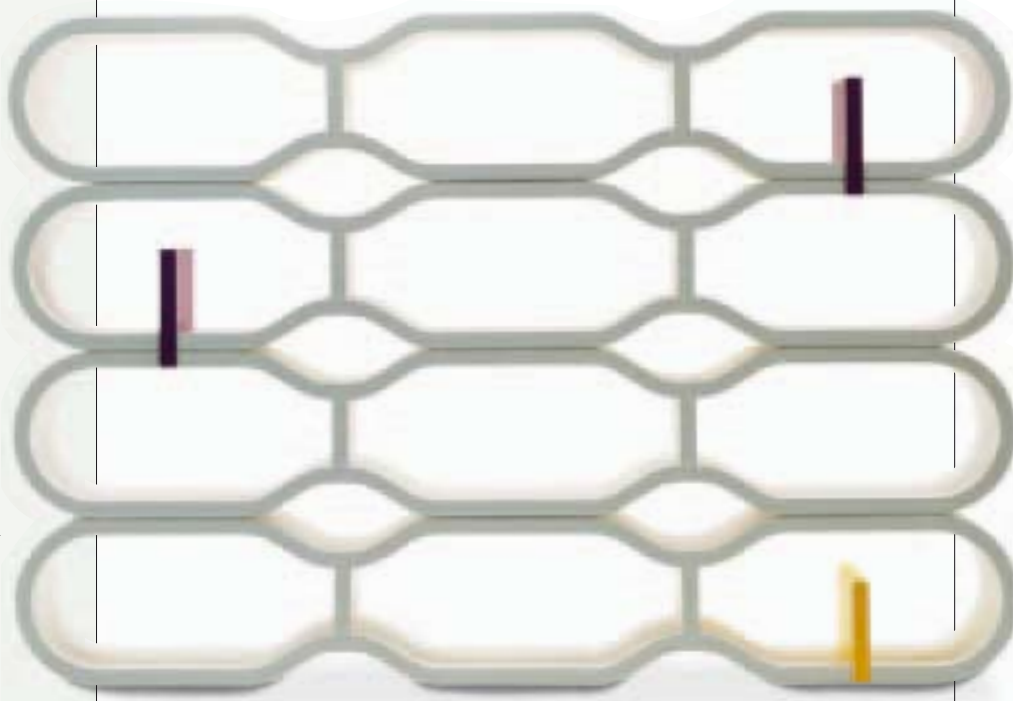
By the end of the 1990s, talk about French design centred on two young brothers from Brittany, Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec. The Bouroullecs’ urbane style owed much to the measured aesthetic of the British designer Jasper Morrison. The international success of the Bouroullecs, coupled with the strength in depth of the Parisian design scene, proved that at the end of the millennium, French furniture design was thriving.

The interior of the Hi hotel in Nice Designed in an innovative and contemporary style by Matali Crasset, the simple, functional furniture and pastel shades create an inviting atmosphere that does not overwhelm. 2003.



SPINE CHAIR

This sculptural chair was made by hand using 10mm- (3/8in-) diameter, black-lacquered, flat-iron wire. Despite its heaviness, the structure has a visual transparency. The chair’s design combines familiar elements from Victorian garden furniture of the mid to late 19th century with Neo-Rococo scrolling. It was designed by André Dubreuil for AD Decorative Arts. 1988-89. H:89cm (35in). BK



BRICK BOOKSHELF

This modular bookcase system is made up of a number of honeycomb-shaped plywood shelves stacked one on top of the other. They have a white matt lacquer finish and are held in place by plywood book-stops. Available in a range of different colours, the system was designed by Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec for

Cappellini. The brothers are considered to be among the best industrial designers of recent years. They are gifted at taking concepts and traditional forms and giving them a truly contemporary feel. Their designs look simple, yet are extremely modern, and they never lose sight of the ultimate purpose of a piece. 2001. Basic module: H:50cm (19 3/4in); W:300cm (118in); D:40cm (15 3/4in). SCP





A small "connection" links the two chairs and acts as an interconnecting table.

The low seats suggest that the chairs are meant primarily for informal use.

The contrasting colours articulate the simple structure of the design.

Splayed back legs give the chairs greater stability.

INTERFACE SEATING

Designed by Matali Crasset specifically for the ultra-contemporary Hi Hotel in Nice, these modular armchairs come with "connections" and can be arranged to offer a variety of different permutations of seating arrangements. Some of them are even designed to take laptop computers. They are made of brightly coloured polyurethane-coated fabric over high-density foam and have brushed stainless-steel square-section legs. 2003. H:115cm (45¼in); W:58cm (22¾in); D:75cm (29½in). MCP



BARBARE CHAIR

This chair, designed by Elisabeth Garouste and Mattia Bonetti for Neotu, is inspired by African tribal art. Animal hide laced onto the patinated steel frame creates the chair's back and seat. 1981. H:117cm (46in); D:59cm (22in).



DELO-LINDO TABLE

The square table tops are raised on L-section legs. The designers have added a surreal touch with their use of warped perspective. The tables were designed by Delo-Lindo for Ligne Roset.

PHILIPPE STARCK

INTERIOR DESIGNER, ARCHITECT, AND FURNITURE AND PRODUCT DESIGNER, PHILIPPE STARCK ROSE TO PROMINENCE IN THE 1980S AND HIS BOLD DESIGNS REMAIN INFLUENTIAL TODAY.

Born in Paris in 1949, Starck became something of a household name during the 1980s and 1990s because of his unrivalled talent for self-promotion and his knack of producing slick, commercial products that retained a strong sense of individual charm.

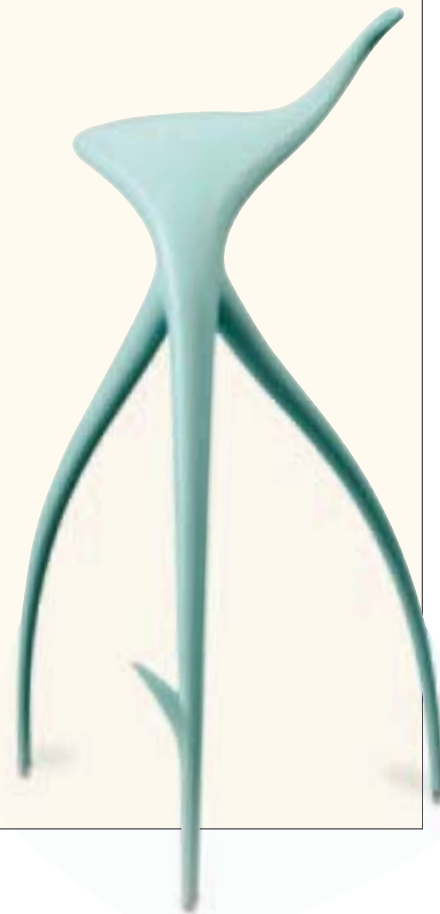
Starck first rose to prominence in 1969 when, aged just 20, he became the art director of the furniture arm of the Pierre Cardin empire. Starck spent much of the 1970s designing and furnishing

nightclubs, and it was not until 1982, when he completed the interior design scheme for President Mitterrand's private apartments in the Elysée Palace in Paris, that he received the international attention he craved.

During the 1980s and early 1990s, Starck was prolific, designing projects for everything from a mail-order house to organic food, but it was his furniture and lighting designs that won him the most plaudits. He produced such era-defining designs as the WW stool for Vitra (1990) and the Ara lamp for Flos (1988). Often blending primitive imagery (the Ara lamp resembles a bull's horn) with references to high-brow culture (the WW stool was originally designed for the arthouse film director Wim Wenders), Starck has managed to stimulate the appetites of a remarkably broad audience.



Philippe Starck



Paramount Hotel interior The interior of this "cheap chic" hotel in New York, is brimful of the witty and whimsical touches so characteristic of Starck's bold Postmodern design style.

The WW Stool This stool exemplifies the streamlined, elongated horn motif that Starck often uses. The stool has a varnished sand-cast aluminium frame with a pale green enamel finish. 1990. H:98.5cm (38¾in); W:53cm (21in). BK



BRITAIN

AT THE HEIGHT OF the boom in 1960s youth culture, there was no hipper place to be than London. This enviable reputation stood the city in good stead for the next 30 years, as ambitious young artists and designers continued to flock there from abroad, in an attempt to establish themselves at the very cutting edge of creative culture.

DESIGN INFLUENCES

Those arriving during the 1970s, however, found themselves in a very different Britain to that of the 1960s. A more earnest atmosphere pervaded the 1970s, with the work of OMK, a design group founded by the

Polish-born Jerzy Olejnik, Bryan Morrison, and Rodney Kinsman, typical of the era. "It is irresponsible to design things that don't last", Kinsman stated, alluding to the 1960s' obsession with ephemeral furniture. "You can't just rely on colour or some formal gimmick, there has to be something deeper." OMK's most successful design was the Omkstack chair (1971), a concise steel

stacking chair that paved the way for a new, technical aesthetic in British furniture design.

The "High-Tech" look continued to prove popular with architects and designers well into the 1980s. Architects Eva Jiricna (born in Czechoslovakia) and Norman Foster, both of whom also produced furniture, became associated with a style that celebrated the magnificence of industry.

Not all British designers subscribed to this macho, machine-inspired aesthetic. In 1979, the Crafts Council was

launched in London to support designers who practised a more hand-crafted style. The attitude of these Craft Revival designers (see pp.518–19) was similar to the DIY approach of the punk movement.

In 1979, Margaret Thatcher came to power and began to foster a society of capitalist enterprise. In this climate, a generation of "designer-makers" was born, a group which branched out on its own, producing limited editions of experimental work. Ron Arad, who had moved to Britain from Israel, formed One Off Ltd and spent the 1980s making rough-edged hunks of furniture from discarded industrial

MINI-BOOKWORM SHELF

Designed by Ron Arad, this thin, sheet-steel bookshelf comes tightly coiled in its packaging and is supplied with a number of wall brackets so that users can design a bookshelf to suit their needs. 1993.

L:495.5cm (198½in). QU



MAGIS WAGON

This small table on wheels was designed by Michael Young for Magis. Its sand-blasted, die-cast aluminium frame on red translucent polyurethane wheels supports an injection-moulded translucent polyurethane tray. 2003. H:28cm (11in); W:68cm (26¾in); D:68cm (26¾in). CRB



NEMO CHAIR

This armchair has a moulded Lloyd Loom seat and back raised on a chromed-steel frame. The thin, tapering legs emphasize the lightness of the design. It was designed by Studio Dillon and manufactured by Lloyd Loom of Spalding. 1999. H:73.5cm (29in); W:79cm (31in); D:65.5cm (25¾in). DIL

The orange-red varnish anticipates the rust that will set in if the chair is left outside.

The flat steel back and seat provide a visual contrast with the tubular steel legs and arms.

Circular discs provide a space on which to place drinks.



The designer's notes have been incorporated as a feature of this design, emphasizing the honesty of its construction.

The deep seat of the chair encourages users to sit quietly and ponder, as the chair's name suggests.

THINKING MAN'S CHAIR

The frame of this easy chair is made from orange-red varnished metal tubes, and the seat and back are composed of contrasting flat metal bars. Each arm has been fitted with a tray for holding a glass and this design feature, combined with the deep seat, makes it a chair in which a thinking man could comfortably

settle. The incorporation of designer's notes, which are written on the chair parts, is reminiscent of the desire for honesty of construction, which has its roots in Modernism. The chair was designed by Jasper Morrison shortly after he left the RCA. 1986. H:70cm (27½in); W:57cm (22½in); D:90cm (35½in). SCP



Creek Veau House, Cornwall This house was designed in a "High-Tech" style by Richard Rogers and Norman Foster and won an award in 1970.

materials. Tom Dixon also employed recycled materials, albeit with rather more elegance, to make items of furniture for his "Creative Salvage" company. The architects Nigel Coates and Zaha Hadi were intent on making a name for themselves too, and began designing experimental furniture.

CONFIDENCE IN DESIGN

By the early 1990s, London seemed to have rediscovered its cutting edge, as confidence within the British design industry ran high. In 1989, Terence

Conran opened the Design Museum in London. Numerous bar, restaurant, and hotel owners began employing designers to inject energy and glamour into their buildings' interiors. The design departments of London colleges, such as the RCA (*see below*) and Central St. Martins, were also the focus of much international attention.

With such an enthusiastic audience, British designers of the 1990s no longer needed to make such blunt, attention-seeking statements with their furniture. Instead, a smoother, more subtle and refined style developed,

with Jasper Morrison the undisputed master. Arad and Dixon also began to tone down their designs, adopting a far more commercial approach.

Many designers chose to work together rather than alone. The mid 1990s saw groups such as El Ultimo Grito, Inflate, and Azumi emerge and adopt a modest, light-hearted approach to furniture design. By the millenium, much of the optimistic spirit that had drained from the British design industry in the 1970s had been restored.



PLASTIC LIGHT

This white plastic light in the shape of a "jack" was designed by Tom Dixon for Eurolounge. Different lights can be stacked on top of one another. The light can also be used as a stool. 1997. H:60cm (23½in); W:60cm (23½in).



SHIPSHAPE

This self-contained storage unit is made from laminated birch. It can also be used as a seat or side table. It was designed for Isokon Plus by Shin & Tomoko Azumi. 2003. H:40cm (15¾in); W:45cm (17¾in); D:29.5cm (11½in). ISO



OMKSTACK CHAIR

This stackable chair has a tubular-steel frame supporting a polished, perforated sheet-steel back and seat, and stands on rubber feet. It was designed by Rodney Kinsman and manufactured by OMK. 1972. BouE



S-CHAIR

The metal frame of this chair is covered in woven marsh straw, emphasizing the organic feel of the structure. It was designed by Tom Dixon for Cappellini. 1985. H:100cm (39½in); W:42cm (16½in); D:52cm (20½in). SCP

THE LEADING ROLE OF THE RCA

ALTHOUGH IN EXISTENCE SINCE 1837, IT WAS ONLY DURING THE 1980S AND 1990S THAT THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART COULD REALLY CLAIM TO BE ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT INSTITUTIONS IN THE WORLD FOR THE TEACHING OF DESIGN.

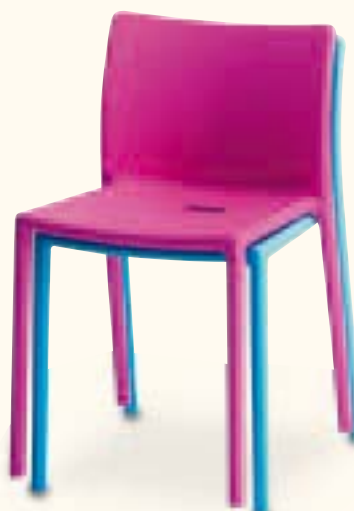
The RCA is a college that concentrates solely on postgraduate studies and since 1948 it has focused mainly on preparing students for future professional practice. Disciplines taught at the RCA include fine art, fashion, vehicle design, animation, architecture and, of course, industrial design and furniture design.

While Britain lagged somewhat behind world developments in furniture design during much of the early part of the 20th century, it began to forge an identity as a hotbed of creativity during the 1960s and 1970s, thanks in large part to the progressive teaching taking place at institutions such as the Architectural Association, the RCA, and the Central School of Art and Design. In response to this reputation, many of the most

talented graduates from across the world flocked to London in order to pursue their postgraduate studies.

