



THE GEAR

DRINKING BUDDIES

Eight next-level coffee tables guaranteed to be the talking point of your home



Words by Ms Emma O'Kelly

Choosing the right coffee table can be as difficult as buying a piece of art. I know this, because every day I stare at a space in the middle of my living room as vast and desolate as the Rub' al Khali desert. Newspapers wash up in messy piles next to the sofas; scented candles look out of place on the hearth; a deck of cards lies half-pushed under the rug, and there's nowhere to put a G&T. The coffee table is the focal point of a room, the place around which (the most enjoyable) entertaining, relaxing and drinking orbits. It's the spot where memories are created, games are won and lost, arguments ignited and resolved. Hard to believe it only became popularised in the 20th century. In earlier eras, tea services and drinks were set on taller, more formal tables. Such was its popularity in the post-war years that the late American fashion writer Ms Eugenia Sheppard called it, "the heart, soul and centre of a home". Point taken. And that's why it should be purchased as an investment piece. The following examples are what we believe to be shining examples.

SOLARIS KINETIC



For its *Handmade* exhibition this year, *Wallpaper** magazine introduced jewellery designer Ms Lara Bohinc to British stone specialists Lapidida. It proved to be an excellent pairing, as this Solaris Kinetic coffee table shows. Formed of four tiers of rich, gold, veined marble in different shades, which progress from light to dark, from top to bottom, each tier spins around a central axis. When it's closed, the table exists as a circular tower, with elegant hand-brushed brass edges; when it's open, it expands to 175cm – nearly double its size. The table was Ms Bohinc's furniture debut, and luckily there's more to come. This month she's launching a range of metal accessories with Swedish company Skultuna. larabohinc.com; lapidida.com

RAIN EFFECT TABLE



Raindrops lie at the heart of the Rain Effect Table. Spanish designer Ms Andere Monjo leaves distressed mirrors out in the rain for a few days, allowing their surfaces to stain and weather. She then envelopes them in a white film-like surface and covers them in glass. Each pattern is unique, depending on whether it's drizzling or tipping buckets. They can be made to order in any size and are available exclusively through design store Mint. mintshop.co.uk

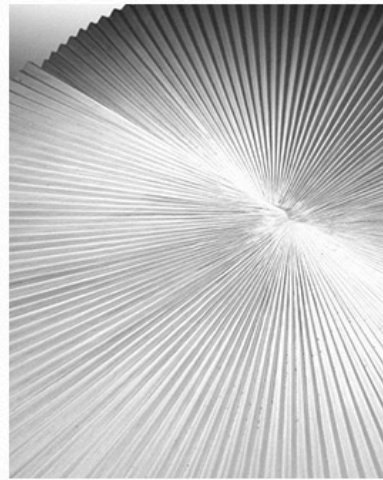
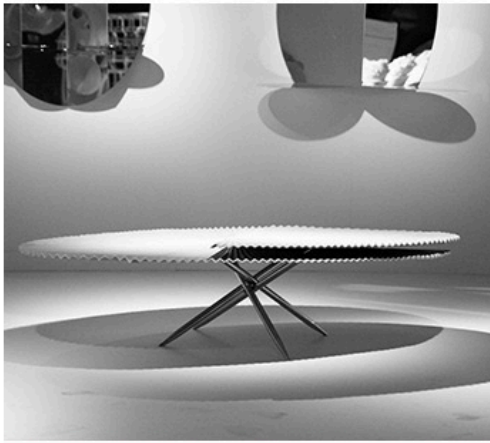
STUD



As part of this year's London Design Festival (13-21 September), Harrods is setting up a "design trail" within the store. Not to be missed is a pop-up by British designer du jour Ms Bethan Gray, who has created exclusive pieces for the event. Among these is a new version of her runaway hit, the Stud coffee table that comes with a luxe leather top in teal. For those who don't catch the festival, the pop-up continues into 2015.

bethangray.com

SKIRT



Who would have guessed? This Skirt coffee table is inspired by the pleated skirts of the Miao people of southern China. Its creator, Dutch designer Mr Reinier Bosch, first travelled to the region in 2007 while he was a student. Subsequent trips to China inspired a collection of mirrors, cabinets and tables. To make Skirt, Mr Bosch incorporated the pleats of a real skirt, setting the shape in aluminium, so it's a direct replica of the real thing. reinierbosch.com; pearllam.com

RESIN FOSSIL TABLE



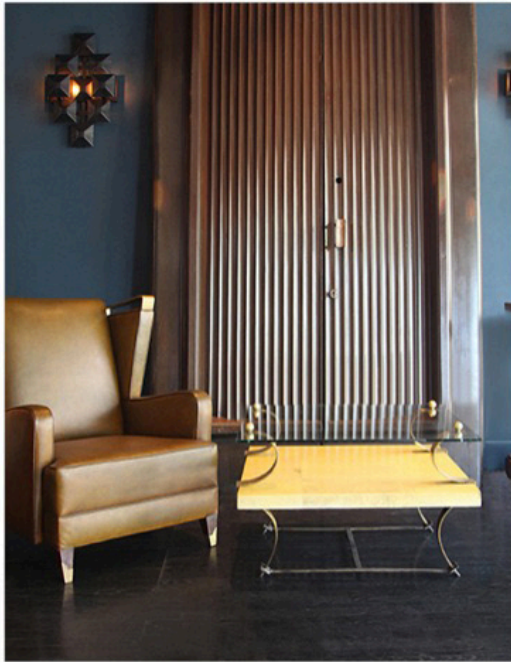
When Turin-based design studio Nucleo first launched its Resin Fossil Tables in 2010, it claimed it was “designing the future of objects by making them fossils of themselves”. That is, it would make a resin mould of an object which it would then discard. The “Resin” series has grown to include many elegant coffee tables, handmade in rich colours. The newest incarnation comes in ghostly white and launches at PAD London with Ammann Gallery. ammann-gallery.com

WILLY RIZZO COFFEE TABLES



Nobody did 1970s playboy chic quite like the late Mr Willy Rizzo. An Italian photographer who made his name shooting celebrities for the likes of *Paris Match* and *Marie Claire*, Mr Rizzo took a 10-year break from his day job to design furniture. His low-slung modular coffee tables (usually with an insert for holding bottles), consoles and sexy lamps quickly gained a cult following among his high-society entourage, but in the late 1970s he gave it all up to return to photography. Mr Rizzo passed away last year, but his furniture is as sought-after as ever. compasso-design.it

ARTURO PANI



Mr Arturo Pani studied at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris before returning to Mexico City in 1934, where he was decorator du jour, fitting out homes for the elite and creating the Acapulco jet-set look. He designed a huge amount of bespoke furniture, including many coffee tables, which often appear in gilded iron, brass and marble, with Art-Deco flourishes. If you're looking for something different there's a whole heap of untapped mid-century Mexican design out there – Los Angeles-based dealer Mr David Cruz for one. For a few years now, Mr Cruz has been heading down Mexico way to scope out pieces from