By the late 1980s, many of the most prominent figures of Britain's prospering design scene were graduates of the RCA, and alumni like Jasper Morrison, Jane Dillon, James Irvine, and Ross Lovegrove only helped to attract an even higher calibre of graduates to the college.

In the mid 1990s, by now referring to itself as an "ideas factory", the RCA consolidated its already robust reputation by appointing the furniture designer Ron Arad as Professor of Furniture Design and the architect Nigel Coates as Professor of Architecture and Interiors, both of whom continued to uphold the tradition of progressive teaching.



Air chair by Jasper Morrison This chair was made from a single piece of gas-injected polypropylene. Designed by one of the RCA's most famous students, it was produced by Magis in Italy.



Aero lamp by Ralph Ball Since graduating from the RCA in 1980, Ralph Ball has achieved critical and commercial success for his work both as a lighting designer and a furniture designer. 1979.

CRAFT AND TECHNOLOGY

TWO DISTINCT STRANDS OF FURNITURE DESIGN EXISTED IN THE 1970S AND 1980S – “HIGH TECH” AND CRAFT REVIVAL. IN THE 1990S, COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY FACILITATED THEIR FUSION.

THE 1970S WAS A DECADE when fractures began to appear within the furniture design industry. While some designers argued for a more vital, hands-on approach to design, others continued to pursue the Modernist dream of a functional, mechanized future.

Sophisticated computer technology was still some way off. The stark “High-Tech” style of the 1970s had little to do with computers and more to do with construction and engineering. Its development was partly a response to manufacturers’ demands for a skeletal style that scrimped on materials and was simple to mass produce. In Switzerland, the architect Mario Botta (an ex-employee of Le Corbusier) began producing furniture from perforated sheet steel that resembled machine parts, while in Britain Rodney Kinsman worked on a range of terse, rational designs, also made in metal. In 1986, Norman Foster produced the ultimate “High-Tech” furniture range for Tecno – the Nomos system. Designed for use in open-plan offices, the gleaming glass and steel tables looked like majestic feats of civil engineering rather than humble office desks.

CRAFT-BASED STYLES

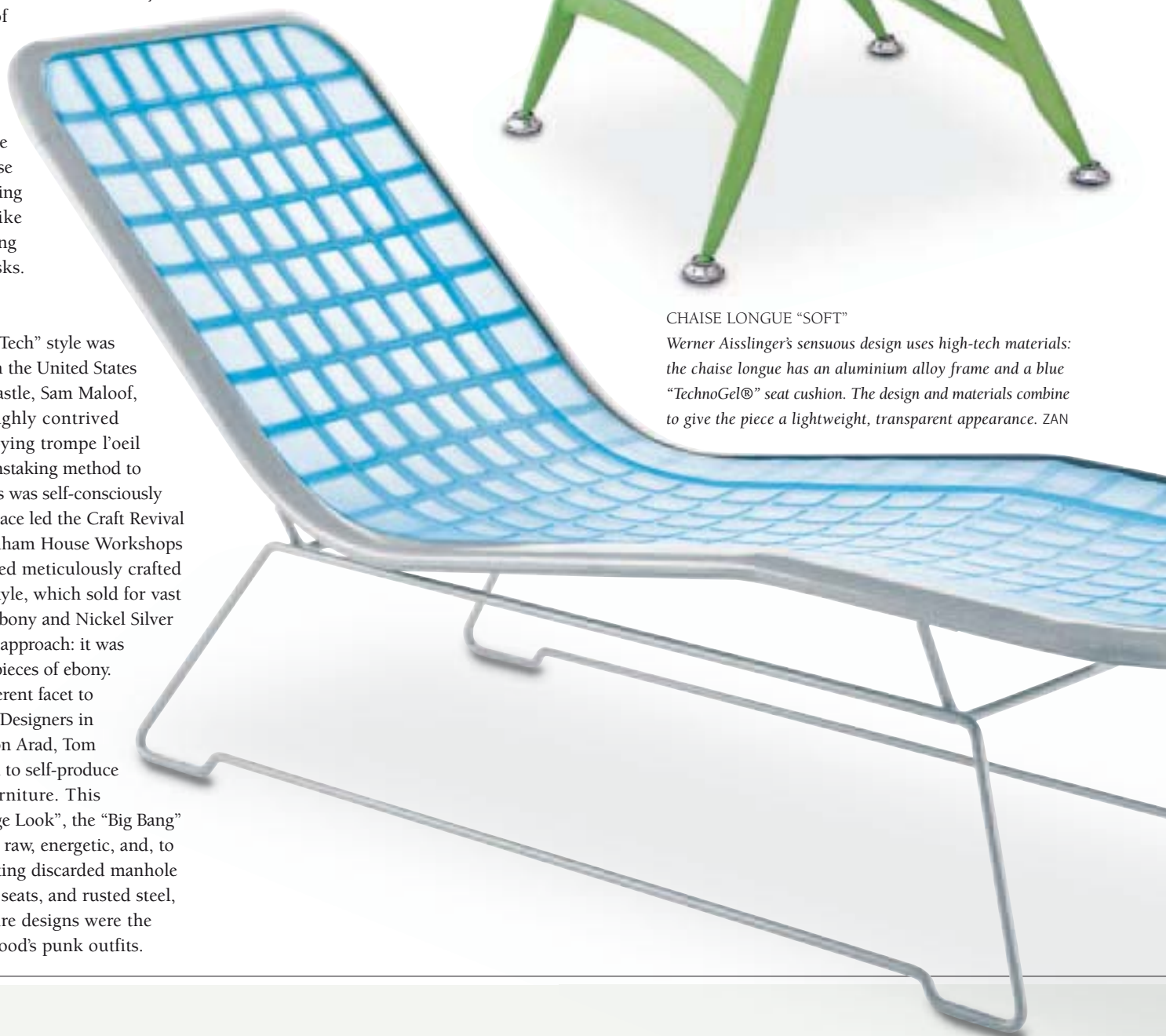
Running counter to the “High-Tech” style was the Craft Revival movement. In the United States in the early 1980s, Wendell Castle, Sam Maloof, and Tage Frid worked in a highly contrived Postmodern style, often employing trompe l’oeil effects. Using a laborious, painstaking method to produce off-hand, jokey objects was self-consciously ironic. In Britain, John Makepeace led the Craft Revival movement. He set up the Parnham House Workshops in Dorset in 1977 and produced meticulously crafted objects, often ornamental in style, which sold for vast sums of money. Makepeace’s Ebony and Nickel Silver chair (1978) was typical of his approach: it was constructed of 2,000 separate pieces of ebony.

In the late 1980s, a very different facet to the craft-based trend emerged. Designers in London, such as Fred Baier, Ron Arad, Tom Dixon, and Danny Lane, began to self-produce defiantly rough-and-ready furniture. This movement, labelled the “Salvage Look”, the “Big Bang” style, or “Neo-Brutalism”, was raw, energetic, and, to an extent, political. Incorporating discarded manhole covers, smashed glass, old car seats, and rusted steel, these new iconoclastic furniture designs were the equivalent of Vivienne Westwood’s punk outfits.

DOLLY FOLDING CHAIR
Designed by Antonio Citterio for Kartell, this folding chair combines elegance and lightness with a sophisticated and solid plastic structural system. The arms of the chair are integral to the frame design rather than being separate, as in regular chair designs. The chair is available in a variety of colours, and has a padded, wooden, or plastic seat.



CHAISE LONGUE “SOFT”
Werner Aisslinger’s sensuous design uses high-tech materials: the chaise longue has an aluminium alloy frame and a blue “TechnoGel®” seat cushion. The design and materials combine to give the piece a lightweight, transparent appearance. ZAN





MOLLUSC DESK

Designed by John Makepeace, this desk is made of washed oak from trees that were planted at Longleat, Wiltshire, in the 1760s. The desktop is cantilevered off three curving legs. The legs are laminated and connect to a central curving and laminated beam, which tapers towards each edge and the two ends. H:72cm (28½in); W:190cm (74½in); D:110cm (43½in). JM



The French designer André Dubreuil employed a blacksmith to make his chairs, produced from bent and welded mild steel. Dubreuil's most celebrated creation was his Spine chair (1988) (see p.514), an elegant piece inspired by the designs of 18th-century France. In the same year, the Italian designer Alberto Meda utilized technologies developed for the aeronautics and space travel industries to produce his LightLight chair. Made from carbon fibre, Nomex polyurethane foam, and epoxy resin, the chair was appropriately produced in austere matt black.

A NEW SOPHISTICATION

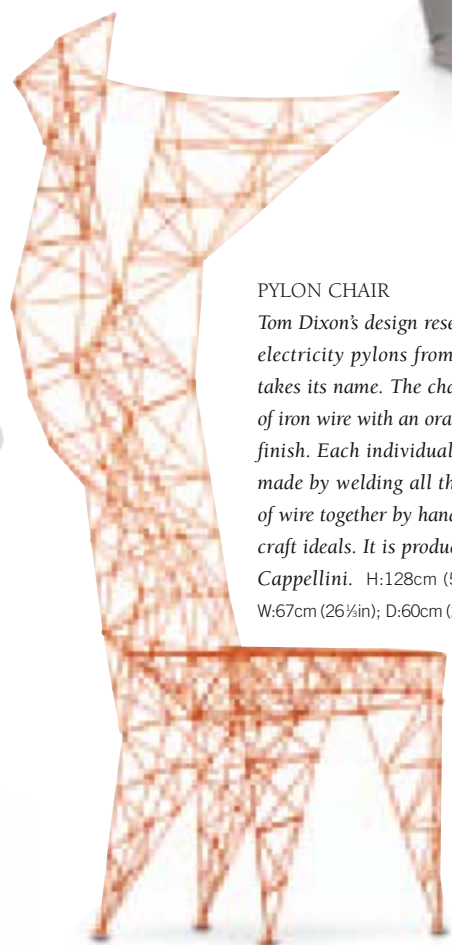
The 1990s was a decade of rapid acceleration in the field of computer technology. New programs allowed designers to create ever more intricate and sophisticated designs (and enabled manufacturers to produce them). For the first time, designers could take a highly personal, craftsman's approach to design while also embracing advanced technology.

The German designer Werner Aisslinger was one of the first designers to prove that technologically driven furniture could no longer be equated with accusations of coldness and inhumanity. Aisslinger's Soft Cell range (1999) utilized an advanced gel formula borrowed from the medical industry that lent both comfort and a distinctive look to his furniture.

By the beginning of the new millennium, craft and technology were no longer seen as mutually exclusive aspects of design. The rifts that had appeared in the furniture industry during the 1970s and 1980s, it seemed, were beginning to close over.

WELL-TEMPERED CHAIR

Designed by Ron Arad, this chair consists of four pieces of temper-rolled stainless steel, bent over to form the back, two arms, and seat of the chair, and bolted into place with wing nuts. 1987. H:98.5cm (38½in). QU



PYLON CHAIR

Tom Dixon's design resembles the electricity pylons from which it takes its name. The chair is made of iron wire with an orange varnish finish. Each individual chair is made by welding all the pieces of wire together by hand, true to craft ideals. It is produced by Cappellini. H:128cm (50½in); W:67cm (26½in); D:60cm (23½in). SCP



1/2 CONE = CUBE - CYLINDER = TABLE

This unique pair of tables was made by Fred Baier. Each one is formed from an oak cylinder, a burr myrtle cube, and a nickle silver cylinder. They are said to be the first furniture to interpret the minus key in three-dimensional form. H:55cm (21½in). FB

EUROPE

DURING THE 1970S, 1980s, and 1990s, furniture designers became itinerant to a remarkable degree, with designers from across the globe being drawn to established centres of design, such as London, Milan, and Amsterdam, like moths to a flame. By the 1990s, it had become common practice for aspiring designers from less-established design nations to educate themselves and build up a reputation abroad (often moving from city to city) before moving back to the country of their birth.

Despite many of its key protagonists being inveterate globetrotters, one of the most interesting aspects of Postmodern design was the fact that

it championed regional styles together with a combination of Classical motifs, often with unconventional materials. Typifying this is the Czech-born designer Borek Sipek who moved restlessly between Germany, the Netherlands, and Czechoslovakia in the late 1970s and 1980s, yet whose work consistently referred to the Baroque traditions of his homeland.

Also exemplary of this paradoxical Postmodern trend was Mario Botta, a Swiss architect and designer who worked for periods in Italy, France, and Japan during the 1980s, but still remained true to the innately Swiss spirit of technical engineering.

NEW DESIGN HOT SPOTS

As Postmodernism spread across the world of furniture design in the 1980s, nations with a rich history of functional Modernism began to fall from prominence. Although there were a few notable exceptions, such as Stefan Wewerka (who combined Bauhaus principles with a keen knowledge of art practice and ergonomics) and Peter Maly, Germany made little contribution to furniture design during the 1980s, and the same is true of the Scandinavian countries.

Spain, which has a rather thin history of Modern design,

emerged strongly in the 1980s, with Barcelona becoming a particular hot spot for contemporary design. Oscar Tusquets Blanca and Javier Mariscal represented the more exuberant spirit of Spanish design, while Jorge Pensi and Patricia Urquiola followed a more functional path.

Despite having designers like Gerrit Rietveld and Mart Stam, who were key to the development of the early Modern style, the Netherlands made little impact on the world of furniture design during



CD CHEST

This industrial-looking chest for storing CDs is made from welded and lacquered steel with industrial glass panels. The upper section of the chest is hinged and rises up to reveal a large storage area. Below this are six drawers for CDs. The case is open to the rear and stands on casters. It was designed by Götz Bury in cooperation with Franz West, Germany. 1992. H:95.5cm (37½in). POR



ARMCHAIR

This armchair was designed by Mario Botta. It has a black-lacquered aluminium frame, and the front legs and arms are shaped as huge hollow cylinders. The circular back and seat are made of vinyl-upholstered foam, in a black and white chevron design. 1980s. H:91.5cm (36in); W:98cm (38½in); D:104cm (41in). SDR

The painted fibreboard back panel is redolent of marble, granite, or even open sky.

The interior of the cabinet has been fitted with lights that switch on when the door opens.

The coppered handles don't match and are slightly offset.

The shelves are made from solid ash that has been stained black.

The slender doors are set in a thick frame, giving the cabinet a slightly surreal appearance.



PO-LAM WARDROBE

This surreal Postmodern wardrobe was designed by Borek Sipek for Franz Leitner Interior Design, Austria. It has a copper central section within a fibreboard frame. The central section forms the wardrobe and has a wide frame, slender doors, and asymmetrical handles all made from untreated copper. The primed and

painted, shelved back panel is made from fibreboard with a marble-effect finish. Both the graduated shelves on the back panel and the fitted interior of the wardrobe are made of black-stained ash – a mainstay of Postmodern design. Lights inside the cabinet switch on when the doors are opened. The “keystone” element at the top gives the piece an architectural quality. 1990. H:220cm (86½in). DOR

the post-war years. During the 1980s and 1990s, however, Dutch design flourished as the Dutch became the leading proponents of a dry, gently conceptual style typified by the work of Droog, a collective of designers based in Amsterdam. Droog (which translates as “dry”) summed up much of the non-dogmatic, playful attitude of late-1990s European design. “We certainly don’t see our designs as the definitive solution to a problem, or the one true direction to take”, said Droog’s Remmy Ramakers. “Our designs are just the door to any number of possibilities.”

Konstantin Grcic can also be considered a quintessentially 1990s

designer. Grcic’s stated aim of making “furniture that everyone understands immediately” illustrates a very different attitude to that shown by many more wilfully avant-garde designers of earlier decades. Born in Germany in 1965, Grcic followed the typical pattern of many designers of his generation by studying abroad in London – where he worked for a short time with Jasper Morrison – before returning home to Munich to set up his own office.

Apartment by Günther Domenig This apartment in the village of Steindorf in Austria is very anti-purist in style and goes against the grain of the clean lines espoused by Modernism. It also illustrates a very personal rather than universal approach to design.



PRADO DESK

This desk has a simple, rectangular frame made from solid American oak, and a flat oak-veneered work surface. It is a contemporary interpretation of a kneehole desk. Below the desktop are two shaped shelves, which span

the entire width of the desk and have a curved cut-out to allow the sitter to pull up a chair. The back and sides of the desk are open and there is a shallow drawer beneath the desktop. The desk is raised on casters. It was designed by Konstantin Grcic for SCP. *H:76cm (30in); W:165cm (65in); D:80cm (31½in). SCP*



ARTICO TABLE

The clean lines of this table are emphasized by the materials from which it has been made. A rectangular sheet of sand-blasted glass floats on the simple base of light-grey enamelled aluminium, which has narrow,

tapering legs. Colour and form combine in this table to convey elegance and lightness. It was designed by Jorge Pensi for Cassina, Italy. *1998. H:74cm (29in); W:180cm (70½in); D:95cm (37½in). CAS*



THREE-LEGGED CHAIR

This black-lacquered beech chair has a flat upholstered seat, a shaped back rail to allow the sitter to sit side on or facing forwards, and three legs. Designed by Stefan Wewerka for Tecta. *1979. H:76cm (30in); W:62cm (24½in). DOR*



“85 LAMPS” CHANDELIER

This chandelier uses 85 15-watt light bulbs at the end of narrow, flexible wire stems, which are knotted together to form a ball of the 85 plugs. Designed by Rody Graumans for Droog Design. *1993. H:110cm (43½in); W:70cm (27½in). DRO*

BENCH FOR TWO

Designed by Nanna Ditzel and produced by Fredericia furniture, this bench is made from solid maple and 1.2mm- (½in-) thick aeroplane plywood. The whole is covered with a silk-screen print design of concentric circles. In 1990, it was awarded a gold medal at the International Furniture Design Competition, Asahikawa, Japan. *1989.*



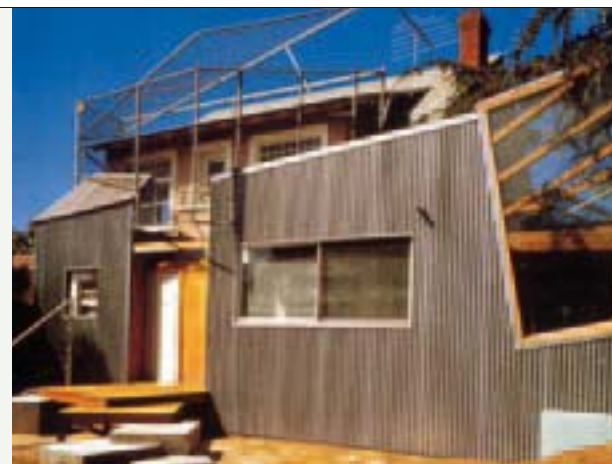
THE AMERICAS

ALTHOUGH THE IDEAS that would eventually go by the name of Postmodernism were first mooted in the late 1960s, there was something of a hiatus in their development during the early 1970s. This was a period when theorizing was put to one side in favour of more immediate concerns. The most important design book of these years was Victor Papanek's *Design in the Real World* published in New York.

In 1970, the US Environmental Agency was founded in response to increasing concerns for the planet in

the face of escalating consumerism. American designers of the early 1970s attempted to become more responsible in their approach to design by moving away from the use of plastics and favouring more natural materials. The most celebrated example of this environmentally conscious outlook was Frank Gehry's 1972 collection of furniture: "Easy Edges". Made from biodegradable cardboard, Gehry's ingenious designs were intentionally inexpensive (selling for \$35–\$100). At the end of the decade, Gehry returned to working with cardboard, but this time his "Experimental Edges" collection sold for much higher prices.

BRASH DESIGN
During the early 1980s, environmental concerns seemed to slip from the United States' agenda as a culture of conspicuous consumption was ushered in. Wall Street traders were making millions on junk bonds while consumer confidence returned with a vengeance. Against a background of such rampant demand, the bold ideas of Postmodernism once again rose to the surface. Bright, brash, and self-consciously smart, the aesthetic espoused

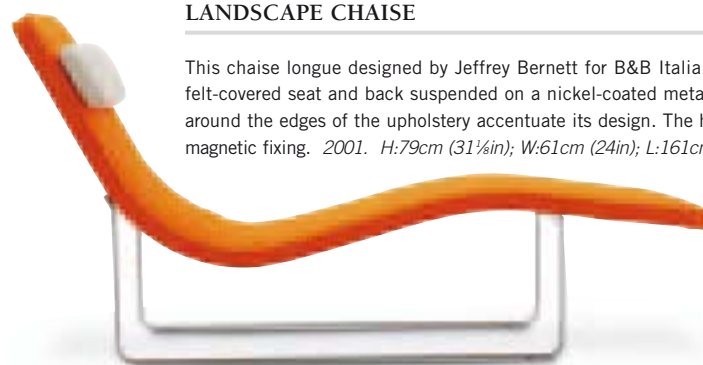


Gehry House Frank Gehry's own house is a deconstructivist remodelling of a suburban Californian house. Chain-link, plywood, and corrugated aluminium have been used on top of the house's original timber frame. The haphazard look is deliberate. 1978.



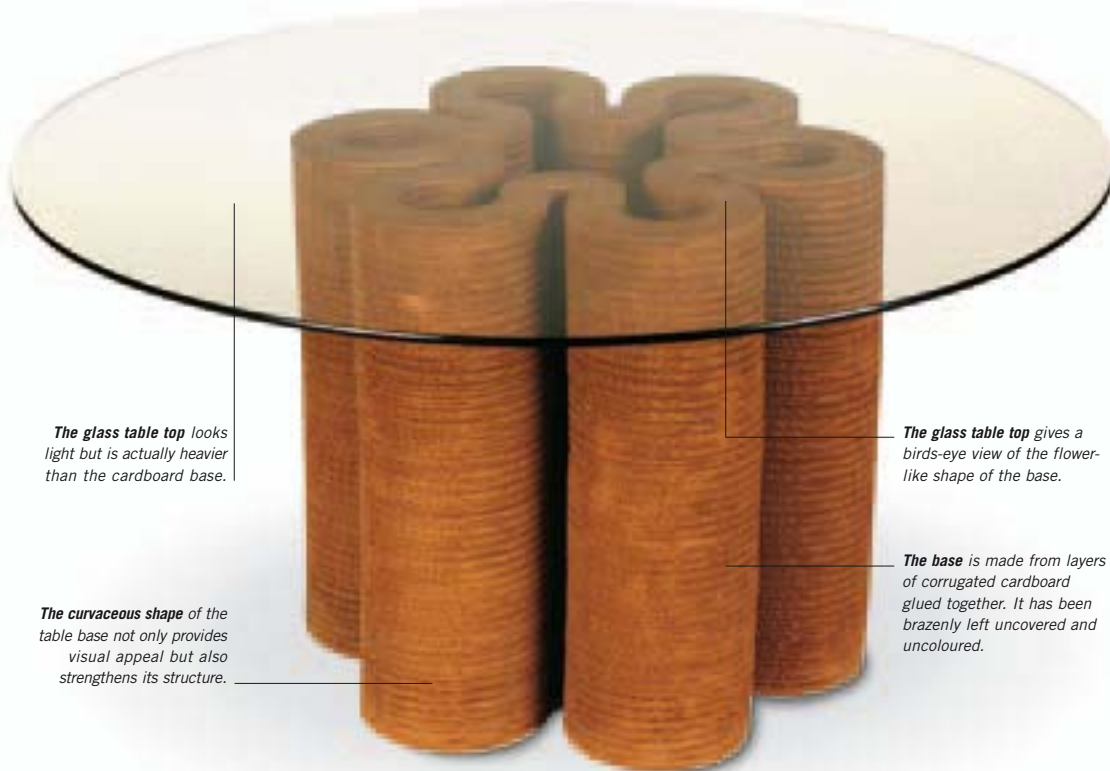
STRAP CHAIR

This chair, which is part of an experimental line of furniture, has a light, box-like maple frame. It uses polypropylene strapping tape to create a lightweight, three-dimensional web as a minimal yet comfortable seating surface. It was designed by Boym Partners. 2000. H:76cm (31in). BOY



LANDSCAPE CHAISE

This chaise longue designed by Jeffrey Bennett for B&B Italia has an orange felt-covered seat and back suspended on a nickel-coated metal base. Seams around the edges of the upholstery accentuate its design. The headrest has a magnetic fixing. 2001. H:79cm (31½in); W:61cm (24in); L:161cm (63½in). B&B



The glass table top looks light but is actually heavier than the cardboard base.

The curvaceous shape of the table base not only provides visual appeal but also strengthens its structure.

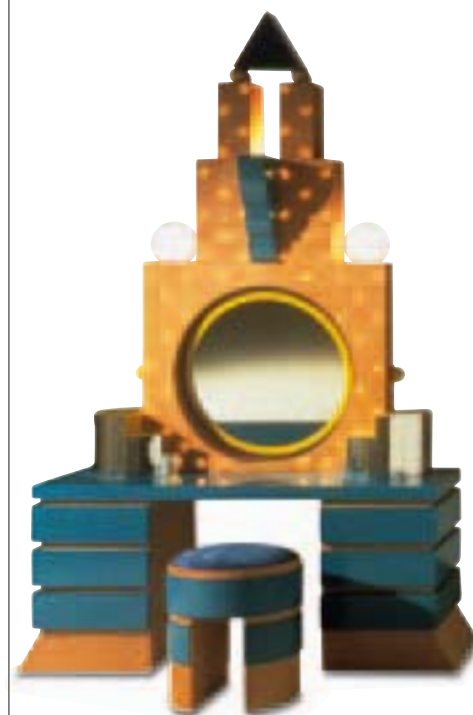
The glass table top gives a birds-eye view of the flower-like shape of the base.

The base is made from layers of corrugated cardboard glued together. It has been brazenly left uncovered and uncoloured.

DAISY TABLE

This extremely rare dining table has a circular, plate glass top raised on a six-cylinder corrugated cardboard base. The six-cylinder base is constructed of many layers of compressed and laminated corrugated card to give it stability. The nature of the material means it is easy to

shape and gives a singularly sculptural quality to the furniture. Although the cardboard was an ecological choice, the table was not as durable as those made of plastic at the same time. Designed by Frank Gehry, this table was just one of 14 designs from the "Easy Edges" series aimed at producing contemporary furniture at affordable prices. c.1972. H:58.5cm (23in); Diam:220cm (48in). SDR



PLAZA DRESSING TABLE

Designed by Michael Graves for Memphis Milano, this Postmodern dressing table is made from plastic-laminated wood. It has an architectural upper section with crystal mirrors above six drawers, raised on a flared plinth. It comes with matching stool. 1981. H:226cm (89in); W:140cm (55½in); D:54cm (21¼in). MAP

by the likes of Robert Venturi and Michael Graves perfectly fitted the mood of 1980s America. “Less is a bore”, proclaimed Venturi, perverting Ludwig Mies van der Rohe’s famous statement, “Less is more”.

In 1979, Knoll International commissioned Venturi to design a series of showroom interiors and nine chair designs that embodied the American Postmodern style. Venturi’s Queen Anne chair was based on an

18th-century English design, but the reference was only surface deep. On closer scrutiny the bent laminated wood chair looked more like a stage prop than a chair fit for a queen.

CRAFT AND ENVIRONMENT

The 1980s also saw a revival of interest in traditional crafts, with American designers such as Wendell Castle and Sam Maloof producing one-off, hugely labour-intensive objects in a highly personal style. Often referred to as the “Woodcraft” movement, their designs bore strong similarities to the work of the British Craft Revival designers of the same period.

This hands-on approach to design and production continued to flourish in the 1990s, although as the 1980s economic bubble had now burst there was a greater emphasis on low-cost (often recycled) materials. Constantin Boym, who often worked with his wife Laurene Leon, was a leading exponent of this style, producing impressive collections of furniture from low-grade steel and cheap packaging materials.

In 1995, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, celebrated the resourcefulness of designers such as the Boyms in an exhibition entitled “Mutant Materials in Contemporary Design”. This show reflected the desire

of many American furniture and product designers to work with more ecologically sound materials.

Postmodernism fell from favour at the end of the 1980s as consumers deemed it too cerebral and complex. Emerging to fill the void was the work of the ebullient Karim Rashid. Taking his cue from the French designer Philippe Starck – both in his larger-than-life personality and sensual design style – Rashid’s work proved a hit with buyers. Rashid’s furniture was bright, bubbly, and designed to bring a smile to the face of its users, rather than the knowing smirk favoured by fans of Postmodernism.



QUEEN ANNE CHAIR

This modern take on the Queen Anne chairs of the early 18th century by Robert Venturi for Knoll International, has a carved top rail, a solid, vase-shaped splat, and cabriole legs. It is made from bentwood laminates and plastic-laminated veneer. 1984. H:98cm (38½in). KNO



POWERPLAY CHAIR

This chair is made up of wafer-thin strips of laminated maple, bent and woven to create a rigid form. The seat back strips have been bent back, while the seat has been woven. It was designed by Frank Gehry and manufactured by Knoll International. 1990–92. BonE

CAMPANA BROTHERS

“BRAZIL IS OUR GREAT FOUNTAIN OF INSPIRATION”, THE CAMPANA BROTHERS ONCE STATED, EXPLAINING WHY THEY HAVE NEVER MOVED FROM SÃO PAULO.

Humberto and Fernando Campana first established a design office together in 1983, Humberto having previously studied as a lawyer and Fernando as an architect. The brothers’ scant experience of designing and making furniture forced the pair to utilize rudimentary construction techniques, while their lack of financial resources led to a preference for inexpensive, easily available materials for their pieces.

Transforming these seeming impediments into a positive feature of their work, the Campana brothers were, by the mid 1990s,

attracting attention from beyond South America. Indeed, in 1998, the Museum of Modern Art in New York became so taken by the obvious ingenuity and humanity that pervaded the Campanas’ work that they showcased their work in an installation entitled “Projects 66”.

Perhaps the most startling of the Campanas’ designs is the *Favela*, a chair designed in 1991 that pays homage to the homebuilders of Brazil’s shanty towns. Constructed from scraps of wood, apparently banged together at random, the design was taken on by the Italian manufacturer Edra 12 years later and sold (with great success) to the company’s affluent European clientele.

The *Favela* armchair This chair is made from many pieces of natural wood, glued and nailed together in a similar way to that in which the shacks of the *favelas*, or shanty towns, are built in Brazil. Because each chair is made by hand, no two are exactly the same. 1991.



“Ideal House” This installation was created by the Campana brothers for the 2004 Cologne furniture fair. The brothers called this “spontaneous architecture”, giving the impression it is built from found objects rather than being a planned design.



Banquette chair This handmade, limited-edition chair is made from a compilation of stuffed toy sharks and dolphins on a metal base. 2004. H:63.5cm (25in); W:104cm (41in); D:94cm (37in).



The Edra Sushi chair This chair is made by rolling up different materials and squeezing them into a large flexible tube. The part left uncovered forms a multicoloured seat. H:65cm (25½in); W:95cm (37½in).



The Corallo chair This chair, designed for Edra, has a large seat formed out of an irregular structure of hand-bent steel wire with a coral-pink epoxy paint finish. H:90cm (35½in); W:140cm (55in); D:100cm (39½in).

JAPAN

BY THE 1970S, THE EFFORTS that the Japanese furniture industry had made to align itself with Western society (and thus benefit from selling to a thriving Western market) were reaping rewards. Indeed, so comprehensively had Japanese designers caught up with their Western counterparts that when Postmodernism emerged as a dominant trend in design, the Japanese were among its leading exponents.

In 1972, Arata Isozaki produced his Marilyn chair, a protean Postmodern design that borrowed from an unlikely spectrum of sources. The chair's curvaceous back was based on the shapely form of Marilyn Monroe, while the overall shape was clearly derived from the chair designs of the early 20th-century Glaswegian designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh (see pp.364–65). The very particular craftsmanship was typically Japanese.

Also establishing a name for himself during the 1970s was Shiro Kuramata, a designer whose work was at once lyrical and highly rational. Kuramata gave industrial materials a grace and sense of humanity that few designers had ever previously achieved. It has been pointed out that Kuramata's furniture designs are as much objects for contemplation as they are for practical use.

At the start of the 1980s, a prosperous decade for Japan, the work of Japanese designers began to attract worldwide

attention. In 1981, the recently formed Memphis group, based in Milan, invited Isozaki, Kuramata, and Masanori Umeda to contribute designs to its latest collection. Meanwhile, Ettore Sottsass travelled to Tokyo in 1982 where the Italian designer was given a hero's welcome by a Japanese public that had become enthusiastic consumers of Western design. By the 1990s, Japan would be considered the most important market in the world for progressive design.

Mutual appreciation between the worlds of Japanese and European design in the 1980s and 1990s meant that many Japanese designers worked for European manufacturers, while numerous European designers plied their trade in Japan.

Making sure he had a foot in both camps was Toshiyuki Kita, a designer who kept offices in both Osaka and Milan. Kita's most celebrated design is his Wink chair for Cassina (1980), a distinctly Postmodern design that conflated several disparate references into one object. While the bright colours and Mickey Mouse ears of the chair are redolent of Pop culture, the chair's technical construction echoes the achievements of early Modernism. The enveloping nature of the chair is reminiscent of aircraft or car seats.

WESTERN INFLUENCE

Sadly, during the 1990s, Japan became increasingly enamoured with Western culture, and most of its talented young designers moved abroad. Manufacturers in Japan began to collaborate ever more with European designers, such as Philippe Starck and Marc Newson. Masanori Umeda did produce a successful series of Flower chairs during the 1990s (a reminder of Japan's natural beauty in an increasingly technological age) but Japanese furniture design of the 1990s showed little of the vitality that it had displayed in the 1980s. Indeed, when Shiro Kuramata died in 1991, it became painfully clear that there were few furniture designers left in Japan who could ever hope to replicate the international impact of his work.

The Museum of Modern Art, Texas This museum in Fort Worth was designed in 2002 by Tadao Ando. Five long, flat-roofed concrete and glass pavilions, supported by 12m- (40ft-) high, Y-shaped columns are reflected in the water of the adjacent pond.



BOOKSHELF

This simple, but striking bookcase is made from matt-white-lacquered strips of wood, which are arranged vertically and horizontally to provide a large number of boxed compartments that

graduate in size. The largest box is in the bottom left-hand corner and the boxes grow smaller towards the top right corner. The red crosses are not part of the piece. It was designed by Shiro Kuramata for Cappellini. H:254cm (100in); W:252.5cm (99½in); D:40cm (15¼in). SCP



WINK ARMCHAIR

The base of this chair by Toshiyuki Kita can be tilted forward so that it becomes a chaise longue. The headrest is divided into two parts, each with an independent reclining position; side knobs adjust the back. The chair has a steel frame and

fabric or leather upholstery. 1980. H:102cm (40¼in); W:83cm (32¾in); D:90cm (35½in) (min) H:85cm (33¼in); D:200cm (78¼in) (max). CAS





KICK TABLE

This low table by Toshiyuki Kita has an ovoid wooden top with a red-lacquered surface. The table top is supported on a dark grey enameled steel base, which is regulated by a glass cylinder so that the height can be adjusted, and raised on casters. 1983. H:40-52.5cm (15¼-20¾in); W:50cm (19¾in); D:50cm (19¾in). CAS



AKI BIKI CANTA

This swivel armchair is one of three variations on a theme designed by Toshiyuki Kita. Each chair has an upholstered swivel seat on a fixed steel base but a slightly different configuration. The Biki (shown here) has a backrest with arms. 2000. H:68cm (26¾in); W:72cm (28½in); D:68cm (26¾in).



SING SING SING

Designed by Shiro Kuramata for XO, this chair has a cantilevered frame made from coated steel. The seat and back of the chair are made from wire mesh, which has been welded in place. The chair's slight spring adds to its comfort. 1985. H:88cm (34¾in); W:52cm (20¾in); D:64.5cm (25¼in). QU



Velvet upholstery adds a sensual element to this design.

Layers of cushions mimic the petals of a flower.

The splayed legs are tapered to a thin point to emphasize the design's delicate nature.

The metal of the legs has been brushed to give a subtle matt surface.

ROSE CHAIR

Designed by Masanori Umeda for Edra, the seat of this *haute couture* chair is shaped like the open flower of a rose. The frame is made of moulded metal and small sections of shaped wood. The velvet, petal-shaped cushions, which form the padding, are handmade. They are filled with polyurethane foam and DacronR.

The legs are made of turned and brushed aluminium with a kiln-dried transparent finish coating. H:80cm (31½in); W:90cm (35½in); D:82cm (32¼in).



MARILYN CHAIR

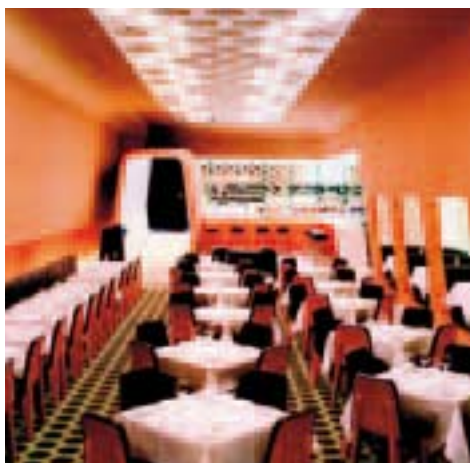
This chair has a solid birch frame with a bent, laminated wood back and a leather-covered, upholstered seat. Seen from the side, the chair is a representation of Marilyn Monroe's figure. From the front it is clear that the designer, Arata Isozaki, was inspired by Charles Rennie Mackintosh. 1972. H:140cm (55in); W:54cm (20¾in); D:54.5cm (21¼in). TDO

MARC NEWSON

A PROLIFIC AND PASSIONATE DESIGNER WHO EMPLOYS THE LATEST COMPUTERIZED TECHNIQUES, MARC NEWSON DRAWS INSPIRATION FOR HIS SCULPTURAL DESIGNS FROM THE 1950S AND 1960S.

MARC NEWSON'S WORK embodies many of the paradoxes that prevailed in 1990s design. His work often alludes to the culture of his home country, Australia, yet most of his designs have been created in Tokyo, Paris, and London. Newson often employs the latest computerized design and manufacturing techniques, but also retains a great appreciation of natural materials and traditional handcrafts. While his designs take the pursuit of sculptural form to unprecedented heights, Newson's work is underpinned by an essentially conservative approach to function.

Newson likes to describe his works as "naïve". By this he means that they are not driven by any grand concepts or ideologies. Indeed, more often than not, Newson has admitted, they are the result of absent-minded doodles. "I approach my designs in a fairly subliminal way", he once said, "which is lucky because I don't have time to think about it too much!" For this unencumbered approach to design, Newson believes that he has his education in Australia to thank. At the Sydney College of Arts he studied jewellery and sculpture, rather than industrial or furniture design, and the lack of an entrenched design culture in Australia allowed him to pursue his own particular path.



LEVER HOUSE RESTAURANT, NEW YORK
Newson transformed the 604 square metre (6,500 square foot), subterranean, windowless restaurant at Lever House with his design. His use of hexagons and curved surfaces give the room a retro 1950s feel while the use of blonde oak and mirrored glass adds light. 2003



EMBRYO CHAIR

This armchair, manufactured by Cappellini, has three legs made from chromed tubular steel. The polyurethane foam padding is covered with bi-elastic fabric. 1988. H:78.7cm (31in); W:83.8cm (33in); D:86.4cm (34in).



ORGONE LOUNGE CHAIR

This lounge chair designed for Cappellini is made entirely from fibreglass and is available in a range of bright colours. It has an organic, flowing form, and stands on three tapering legs. 1992. H:50cm (19½in); W:181cm (71¼in). BK



BUCKY CHAIR

50 of these chairs were made for the Bucky Gallery installation at the Cartier Contemporary Art Foundation in Paris. Each chair has a sculptural fibreglass shell electrostatically upholstered in flock and can be stacked (as shown above). 1995.

WOODEN CHAIR

This elegant chair, created for Cappellini, is constructed from extremely long strips of bent beech heartwood. Each strip has been looped back on itself to provide the seat back, seat, and support in one. H:75cm (29½in); W:75cm (29½in); L:100cm (39½in).

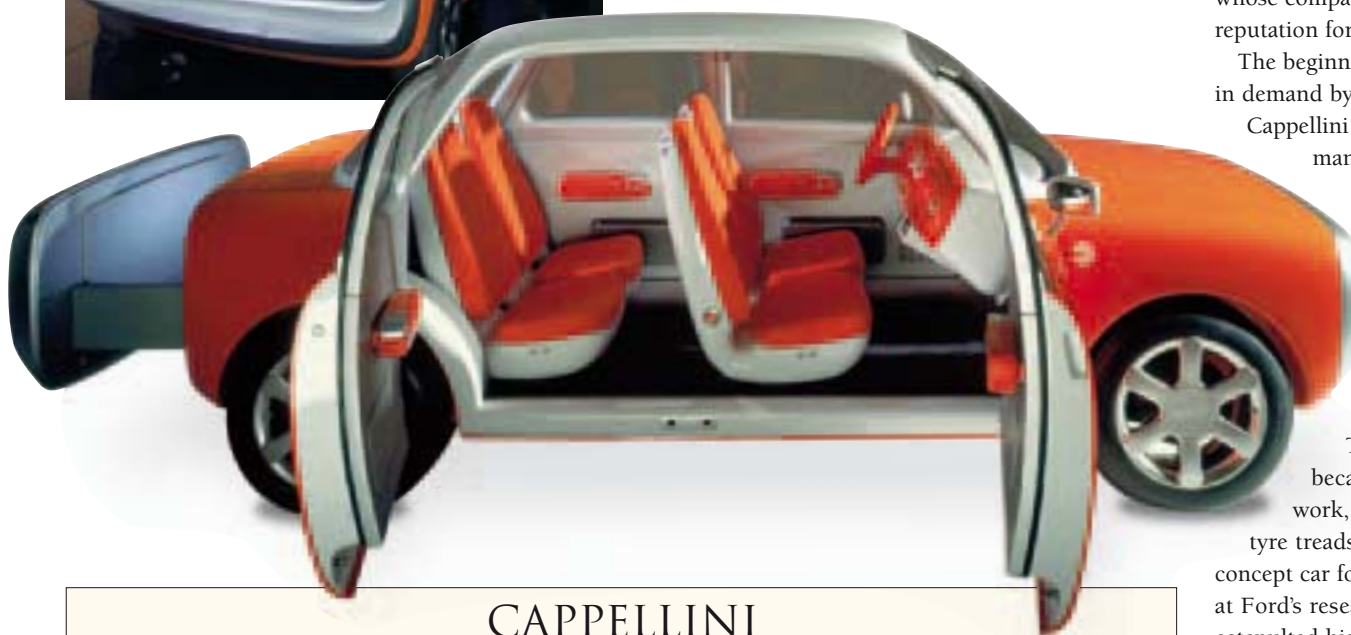




FORD DESIGN VICE PRESIDENT J MAYS (LEFT), MARC NEWSON, AND THE FORD 021C CONCEPT VEHICLE. The Ford 021C concept vehicle, created by Newson, was displayed at the Tokyo Motor Show press preview in Makuhari on 20 October 1999.

021C CONCEPT FORD

Built around elements of Ford's next generation small car platform, this car was, according to Mays, designed "to bring some fun back to the Tokyo Motor Show". 1999.



Newson's first major success as a designer was the exhibition in 1986 of his Lockheed Lounge at the Roslyn Oxley Gallery in Sydney. An organically-shaped chaise longue, encased in riveted aluminium panels, the Lockheed Lounge resembles a 1940s aircraft fuselage beaten into the shape of a Surrealist sculpture. Newson himself described it as "a giant glob of mercury". The design was widely featured in international design magazines and, by 1989, Newson was working in Japan for Teruo Kurosaki, whose company *Idée* had established a worldwide reputation for innovative furniture design.

The beginning of the 1990s saw Newson much in demand by European furniture manufacturers.

Cappellini was his most enthusiastic suitor and many of Newson's most notable designs

would be produced by this Italian manufacturer. Such was the interest in Newson's work in Europe that he moved to Paris in 1992. References to the beach culture of Sydney, however, consistently cropped up in his work, as can be seen in the surfboard-shaped Orgone chaise longue.

The hourglass shape of the Orgone became a much-used motif in Newson's work, and was one that he employed for the tyre treads and floor carpets of his astonishing concept car for Ford. Designed by Newson in 1999, at Ford's research centre in Turin, the 021C car catapulted his career onto a whole new level. Soon Newson was working on designs for watches, bicycles, aeroplanes, clothing ranges, and much more.

CAPPELLINI

WITH AN EXACTING EYE FOR DESIGN COUPLED WITH THE COURAGE TO BACK NEW TALENT AND A GIFT FOR PROMOTION, GIULIO CAPPELLINI CATAPULTED A VAST NUMBER OF DESIGNERS TO FAME.



Giulio Cappellini

The list of designers that have collaborated with the Italian manufacturer Cappellini reads like a *Who's Who* of 1990s' design. Marc Newson, Jasper Morrison, Piero Lissoni, Tom Dixon, Fabio Novembre, Konstantin Grcic, Werner Aisslinger, Karim Rashid, and Christophe Pillet have all had their designs produced in Cappellini's small, but well-resourced factory in Arosio, north of Milan.

As well as having an exacting eye for design, and the courage to employ raw talent, Cappellini was also something of a master at generating public and media attention. Cappellini promoted his designers as personalities and produced lavish, high-concept catalogues. He also ensured that his stand at the annual *Salone del Mobile* in Milan was the most conspicuous.

Cappellini has said that the two qualities he values most in furniture designs are "purity and vitality". Because of his essentially classicist views, most Cappellini products have clean lines and rich, monochrome

Felt Chair This armchair has a lacquer finish, making it suitable for outdoor use. The design was also produced with fabric upholstery, such as felt and leather, for indoor use. Designed for Cappellini by Marc Newson. 1994. H:86cm (34in); W:67cm (26½in).

surfaces. This is not to say that Cappellini was afraid of indulging the more fantastic whims of designers; he just insisted that any innovations be driven by structural logic. Keen to steer clear of what he described as the "saturated" aesthetic of Postmodernism, Cappellini gave a wide berth to anything approximating academic theory.

In 1997, the company – in its 50th year and at the height of its success – opened a chain of stores in the exclusive shopping areas of Vienna, New York, São Paulo, and Paris. Sadly, however, Giulio Cappellini was affected by the financial pressure that everyone was feeling at the end of the 1990s and, at the turn of the century, he sold a controlling stake in the company to the Poltrona Frau group.



INSPIRED USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Despite such high-flying commissions, however, Newson continued to pursue the production of furniture. By the end of the decade, he was working with Benjamin de Haan, an architect who introduced the designer to many cutting-edge computer technologies. The recent development of Rapid Prototyping – a process whereby a computer drawing can be immediately realized in plastic without the need for making intermediate models or moulds – perfectly suited Newson's impulsive approach to design.

Although Newson was using up-to-the-minute technologies, he continued to turn to the recent past for inspiration. Newson was fascinated with the forms and mechanics associated with the early developments of space travel, while he has often cited the quick-witted work of Achille Castiglioni and the domes of Buckminster Fuller as antecedents of his distinctive style. And when Newson was handed his first sizable pay-slip he went out and bought an Aston Martin DB4, one of the most celebrated car designs of the 1950s.

The facility with which Newson ranges across vast territories of design – his sinuous style can be seen in everything from hairdryers to entire restaurants – marks him out as one of the most distinguished talents of the 20th century, alongside Carlo Mollino, Raymond Loewy, Ettore Sottsass, and Philippe Starck.

OFFICE FURNITURE

DURING THE MID 1960S, many office environments underwent a radical change. Places that had previously resembled either vast classrooms or rabbit warrens now became intricate, open-plan spaces fitted with modular office-furniture systems.

These changes were first initiated in Germany – where the new look was described as the *Bürolandschaft* or “Office Landscape” – and in the United States where George Nelson and Robert Propst had devised the ground-breaking Action Office scheme (1964).

The 1970s, then, were boom years for the newly revitalized office-furniture industry. Companies such as Herman Miller Inc. in the United States and Vitra in Germany began to invest large sums of money in researching and developing office-furniture systems.

Flexibility soon became the key word in office-furniture design, as chairs were given swivelling seats and put on casters, and modular shelving systems became increasingly common. Ergonomics, too, was another much-

discussed subject as a growing percentage of the world’s workforce was sitting down at desks rather than standing on the factory floor.

The arrival, in the late 1970s, of computers as a common feature of the office environment proved another spur for designers to rethink office furniture (the launch of the Apple Mac in 1984 changed the meaning of the word “desktop”). In the 1980s, personal computers allowed more people to work from home, prompting many dusty studies to become transformed into “home offices”. This sparked a temporary move away from the technical aesthetic of office furniture.

The development of hot-desking in the 1990s further de-formalized the office environment. In hot-desking offices, desks became little more than the equivalent of car parks and were thus stripped of drawers and other storage spaces. By this time, too, the increased memory capacities of computers reduced the need for expansive filing systems.

The tray is raised and swivels so it is easy to reach papers inside it.

The shelving units are on casters, so they can be moved around the office.

The shelving units are backed with wood, bringing a natural element into the office.



The standardized shape of the desk allows a number of them to be placed together.

The holes in the desk are for electrical cables.

VITRA ATM

Vitra’s Advanced Table Module (ATM) was designed with practicality uppermost in mind. The look is simple and restrained but with carefully detailed features. The table has an eased edge for comfort, and discreet slots for

cables and accessories. It accommodates various accessories that organize the desktop, such as lamps, file trays, plates, and paper boxes, and it can fit together neatly with other tables to form multiple work stations. A mobile unit provides storage and helps to define the broader office landscape. 2003.



REVOLVING CABINET

Designed by Shiro Kuramata for Cappellini, this innovative filing system has 20 drawers, each of which rotates around a single vertical metal bar. H:185cm (72¾in); W:36cm (14¼in); D:25cm (9⅞in). BK 3



STORAGE UNIT

This Postmodern storage unit was designed by Gaetano Pesce. It has an ebonized frame and two banks of 13 “mailbox” compartments with hinged fronts in polychromed wood. 1991. H:167cm (65¾in); W: 61.5cm (24¼in). SDR 1



CORNER TABLE

This table forms part of the Sedus reception room furniture designed by the Australian architect Peter Wilson (see also his *Corner Chair*, opposite). The low table has a square, plate-glass top, and is supported on a

chromed-steel frame, which has an asymmetrical cross-shaped base and four large, black, padded feet. The angular, asymmetry of the design gives the table a certain quirky personality of its own. H:40cm (15¾in); W:70cm (27½in); D:70cm (27½in). SED



ARCHIMOOON CLASSIC

Philippe Starck's version of the classic desk lamp makes use of clean lines and a smooth aluminium finish. The lamp folds and pivots to direct light as needed. *H:57cm (22½in); D:68.5cm (27in).*



JOYN OFFICE SYSTEM

Designed by Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec for Vitra, this system provides a flexible series of work stations. It has a rectangular table top and a number of movable screens that can be slotted into the table to form enclosed compartments. *2002. The dimensions vary according to the model. VIT*



CORNER CHAIR

This asymmetric, upholstered chair is part of a range of reception furniture. The two-tone leather seat is supported on an asymmetrical chromed-steel frame. *H:85cm (33½in); W:60.5cm (23¾in); D:60cm (23¾in).* SED



AERON OFFICE CHAIR

This swivel chair has a recycled aluminium- and fibreglass-reinforced frame with a mesh seat and back. It is raised on casters. It was designed by Donald Chadwick and William Stumpf for Herman Miller Inc. *1992. L&T 1*

OLIVETTI

OLIVETTI PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WHOLE OFFICE ENVIRONMENT THROUGHOUT THE 20TH CENTURY.

Olivetti's products, from Camillo Olivetti's first typewriter design in 1908 to its pioneering laptop computers of the 1980s, were always at the cutting edge of product design. And Olivetti's own offices were always at the forefront of ideas regarding office environment design.

In 1939, the designers Gino Pollini and Luigi Figini designed the company's offices and production plant in strict Rationalist style, furnishing the interiors with tubular-steel chairs. At this time, Marcello Nizzoli was the company's design director, producing a series of radically advanced typewriter designs.

In 1958, Ettore Sottsass took over Nizzoli's role and stamped his own unique spirit on Olivetti. The company's offices were soon furnished with bright, ergonomically advanced chairs, and Olivetti's product range was revamped. The portable Valentine typewriter that Sottsass designed with Perry A. King in 1969 caught the zeitgeist of an on-the-go



The Olivetti Establishment in Ivrea, Italy This large and open-plan, Rationalist-style office space was designed by Luigi Figini and Gino Pollino.

lifestyle, appearing more of a fashion accessory than a working tool.

During the 1970s and 1980s, Olivetti ensured that it kept pace with technological advances, and was one of the first manufacturers of personal computers (PCs) and fax machines.



KANT DESK

This white-laminated, birch plywood desk has a rectangular work surface that dips towards the back to create a bookshelf. This is a basic model to which a number of accessories can be added, including banks of drawers suspended from the desktop and a monitor panel. *2002. H:74cm (29¼in); W:160cm (63in); D:105cm (41½in).* NHM 2



Olivetti furniture designed by Ettore Sottsass This office shows some of the technically innovative products that Sottsass designed, such as the ergonomic chairs and the pop-inspired Valentine typewriter. *1970-71.*



Synthesis 45 desk chair This injection-moulded plastic chair, designed by Ettore Sottsass, is brightly coloured and has a chunky silhouette. The chair was intended to appeal to young office workers. *1970-71.*

CHAIRS

THE 1970S WAS a decade when many designers finally relinquished their visions of a brave new world: no matter how many outlandish seating systems they devised, they realized that they could do little to alter natural human behaviour.

In the face of such a sobering realization, the four-legged chair with a seat and back made a determined comeback. From the mid 1970s onwards, designers worried less about challenging the archetypal form of a chair and concentrated instead on the chair's more superficial appearance. The chair became regarded as a canvas for communication. "Chairs present potent declarations about their designers", wrote the critic John Pile in 1990. "When sitting on a chair we are in touch not only with the object but also its human creator."

Plastic, a material that had opened up so many new vistas in the world of chair design, was largely rejected by

designers during the 1970s and 1980s. High oil prices had made it a more expensive material to use and designers had a greater awareness of plastic's negative ecological impact.

Wood returned as a favoured material, although it was often painted or laminated, and high-grade woods were rarely used. Unusual materials, such as wicker, cork, cardboard, bamboo, and recycled frying pans (in the case of designer Tom Dixon) were also experimented with in an effort by designers not only to find more environmentally friendly alternatives to plastic but also to give their chairs greater communicative impact.

The upsurge of Postmodernism in the late 1970s and 1980s had a riotous effect on design, and chairs were covered in coloured paint and patterned laminates. The 1990s, however, saw this bluster stripped away, as a more restrained style was adopted by furniture designers.

The glass has been gently twisted to create a flat back.

The chair has been made by slitting and then bending a sheet of glass warmed in a tunnel furnace.

The seat can take a load of up to 150kg (300lb), even though the curved crystal glass is a mere 12mm (½in) thick.

The transparency of the glass makes the chair appear far lighter than it actually is.

GHOST CHAIR

This chair is made from a single piece of moulded glass that has been slit along its length and moulded, while hot, to take its shape. The chair's form echoes the traditional British club chair (also adapted by Marcel Breuer for his Wassily chair).

While the chair's construction, combined with the transparency of the 12mm- (½in-) thick glass, make it look light, it can in fact take a load of up to 150kg (300lb). The chair was designed by Cini Boeri and Tomu Katayanagi and produced by Fiam. 1987. H:68cm (26¾in); W:95cm (37½in); D:75cm (29½in). BonBay 4



LAZY CHAIRS

Each of these lounge seats has a fabric sleeve slipped over a stainless steel frame and can be converted from an armchair into a chaise longue in one single movement. The chairs were designed for outdoor and indoor use and are still available

in a range of materials, including leather, some of which are easy to remove from the frame. The chairs were designed by Patricia Urquiola for B&B Italia. 2003. Chair: H:68cm (26¾in); W:82cm (32¼in); D:108cm (42¼in); Chaise longue: H:82cm (32¼in); W:82cm (32¼in); D:113cm (42¼in). B&B



SPAGHETTI CHAIR

This armchair has a tubular-steel frame supporting four tan leather slings. The four legs are straight and the back uprights and seat rail curve gently. It was designed by Giandomenico Belotti. 1979. H:71cm (28in); W:68cm (26¾in); D:59cm (23¼in). BonE 1



NON 2000

This square-framed chair has been moulded in PUR rubber in one go. It has an inner steel frame with spring bands in the seat and can be used indoors and out. It is produced by Komplot Design. 2000. H:77cm (30¾in); W:44cm (17¼in); D:39cm (15¼in). KAL



FRED BAIER ARMCHAIR

This plywood and sycamore Postmodern armchair is stained red, purple, and yellow and then lacquered. It is a contemporary version of the smoker's bow, a type of Windsor chair. Four pairs exist, each in a unique colourway. Designed by Tim Wells. 1983. H:55cm (21¼in). FB 3



TOK CHAIR

The back rail and legs of this three-legged armchair are made from a single piece of bent wood. The leather seat and triangular backrest are raised on steel supports. The rear support is splayed at the bottom to form the back foot. H:77cm (30¾in); W:53cm (21¼in). 2

**ASTON CHAIR**

This chair, designed by Linley, is a 21st-century interpretation of a gentleman's club chair and its fluid shape is inspired by car upholstery. The chair is available in a variety of fabrics, including leather and silk, and in colours that range from white, cream, and black, to bright red and electric blue. 2001.

**KARTELL ARMCHAIR**

This chair has a black injection-moulded frame with a curved backrest and a deep seat that slopes down towards the backrest. The seat and rounded arms of the chair are supported on L-section legs, so shaped for extra strength. It was designed by Gae Aulenti for Kartell. *BonE* 1

**FELTRI CHAIR**

This armchair is made of thick wool felt and the lower section is impregnated with thermostatic resin to stiffen it. The seat back and seat cushion are quilted and sewn together with polyester padding. It was designed by Gaetano Pesce for Cassina. 1987. *H:130cm (51¼in); W:73cm (28¾in); D:66cm (26in).*

**IL CAPRICCIO DI UGO**

This is a steel-framed armchair with a fabric-upholstered foam seat and armrests, raised on tubular-steel legs. The armrests fold down so that they can be used as trays. It was designed by Matali Crasset, France. 1997. *H:77cm (30¼in); W:63cm (24¾in) (closed), 109cm (43in) (open); D:63cm (24¾in).* MCP

**VINE CHAIR**

This chair has been made from limewood, which has been carved and painted to simulate a seat and back made of vine leaves and legs resembling tree trunks. It was designed by John Makepeace. *H:85cm (33¼in); W:50cm (19¾in); D:50cm (19¾in).* JM 6

**MAPLE DINING CHAIR**

This solid maple dining chair is one of a set of 10. The chair has a cane back panel and a curved seat, which is raised on square-section legs. Designed by Studio Dillon for a private client. 2001. *H:80cm (31½in); W:45cm (17¼in) D:50cm (19¾in).* DIL

METAMORPHIC FURNITURE

SMALLER LIVING SPACES COMBINED WITH A FOCUS ON FUNCTION BY DESIGNERS LED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSFORMABLE FURNITURE.

The Japanese have long been used to compact living spaces. During the 1980s and 1990s, however, compact living also became a key issue in cities across Europe and the United States as spiralling house prices forced people to inhabit ever smaller spaces. With people considering how to make the most of such restricted room, the production of multi-functional furniture seemed like a logical idea. The 1990s saw a revival of interest in the functional aspects of furniture by designers, who found the idea of multi-purpose furniture particularly appealing. Designers of the 1990s took a more playful

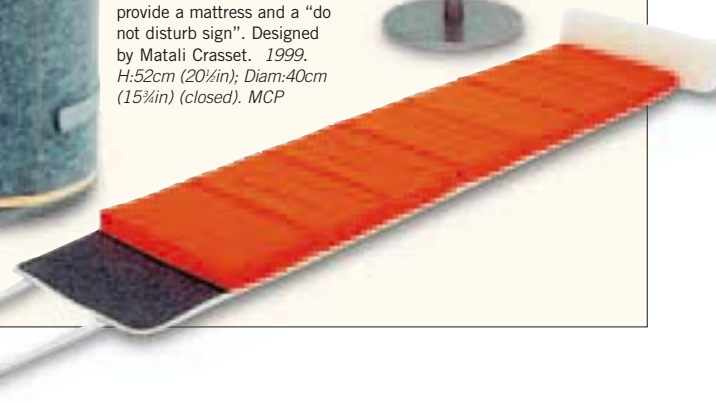
approach to function than their Modern predecessors, and many worked on transformable furniture designs.

Typical of this type of design was French designer Matali Crasset's Teo (1999), a stool that could be dismantled to provide its owner with a mattress. Other notable multi-functional furniture designs of this decade included the Armchair-Table (1998) and the Wire

Frame Reversible Bench (1999), both by Shin and Tomoko Azumi, who were brought up in Japan. While the former design is self-explanatory, the latter is best described as a bench that, when flipped over, becomes a chaise longue.



Teo from 2 to 3 The Siesta piece metamorphoses from a stool to a bed. The main elements of the assembled stool can be dismantled to provide a mattress and a "do not disturb sign". Designed by Matali Crasset. 1999. *H:52cm (20¼in); Diam:40cm (15¼in) (closed).* MCP

**AFRICA CHAIR**

One of a pair designed by Tobia and Afra Scarpa, this chair has a two-piece cherry-wood back, and a black leather-upholstered seat. Its simple frame has a cross-stretcher for extra stability. The chair back extends to become the back leg. It is manufactured by Maxalto. 1975. 1

**BIBLIOTHÈQUE**

This is one of a set of four limited-edition Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano bibliothèque dining chairs. It has a wire-mesh seat and adjustable back supported on four steel-rod uprights, with a tan-leather drop-in seat pad. *Late 1970s.* *Bonbay* 3

TABLES

THE POPULARITY OF the coffee table during the 1940s, 1950s, and, to a lesser extent, the 1960s and 1970s, meant that the large, often cumbersome dining table was left somewhat by the wayside.

During the 1980s, however, the dining table enjoyed something of a revival in elite circles. This was a decade of conspicuous consumption and an expansive, authoritative dining table served well as a status symbol. Not only did it declare that the owner had no pressing need to economize on space, it also gave the message that they were continually holding fashionable dinner parties.

Ownership of a dining table sent out much the same message in the 1990s. However, by now it was considered lacking in taste to flaunt objects of

obvious value. Dining tables, then, became simple in form and increasingly produced in understated materials, such as glass, blonde wood, and brushed metal.

The 1990s also saw an increasing trend for “loft-living”. The conversion of many ex-industrial buildings and warehouses into residential dwellings during this decade allowed for large, open-plan spaces in which the coffee table – usually seen squeezed between the television set and the three-piece suite – seemed rather inappropriate. It was the rather more footloose occasional table, then, that began to enjoy a boom in popularity. As ingenuity was a much-admired feature in furniture design during the 1990s, occasional tables often came in nesting sets of three.

The severe shape of these occasional tables is similar to the sculptures made by the Minimalist artist Donald Judd.

The black ends of the table give definition to their shape, emphasizing just how thin they are.

The matt aluminium surfaces give the tables a sense of luxury.

An internal panel adds strength to the table's structure.



T60 TABLES

This set of three Antonio Citterio T60 tables is produced by B&B Italia. Each table is made from a single sheet of aluminium with a satin finish, which has been moulded into an upside-down “U” shape. The table top is

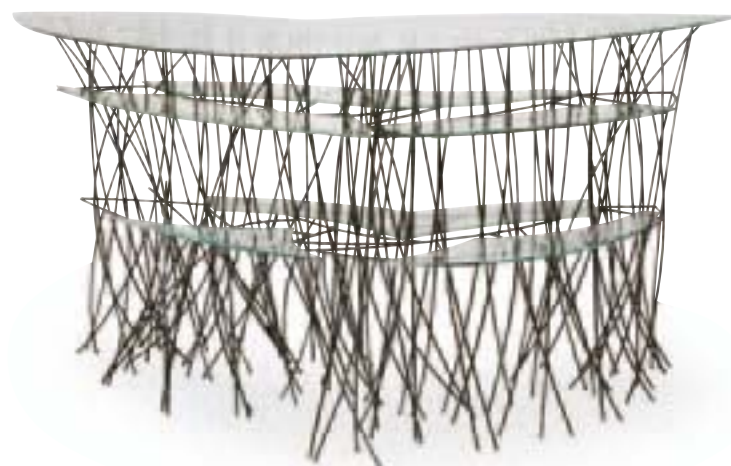
square and there is a central reinforcing element between the legs, which is also made of aluminium. Each outside edge has a 10 mm- (3/8in-) thick black border that emphasizes the clean, straight lines and geometric form of the tables. c.1998. W:59.5cm (23 1/2in). FRE 1



PLATE-GLASS TABLE

This large, architectural-looking table has a heavily structured frame made from matt anodized aluminium. The truss-type legs support a detachable, rectangular plate-glass top. The table's colour and form give it an industrial

look. It was designed by André Kiskan & Andreas Freund, Austria. 1985. H:76cm (30in); W:220cm (87 1/2in); D:109cm (47in). DOR 3



FREE-STANDING BAR

This intriguing bar has a curved plate-glass table top supported on numerous black-lacquered iron rods. Two lower levels of glass shelving have been added. These levels are each made of several pieces of glass, making

it look as if they have been pierced by the iron rods. The bar was designed by B.R.A.N.D. (Boris Brochard & Rudolf Weber), Austria. B.R.A.N.D. was founded in 1983 with an initial symbolic event in which old furniture was burnt in order to create space. c.1985. H:117cm (46in); W:245cm (96 1/2in). DOR 4



GLASS DINING TABLE

This table is almost all glass. The thick plate-glass top is supported on two large, square-section legs. Each leg is made up of nine vertical sheets of plate glass, which graduate in size, and have been joined

together with steel bolts, spaced apart, to form a solid-looking leg. The table is typical of the quieter style of design at the end of the 1980s, which is sometimes referred to as “Late Modern”. W:244cm (96in). FRE 2



MY 082

This table has a white rectangular table top raised on a black injection-moulded polypropylene frame with slender, tapering legs. The design is also available with a brown,

green, orange, or grey frame. It was designed for Magis by the English designer Michael Young, who is known for his use of expressive colours. 2001. *H:70.5cm (27¼in); W:149cm (58½in); D:68cm (26¼in).* CRB



ROOK TABLE

The rectangular top of this table is made from white-laminated beech. It is supported on a solid beech frame with rectangular-section, splayed legs. Versions of this table are also made with beech veneer or reinforced glass

tops. It was designed by Konstantin Grcic for SCP. *H:74cm (29½in); W:190cm (75¼in); D:85cm (33¼in).* SCP



CONSOLE TABLE

This simple, rectilinear console table has a maple table top and sides of equal depth. The sides are joined by a turned stretcher for extra stability. Below the table top are four pull-out steel units. It is produced by Zanotta of Italy,

which is a recognized leader in Italian industrial design and produces designs by internationally famous designers and architects. *W:117.5cm (46¼in).* FRE 1



LENS TABLES

The tops and sides of these tables are made from sheets of crystal glass with a special film inserted between them, to give a semi-transparent, almost kaleidoscope effect. These cubes are made on a simple steel frame and can be used on their own or placed one over the other. Designed by Patricia Urquiola, the tables are manufactured by B&B Italia. *H:43cm (16⅞in); W:43cm (16⅞in); D:43cm (16⅞in).* B&B



TABLE TABLE

This contemporary centre table by Clementine Hope has an 18th-century-style table printed on a square-section, medium-density fibreboard (MDF) frame. The witty take on the French *bureau plat* that is printed on the table includes

typical 18th-century features, such as cabriole legs, ormolu mounts, Rococo escutcheons, and a leather-inset top. *H:76cm (30in); W:160cm (63in).* L&T 1



CENTRAL PARK

This table has a square glass top supported on four plastic-coated steel columns. The base of the table is made from a deep square of figured white marble, which forms a stark contrast with the black plastic above it. The

table was designed by Ettore Sottsass, the leading member of the Memphis group. The group's main aim was to revive Radical design and break down the barriers between high and low design. The table was manufactured by Knoll International. 1982. BonE 1

ANATOMY OF FURNITURE

Furniture is constantly evolving, and has been since the Ancient civilizations of Egypt, Greece, and Rome. As time has gone by, advances in technology, the discovery of new materials, and the changing fashions of each era have done much to influence the construction, shape, and ornament of the prevailing furniture forms that we are familiar with today. From the mortise-and-tenon joints of the Middle Ages to complex welds of the Industrial Age, and from traditional horsehair stuffing to electrostatic flock upholstery, there have been countless changes in the way furniture is made.

This book has demonstrated, chapter by chapter, how the three basic forms – chairs, tables, and case pieces – have developed since 1600 to the present day: how pieces have become generally lighter and smaller in shape; how hand-crafted pieces differ from their machine-made counterparts; and how social and political events have influenced the various styles. The sheer diversity of design over the last 400 hundred years may lead to confusion when it comes to terminology. However, despite the many guises of the three basic forms, they all share common structural characteristics, many of which are outlined here.



Open armchair

This George II open armchair is made from solid walnut – the timber of choice in England for the first quarter of the 18th century. Typical features of the period are the use of solid wood, the wide, drop-in seat, and stiles that are a continuation of the back legs. The shaped top rail and solid, vase-shaped splat were also fairly common features at the time. *BONS*



Bow-front chest of drawers

Chests of drawers were in common usage from the end of the 17th century, usually for storing clothes. This George III chest of drawers is made from mahogany – the timber that superseded walnut in popularity in England from the mid 18th century. Typical features are the bow-fronted, graduated drawers, the crossbanding, and the brass ring handles. The serpentine apron and splayed feet were also common features of this period. *NA*



Drop leaf

Gateleg

Stretcher

Flattened bun foot

Frieze drawer

Baluster-turned leg

Gateleg table

The gateleg dates back to the end of the 16th century and has been made in various styles since then, but it was at its most popular in the 17th century. This example, made from yellow pine, was made in the southern states of America between 1690 and 1740. The defining features of a gateleg table are the drop leaves, supported on legs that swing out from the centre, and the stretchers that connect the legs. SP



Cornice

Frieze

Drawer

Escutcheon

Crossbanding

Drop handle

Plinth

Apron

Cup-and-vase leg

Bun foot

Stretcher



Frieze

Decorative roundel

Cornice

Door panel

Drop handle

Bracket foot

Linen press

Large case pieces for the storage of household linen were popular from the 17th century onwards, often with two doors, as in the French armoire or German *Schrank*. Later, they had two doors above a set of drawers, as here. This Georgian example is made from mahogany. Typical features of the period include the dentilled cornice, the panelled doors, and the square bracket feet. L&T

High chest of drawers

The high chest of drawers, or highboy, was popular in Britain and America during the early 18th century, and usually consisted of an upper chest of drawers supported on a lower, table-like form with long legs. This example was made in Boston, America. Typical features include the tiger maple and burr maple veneer, the cup-and-vase legs, and the flat, shaped stretchers. KEN

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FURTHER READING

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GLOSSARY

Acanthus A Mediterranean plant, *Acanthus spinosus*, with fleshy, scalloped leaves. From antiquity, it was widely used for carved ornament, such as decorative mouldings, and Corinthian and Composite capitals. In the 18th century, it was a popular motif for furniture and metalwork.

Aluminium A lightweight, silvery-white metal extracted from bauxite, used by furniture designers after World War II, and favoured for its malleability and rust-resistance.

Amaranth A South American tropical hardwood used for veneering since the 18th century. It is purple in colour when first cut, and ages to a rich, dark brown. It is also known as purpleheart and palisander.

Amboyna A decorative hardwood, varying in colour from light reddish-brown to orange, with a mottled figure and tightly curled grain. It was often used for veneering in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Anthemion With origins in ancient Greece and Rome, this is a fan-like decorative motif resembling the honeysuckle leaf and flower. It was used as a repeated motif for banding on Neoclassical friezes and cornices towards the end of the 18th century.

Apron The frieze rail of a table, the base of the framework of a piece of case furniture, or a shaped, sometimes carved, piece of wood beneath the seat rail of a chair. It is also known as a skirt.

Arabesque Stylized foliage arranged in a swirling, interlaced pattern and combining flowers and tendrils with spirals and zigzags. It originated in the Middle East and was popular in Europe until the early 17th century.

Armoire A French term for a storage cupboard for clothing and household linen. It usually has two large doors and interior shelving.

Astragal A moulding, that is semi-circular in cross-section, often used as glazing bars for bookcases.

Aubusson tapestry Tapestries made in Aubusson in France, which was granted the title of royal manufactory in 1665. They were generally less expensive than tapestries produced at the Gobelins factory in Paris.

Bail handle First used from about 1690, this is a loop-shaped handle suspended from two knobs, sometimes mounted on a backplate.

Bakelite A revolutionary synthetic plastic invented by L.H. Baekeland in 1909. This robust, non-flammable and attractive plastic became popular in the 1920s and 1930s and is associated with Art Deco.

Ball foot A round, turned foot used on oak and walnut case furniture and chairs during the late 17th and early 18th centuries.

Baluster A short post or pillar, such as a table leg, or one in a series supporting a rail and forming a balustrade. Usually bulbous in shape, the form was inspired by Classical vases and has been used since the Renaissance.

Banding A decorative strip of veneer in a contrasting wood. Generally used round the edge of drawer fronts, table tops, and panels. With crossbanding, the contrasting wood runs at right angles to the main veneer. In feather, or herringbone banding, two narrow strips of contrasting veneer run diagonally in opposite directions, thus forming a chevron pattern.

Beading A decorative Neoclassical border, often used on case furniture, which has applied or embossed beads of the same size used in a single row, or alternating with elongated beads, in which case it is known as bead and reel.

Beech A pale timber with a fine, straight grain, native to Britain and Europe. It is easy to carve and was popular in France in the 18th century, often carved and gilded, and in Britain during the Regency period, when it was sometimes painted to resemble more expensive woods.

Bellflower See Husk motif.

Bentwood A technique perfected by Michael Thonet in Austria in the mid 19th century for producing bentwood furniture. It involves bending solid or laminated wood over steam to make curved sections for table and chair frames.

Bergère A French term for an informal, deep-seated chair of generous proportions. It usually has a caned or upholstered back and sides and a squab cushion.

Birch A northern European wood with a golden colour, sometimes with a hint of red. It was used in its solid form for chairs and other small pieces in Russia and Scandinavia from the late 18th century onwards.

Bird's-eye maple An attractive wood from northern Europe and North America, which has a characteristic light-brown figuring of tiny rings that resemble a bird's eyes. It was very popular as a veneer in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Blackamoor A life-sized carved figure of a black slave in brightly coloured clothes. Originating in Venice, blackamoors were used as pedestal supports for *torchères* and similar pieces from the 18th century.

Boiserie A French term for wood panelling elaborately carved with foliage, then painted and gilded. It was fashionable in the wealthy residences of France in the 17th and early 18th centuries, and was often complemented with furniture of a matching design.

Bolection A moulding, usually with an S-shaped cross-section, used to cover the joint between two elements whose surfaces are not level and often found as a framework around panels.

Bombé A French term used to describe a chest with swelling, convex sides. The term is usually applied to case furniture, such as commodes. The style was popular during the Régence period in early 18th-century France.

Bonheur-du-jour A French term for a small, delicate lady's writing desk that has a flat writing surface with tiered drawers and compartments at the back. It was first seen in the mid 18th century.

Bouille marquetry A technique named after André-Charles Bouille, which involves the elaborate inlay of brass into tortoiseshell or ebony and vice versa. The process was applied to high-quality furniture – usually made in matching pairs – from the late 17th century onwards.

Bow front The front of a piece of case furniture that curves outwards.

Bracket foot A foot used on case pieces from the late 17th century onwards, made of two brackets that have been mitred and joined together at right angles.

Breakfront The front of a piece of case furniture, on which a squared centre section protrudes further than the sections at either side.

Buffet A French term for a large, heavy display cupboard with open shelves, used for displaying silverware in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Bun foot A round foot, flattened at the top and bottom, that was first used on case pieces in the late 17th century and then became popular again in the early 19th century.

Bureau A French term for a fall-front or cylinder-top writing desk.

Bureau-bookcase A case piece made in two sections, that has a writing desk in the lower section and a smaller, glazed or panelled section – usually with two doors – above it.

Bureau plat A French term for a flat-topped writing desk. It often has a tooled leather insert on the writing surface and a single drawer in the shallow frieze below it.

Burr wood A growth on a tree trunk, also known as burlwood, slices of which reveal elaborate figuring ideal for decorative veneering.

Cabriole leg A furniture leg with two curves forming an attenuated S-shape, like an animal leg. Popular in the early 18th century, it was often used on chairs and terminated in a claw-and-ball or stylized paw foot.

Canapé A French term for a sofa: an upholstered seat with a back and arms, for two or more people.

Cane A lightweight, durable material first imported from the Far East in the late 17th century. Taken from the rattan tree, it was woven to make seats and chair backs.

Cantilever chair A chair with no back legs, in which the weight of the seat is supported by the front legs and base of the chair alone. It was popular with Modernist designers, who made models in tubular steel.

Carcase The term used to describe the shell of a piece of case furniture before the drawers, doors, shelves, or feet have been added.

Card table A small table designed for playing cards, first seen at the end of the 17th century. The top is usually lined with baize and it has compartments for playing pieces.

Cartouche A panel or tablet in the form of a scroll with curled edges, sometimes bearing an inscription, monogram, or coat of arms, and used as a decorative feature.

Caryatid An architectural column in the form of a full-length figure that is used as a support for furniture. It originated in ancient Greece and was used during the 16th, late 18th, and early 19th centuries.

Case furniture A general term for any storage piece, including chests, bookcases, presses, and wardrobes.

Cassone An Italian term for a low chest or coffer made in Italy in the 15th and 16th centuries.

Caster A small wheel used at the end of a leg to make it easy to move heavy pieces of furniture.

Casting The process of making a solid form from a molten liquid, such as brass or bronze.

Chaise longue A French term for an upholstered day bed that has a high support at one end. It is also known as a *récamier* or a day bed.

Chamfer A term describing a bevelled corner, usually on case pieces, and also referred to as canted.

Chest-on-chest A case piece in two sections, one above the other, each of which has drawers.

Cheval glass A freestanding mirror supported on a four-legged frame. The mirror can be tilted to provide a full-length reflection.

Chevron A zigzag decorative motif, popular in Art Deco design.

Chiffonnier From the French term, *chiffonière*, this is a small side cabinet with drawers. A *table en chiffonière* has longer legs and a shelf below the drawers.

Chinoiserie A decorative style, popular in the early 18th century, in which fanciful, exotic motifs derived from Chinese originals were applied to European furniture.

Chrome A silvery metal usually plated on a base metal such as steel. Introduced commercially in the 1920s, it was used by designers for tubular-steel furniture because of its good rust-resistance and high sheen.

Claw-and-ball foot A termination for furniture legs that was popular in the early 18th century. It was said to be based on Chinese examples of a dragon claw clasping a pearl.

Cloven hoof See Hoof foot.

Coffer A low trunk, usually made of wood and known as far back as ancient times. It was popular until the 18th century, when it was superseded by the chest of drawers.

Coiffeuse A French term for a dressing table.

Columnar Having the shape of, constructed with, or having columns.

Commode A French term for a chest with deep drawers. The form was first seen in the late 17th century.

Console table A table that has two legs supporting its front, while its back is fixed to a wall.

Corbel A wooden bracket attached to an upright and used to support a horizontal feature, such as an arm on a chair, from below.

Cornice A decorative, moulded projection that crowns a piece of furniture, particularly tall cupboards or display cabinets.

Crest rail See Top rail.

Crossbanding See Banding.

C-scroll A decorative, carved or applied Classical ornament in the shape of a C, developed during the Rococo period. (See also S-Scroll.)

Damask A rich, woven, silk, linen or cotton fabric with a satin weave, imported to Europe from Syria from the 15th century and used for furnishings from the 16th century.

Davenport A small desk with a sloping writing surface that usually, has a bank of drawers in one side.

Day bed See Chaise longue.

Demi-lune A French term for a half-moon shape.

Dentil pattern An ornamental feature of Classical architecture, dentils are small rectangular blocks, resembling teeth, that run beneath a cornice.

Dovetail A joint, used from the end of the 17th century, in which two pieces of wood are joined together at right angles. Each piece of wood has a row of fan-shaped teeth, which interlock at the joint.

Dowel A small headless wooden pin used in furniture construction to join two pieces of wood. Each piece of wood to be joined has a round hole, the size of the dowel, into which the dowel is inserted and glued.

Dresser A large piece of case furniture, popular since the 17th century, that has a shelved upper section. The lower section usually has a central cupboard flanked by drawers or open shelves.

Dressing table A small table with an arrangement of drawers for holding a lady's or gentleman's personal accessories. The term has been in use since the 17th century.

Drop front See Fall front.

Drop-in seat A removable chair seat that has been made separately and then "dropped" into the seat frame.

Drum table A writing table, used in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, that has a round, drum-shaped, leather-covered top and is supported on a central column on a tripod or pedestal base.

Ébéniste The French term for a cabinet-maker, in use from the 17th century and derived from the word ebony. *Ébénistes* specialized in veneered pieces of furniture.

Ebonized wood Wood that has been stained black in imitation of ebony. It was popular in the late 18th and late 19th centuries.

Ebony A native hardwood from the Indian subcontinent, that is black and heavy with a smooth, tight grain. It was popular as a veneer in late 17th-century Europe.

Elm A European and North American hardwood, red-brown in colour, used largely for country furniture. It was popular as a veneer (burr elm) in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Enamel A coloured, opaque composition derived from glass, sometimes used as a decorative inlay on pieces of furniture.

Encoignure A French term for a small corner cupboard, which often has a graduated shelved interior and short legs. It first appeared in France in the early 18th century.

Escutcheon A protective and usually ornamental keyhole plate, which is sometimes in the shape of a shield.

Estampille A French term to describe the stamp on French furniture made by cabinet-makers, and bearing their name, initials, or monogram. The practice was compulsory under the guild system in Paris from 1751–91.

Étagère The French term for a set of shelves, which was first used in the late 18th century. It is usually free-standing, with two to three shelves.

Fall front The hinged, flat front of a desk or bureau that falls forwards to form a writing surface. It is also sometimes known as a drop front.

Fauteuil A French term for a large, upholstered open armchair, first used at the Court of Louis XIV, and popular in the 18th century.

Faux A French word meaning “false”, used to describe a paint effect that imitates the appearance of another material, such as wood (*faux bois*) or marble (*faux marbre*).

Feather banding See Banding.

Festoon A Classical decorative motif in the form of a garland of fruit and flowers tied with ribbons. It was first used on furniture during the early 17th century, and then again from the late 18th century onwards.

Fibreglass A strong, lightweight, and versatile material made from matted glass fibres bonded with a synthetic resin. Fibreglass was popularized for making furniture by Charles and Ray Eames in the 1950s.

Fielded panel A raised wooden panel with bevelled edges that sits within a flat outer frame.

Figuring A term denoting the natural grain of any piece of cut wood.

Filigree An arrangement of twisted gold and silver wire soldered into openwork forms or two-dimensional panels and used as decoration.

Finial A decorative turned or carved ornament surmounting a prominent terminal on a chair, a bed, or a case piece, often taking the form of an urn, an acorn, or a pinecone.

Fluting Parallel lines of shallow, concave moulding running from the top to the bottom of a column, the opposite of reeding. Fluting was frequently used on table legs in Neoclassical furniture.

Foliate Shaped like a leaf.

Formica A material made from laminated plastic sheets containing melamine. Durable and easy to clean, it was popular for table tops in the 1950s and 60s.

Fretwork Originally Chinese, this is carved decoration consisting of a number of intersecting, often geometric lines, with perforated spaces between them. Fretwork was often used on Chippendale furniture in the Chinoiserie or Gothic styles.

Frieze A Classical term used to describe the horizontal strip that supports a table top, or the cornice on a piece of case furniture.

Fumed A term used to describe a technique popular with designers of the Arts and Crafts Movement, in which a chemical was used to darken the natural colour of a wood, usually oak, to make it look older.

Gadrooning A row of concave or convex flutes used along the edge of a surface to make it more decorative. Originally a Classical motif, it was popular throughout the 18th century and was applied to chests, highboys, chairs, and tables.

Gallery A small metal or wooden railing around the edge of a tray, table, or cabinet, which was popular from the mid 18th century onwards.

Galuchat See Shagreen.

Gateleg table First seen in the late 16th century, this is a table with hinged leaves. When raised, the leaves are supported on pivoting legs joined together by stretchers.

Gesso A composition of gypsum (plaster of Paris) and size, and sometimes linseed oil and glue. Gesso was used as a base for elaborately carved and gilded decoration on furniture during the 17th and early 18th centuries.

Gilding A decorative finish in which gold is applied to wood, leather, silver, ceramics, or glass. The process involves laying gold leaf or powdered gold (or silver) onto a base, such as gesso. Parcel gilding is the term used when only part of the object has been gilded.

Giltwood Wood that has been gilded.

Girandole An Italian term for an ornate giltwood candleholder that was popular with 18th-century Rococo and Neoclassical designers.

Goût grec A French term describing the renewed interest in ancient Greece and Rome that resulted in the Neoclassical style of the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Greek key A decorative band of interlocking, geometric, hook-shaped forms. Originally a Classical motif, it was used on Neoclassical furniture.

Gros point A French term for an embroidery stitch in which the sewing thread crosses two threads of the base fabric before the stitch is completed. (See also *Petit point*.)

Grotesque A type of ornament, popular during the Renaissance, in which real and mythical beasts, human figures, flowers, scrolls, and candelabra were linked together, often in vertical panels.

Guéridon A French term for a small, stand or table, first seen in the 17th century, that was usually ornately carved and embellished.

Guilloche A decorative motif that takes the form of a continuous band of strands that are twisted or plaited together. First seen in Classical architecture, the motif was popular with Neoclassical designers.

Hairy paw foot Originating in ancient Greece and revived during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, this is a leg terminal shaped like a hairy animal’s paw, usually a lion’s paw.

Hall chair A simple, high-backed chair first seen in the 18th century, and used as a waiting chair in the hallway or corridor of a grand house.

Herringbone banding See Banding.

Highboy An American term for a chest-on-chest, a form made throughout the northern United States from about 1710 onwards. It was often made with a matching lowboy – a low dressing table or writing table in the same style.

Hoof foot First seen in ancient Egypt, this is a leg terminal shaped like the hoof of a goat or ram. It was used in Europe from the late 17th century to the end of the 18th century and is also known as a cloven hoof.

Husk motif A stylized ornament in the shape of a husk of corn, which was popular in the late 18th century, when it was used repeatedly to form festoons or swags. It is known as a bellflower in the United States.

Inlay A decorative technique in which different-coloured woods or exotic materials, such as mother-of-pearl, ivory, and bone, are pieced into the solid wood surface or veneer of a piece of furniture.

Intarsia First used in the 14th century, this is an Italian term for a pictorial type of marquetry. It was often used for decorative panelling on furniture in Renaissance Italy and 16th-century Germany.

Ivory A durable, cream-coloured material, usually from elephant tusks. It was used as a decorative inlay on 17th-century furniture and on some French Art Deco pieces.

Japanning A decorative technique, dating from the 17th century, in which furniture is coated with layers of coloured varnish in imitation of true Chinese or Japanese lacquer.

Jardinière A French term for a large ornamental vessel, usually ceramic, for holding cut flowers or for growing plants. It was popular in Europe from the 17th century onwards.

Kas A Dutch term for a large provincial clothes cupboard that originated in the Low Countries in the 17th century and was introduced to America by Dutch settlers in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

Kingwood A Brazilian hardwood introduced to Europe in the late 17th century and often used for marquetry and banding.

klismos chair A chair with a broad, curved top rail and concave sabre legs, that originated in ancient Greece and was popular in Greek-revival furniture of around 1800.

Kneehole desk A desk with a top that is supported on two banks of drawers either side of a kneehole, a central recess for the sitter's knees. First seen in late 17th-century France and the Low Countries, it remains a popular form to this day.

Lacca povera An Italian term, meaning "poor man's lacquer", that describes a form of decoupage, in which sheets of engravings were coloured, cut, and pasted onto the prepared surface of a piece of furniture, then varnished to produce a high-gloss finish. The technique originated in Venice in the 1750s.

Lacquerwork A technique originating in the Far East, in which resin, made from the sap of the Rhus tree, is applied to furniture in many layers in order to produce a smooth, lustrous, hard-wearing finish.

Ladder-back chair A country chair with a back made up of a number of horizontal rails, like the rungs of a ladder, between the uprights. It usually has a rush seat and was one of the chairs made by the Shakers.

Lamination A process in which thin sheets of wood are glued together with the grain at right angles. Lamination was first used as far back as the mid 19th century by John Henry Belter in the United States, and was then used to make plywood in the 20th century.

Library table A large writing table designed to stand in the centre of a library. It was popular during the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Limed oak A process, introduced in the early 20th century, in which oak is treated with lime, producing white streaks on its surface.

Linen press A large cupboard or cabinet for storing linen.

Lion's-paw foot A leg terminal carved in the shape of a lion's paw, a popular Regency and Empire motif.

Lopers A pair of sliding runners that are pulled forwards to support the lid of a fall-front desk when it is open.

Lowboy See Highboy.

Lyre motif A Neoclassical motif based on the ancient Greek musical instrument and used as an ornamental shape or decoration for chair backs and table supports.

Mahogany A Central and South American hardwood imported into Europe in large quantities from 1730. It is reddish-brown in colour, with a tight grain.

Maple A European hardwood, pale in colour, which was used in marquetry during the 17th and 18th centuries. It was sometimes stained black to resemble ebony, a much more expensive wood.

Marquetry A decorative veneer made up of shaped pieces of wood in different colours that are pieced together to form a pattern or picture. The technique was perfected by the Dutch, who produced fine examples of floral marquetry during the 16th century. In seaweed marquetry, used on chests of drawers and cabinets in the late 17th century, richly figured timbers, such as holly and boxwood, were used to create a seaweed effect. See also Parquetry.

Mask A decorative motif representing the head of a human, a god, an animal, bird, or monster. Originally a Classical motif, it was also used during the Renaissance and on Neoclassical furniture.

Medallion An ornamental relief set within a circular or oval frame.

Menuisier A French term for a joiner or skilled craftsman who produced small pieces made of plain wood (as compared to an *ébéniste*, who specialized in veneered pieces).

Metamorphic furniture Furniture that has been designed for more than one purpose, such as a chair that can change into a set of library steps.

Mortise and tenon An early type of joint in which one piece of wood has a projecting piece (tenon), that fits snugly into a hole (mortise) in the second piece of wood. The joint may also be pegged, using a dowel that passes through holes drilled in both pieces of wood, to make the joint more secure.

Mother-of-pearl A pale, shiny, iridescent material found lining some sea shells, and used as a decorative inlay on furniture.

Moulding A strip of wood applied to the surface of a piece of furniture to add decorative detail or to conceal a joint. Mouldings were used from the 18th century onwards.

Mount A collective term for brass, ormolu, or bronze decorative details that were applied to furniture made in the late 17th and 18th centuries, particularly in France. Initially applied to provide protection from knocks, and wear and tear, mounts eventually became purely decorative.

Oak A native European and North American hardwood that produces a light, honey-coloured timber. Oak has been used to make furniture since the Middle Ages, and was the favourite timber of the 19th-century Arts and Crafts furniture-makers.

Occasional table A small table that can be used for different purposes and moved from room to room.

Ogee moulding A form of moulding, originally used in Gothic architecture, that has a shallow S-shaped curve in cross-section.

Ormolu An English term derived from the French term *or moulu*, meaning "ground gold", denoting a process of gilding bronze for decorative mounts.

Oyster veneer Late 17th and early 18th-century veneer made from diagonal cross-sections of small pieces of wood arranged to produce a repeating pattern of small rings.

Pad foot A popular terminal for a cabriole leg, this is a rounded foot that rests on a circular base.

Padouk A heavy, reddish hardwood that was imported by the Dutch and Portuguese from the Far East, and was often used as a component of veneers during the 18th century.

Palladian A restrained Classical style of architecture and decorative features that was derived from the works of the Italian architect, Andrea Palladio (1518–80).

Palmette A Classical decorative motif that is based on the fan-like shape of a palm leaf. It was widely used as ornament on Neoclassical furniture in the late 18th century.

Papier mâché A lightweight material made from dampened paper and paste, which can be moulded into any shape. Popular in furniture-making in the 18th and 19th centuries, pieces were often gilded, painted, japanned, and then varnished for decorative effect.

Parcel gilding See Gilding.

Parquetry A decorative veneer made up of a mosaic of small pieces of wood in contrasting colours pieced together to form a geometric pattern. A variation of marquetry, it was used on walnut-veneered furniture in the 18th century and with consummate skill on Louis XV furniture.

Patera An oval or circular ornament on a flat surface, which is often decorated with a floral design, a rosette, or fluting. Paterae were popular with Neoclassical designers.

Patina A sheen on the surface of metal and furniture, the result of years of handling and a gradual build-up of dirt and polish.

Pedestal table A round or square table raised on a single central pillar or column, often with a tripartite base. This type of table was popular in Britain in the 18th century.

Pediment An architectural term for the triangular gable found above the portico of a Greek temple, a feature adopted in Europe from the 16th century onwards and applied to the tops of case pieces of furniture, such as bookcases and highboys. Furniture pediments were created in a variety of different shapes.

Pegged joint A joint in which two pieces of wood are held together by pegs driven through drilled holes.

Pembroke table A small table, often with an elaborately inlaid table top, that has two frieze drawers, two drop leaves, and is usually on legs with casters. It was made in Britain from the mid 18th century onwards.

Penwork A technique in which the entire surface of a piece of furniture is japanned black before being worked with an intricate, decorative pattern of white japanning.

Petit point A French term for an embroidery stitch in which the sewing thread crosses one thread of the base fabric before the stitch is completed. (See also *Gros point*.)

Pier A term for the area of a wall between two windows, doors, or other openings in a room.

Pier glass A tall, narrow mirror designed to hang between two windows, often above a pier table.

Pier table A small table designed to stand against a pier (see *above*). It was popular from the 17th century onwards and was often paired with a pier glass of the same design.

Pietra dura An Italian term for an expensive form of inlay using semi-precious stones, such as jasper and lapis lazuli, to create decorative panels for cabinets and table tops. First evident in Italy during the Renaissance, the technique was very popular during the 17th century.

Pilaster An architectural term for a flattened column attached to the surface of a case piece of furniture as a form of decoration, rather than for support. Pilasters usually flank cupboard doors or drawers, and are often topped with capitals.

Pine An inexpensive, light-coloured, straight-grained softwood, used predominantly for drawer linings and the backboards of furniture.

Plastic A synthetic material, first popularized in the 1920s, that can be moulded into shape while soft, then set into a rigid form.

Plywood A composite wood made of several layers of laminated wood laid at right angles to each other. The flexibility of thin plywood was useful in forming curved pieces of furniture in the 1920s and 1930s.

Polyurethane foam A synthetic substance used to fill seat cushions and backs, introduced in the 1960s.

Porcelain A mixture of china clay and china stone that becomes hard, translucent, and white when fired.

Pressed glass Glass that has been shaped by being pressed in a mould. The technique was developed in the United States in the 1820s.

Pressed steel Steel that has been shaped by being pressed in a mould, a technique that was developed in the mid 20th century.

Putto An Italian term for “cherub” or “boy”, which denotes a motif widely used during the Renaissance and, in particular, during the 17th century.

Quatrefoil A Gothic decorative motif, often used in tracery, of four asymmetrical leaves resembling a four-leafed clover. Similar motifs with three leaves (trefoil) and five leaves (cinquefoil) are also common.

Rail A horizontal strip of wood on a furniture frame, such as those joining the legs of a table or chair, or the piece of wood joining the uprights of a chair back.

Récamier See *Chaise longue*.

Reeding Parallel convex moulding running from the top to the bottom of a column, the opposite of fluting. Reeding was used from the late 18th century onwards as decoration on table and chair legs.

Relief Carved, moulded, or stamped decorative features that rise above the surface of a piece of furniture. Prominent patterns are known as high relief and less prominent patterns as low relief.

Reverse painted An image that has been painted in reverse on the inner surface of glass.

Ribbon back A term that describes chair backs that have been carved to look like ribbons tied in bows. A popular design during the mid 18th century, it was a typical feature of the Chippendale chair.

Rocaille A French term meaning “rockwork”, which denotes the asymmetrical rock and shell forms characteristic of the Rococo style.

Rosette Of ancient origin, this is a decorative motif in the shape of a rose, which is often used as a disc ornament or as a circular patera.

Rosewood A rich reddish-brown hardwood with an even grain, richly marked with dark stripes. It was used from the 18th century onwards as a veneer, during the Regency period in solid form for whole pieces of furniture, and became popular again in the mid 20th century.

Sabot A metal shoe-fitting at the bottom of a cabriole leg.

Sabre leg A leg with a gentle concave curve, predominantly seen on chairs, that was widely used on Regency, Empire, and Federal furniture during the first half of the 19th century.

Saddle seat A wooden seat that is raised at the centre and scooped away at the sides and back, to look like a saddle. It is a common feature of Windsor chairs.

Satinwood A fine-grained, golden-yellow exotic hardwood used for fine-cut veneers. It was very popular in Britain during the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Scagliola A plaster-like substance, to which colour pigments and small pieces of stone such as granite, marble, and alabaster are added so that once set, it can be polished to look like marble or *pietra dura*.

Scalloped A term used to describe a wavy edge or border resembling the edge of a scallop shell.

Schrank A German term for a cupboard, generally associated with the large, heavy, two-door cupboards of the 17th and early 18th centuries.

Sconce A candleholder designed to be mounted on a wall. It has an arm or bracket for holding the candle and a backplate for reflecting the light of the candle around a room.

Scroll foot A foot that terminates in a scroll or spiral form. It was usually seen on a cabriole leg and was fashionable in the mid 18th century.

Seat rail See *Rail*.

Seaweed marquetry See *Marquetry*.

Secrétaire A French term for a large cabinet in two sections, popular in the late 18th century. The lower section has a fall front that drops down to provide a writing surface and reveals a number of pigeonholes and drawers. Above this there is usually a bookcase or glazed cabinet.

Secrétaire à abattant A French term for a free-standing writing cabinet. It often has a slim drawer beneath the top, and a fall-front writing surface. Below that, there is an arrangement of drawers or cupboards. The form was popular in France during the late 18th century.

Semainier A French term for a tall, narrow chest with seven drawers, one for each day of the week, which was first made in the 18th century.

Serpentine A wavy or undulating surface. A commode with a serpentine front has a protruding central section and concave ends. Serpentine stretchers are curved cross-stretchers.

Settee A seat for two or more people, with a low back and open arms. Sometimes made with an upholstered seat, the settee was more comfortable than a settle and was seen in various forms in Europe from the 17th century onwards.

Settle A wooden chest or bench with a high back and open arms. First made in the Middle Ages, the form was revived by the Arts and Crafts Movement in the late 19th century.

Shagreen Shark or ray skin, used by some 17th- and 18th-century designers as an inlay, and revived in the work of Art Deco designers in the early 20th century. It is also known by the French term *galuchat*.

Shell motif The scallop shell was a popular Rococo decorative motif, appearing on the knees of cabriole legs and at the centre of aprons on American Queen Anne case pieces.

Sofa A fully upholstered seat for two or more people, a less formal version of the settee. It was made from the late 17th century onwards.

Sofa table A long, narrow table with a drop leaf at either end and drawers. Designed to stand behind a sofa, it was popular during the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Spade foot A rectangular, tapered foot, similar in shape to a spade, usually seen on table legs from the end of the 18th century onwards.

Sphinx An ancient Egyptian form that has the head of a woman, the body of a lion, and wings. It was popularized by Napoleon during the Empire period and again by Art Deco designers in the 20th century.

Spindle A thin piece of wood turned on a lathe and used as an upright on a chair. Large numbers of spindles sometimes form the uprights of a gallery on a case piece of furniture.

Splat The flat, vertical, central part of a chair back. Back splats can be either solid or pierced, and are usually shaped. They are important indicators of period styles.

Squab cushion A removable cushion for a chair, sofa, or settee.

S-scroll A decorative carved or applied Classical ornament in the shape of an S, developed during the Rococo period. (See C-Scroll.)

Stainless steel See Steel.

Steel A hard, durable metal, made of a combination of iron and carbon. First used in various forms on 16th- and 17th-century furniture, it was adopted by 20th-century designers in modified forms, such as tubular steel, chromed steel, and stainless steel (a non-corrosive alloy of steel, nickel, and chrome).

Strapwork A form of ornament that looks like a scrolling pattern of bands or straps. Originating in the work of an Italian Mannerist painter, it became very popular in the late 16th and early 17th centuries and was often applied to furniture.

Streamlined A term borrowed from engineering and used to describe American Art Deco furniture with smooth, clean-lined shapes in the 1920s and 1930s.

Stretcher A rod or bar extending between two legs of a chair or table.

Stringing Narrow lines of inlay on a piece of furniture, used to create a simple, decorative border around drawer fronts or table tops. It was popular in the late 18th century.

Stuffer Upholstery that covers the entire wooden frame of a sofa or chair, so that none of it is visible.

Sunburst motif First popularized by Louis XIV in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, the motif of the sun surrounded by rays was later used in stylized form by Art Deco designers.

Swag A Classical decorative motif of a hanging garland of fruit, husks, flowers, or laurel leaves. Swags often featured in inlays or formed part of a frieze on a table. They were widely used on Neoclassical furniture.

Tabouret A French term for a low, upholstered footstool that was originally shaped like a drum.

Tambour A flexible, slatted, sliding shutter on a roll-top desk, made of thin strips of wood laid side by side and glued to a canvas backing.

Teak A heavy, deep-brown, oily hardwood used to make furniture since the 18th century. It was much favoured by Scandinavian designers during the 1950s and 1960s.

Tenon See Mortise and tenon.

Thuyawood A native African reddish-brown hardwood, with a bird's-eye figure. It was popular as a veneer during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Tilt-top table A table with a top that has been hinged to its base on one side, so that it can be tilted into a vertical position, enabling the table to be stored flat against a wall.

Tongue and groove A wood joint in which a tongue along one side of a strip of wood fits into a groove along an adjoining strip of wood.

Tooling A technique of decorating leather either by embossing, gilding, or incising, often seen as the border of a leather insert on a writing table.

Top rail The highest horizontal bar on the back of a chair. It is also sometimes called a crest rail.

Torchère A French term for a lamp- or candlestand, usually a tall table with a small top supported on a column. *Torchères* were popular in the 17th and early 18th centuries.

Tortoiseshell A shiny, translucent material made from the shells of the Hawksbill turtle. Tortoiseshell can be heat-moulded, carved, and coloured, and was used for inlays, particularly in 17th- and 18th-century Boulle marquetry. Nowadays, tortoiseshell is usually imitated in celluloid.

Tracery A delicate, lattice-like form of decoration based on the elaborate shapes of Gothic church windows.

Trefoil See Quatrefoil.

Trestle table A simple form of large dining table in which flat boards, usually made of oak, rest on one, two, or more trestles (pairs of splayed legs). Trestle tables were in wide use from the Middle Ages to the 17th century.

Tripod table A small, occasional pedestal table supported by three splayed legs. The form was popular in late 18th-century furniture.

Tubular steel Lightweight and strong hollow steel tubes, which can be bent into any shape. Favoured for its durable, easy-to-clean qualities and its industrial appeal, it was widely used by Modernist designers during the first half of the 20th century.

Vargueño One of the most popular types of furniture in Spain during the 16th and 17th centuries, this is a writing cabinet on a chest or stand. It usually has a drop front and is elaborately carved or decorated.

Veneer A thin layer of fine wood that is applied to the surface of a carcass made of a coarser, cheaper wood, for decorative effect. Veneers were widely used from the second half of the 17th century onwards.

Verdigris A green or bluish chemical deposit that forms on copper, brass, or bronze after a period of time.

Verre églomisé A French term for a technique of decorating glass, in which the back of the glass is covered in a layer of gold or silver leaf, and a design is then etched or engraved on the leaf. The technique was used during the 18th century.

Vinyl A revolutionary plastic with great durability and flexibility that was developed during the 1940s. It was primarily used by furniture designers in the 1950s and 1960s for covering chair seats.

Vitruvian scroll A wave-like series of scrolls used as a decorative motif – carved, painted, or gilded – on friezes. Originating as Classical ornament, it was widely used on Neoclassical furniture in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Volute A Classical motif, this is a spiralling scroll, thought to resemble the horns of a ram. Used since the Renaissance, the motif was popularized in Neoclassical design.

Walnut A European and North American native hardwood that produces a rich brown timber when cut. Walnut was popular in Europe, both in the solid and as a veneer, from the mid 17th to the early 18th century. Burr walnut, which is highly figured, was frequently used as a decorative veneer.

Wickerwork Known since ancient times, this is made by weaving rods of cane or willow together to form a flat, durable surface, ideal for making seats for chairs.

Windsor chair A country chair with a bentwood back and a wooden seat, into which the chair legs are pegged. An early 18th-century form, the chair was first made around the town of Windsor in England.

Worktable A small table that was often fitted with drawers or shelves and a hanging bag used for storing needlework and sewing materials. It was popular during the 18th century.

Zopfstil The late 18th-century German term for Neoclassicism, which takes its name from Classical braided friezes and festoons – *Zopf* means “braid” in German.

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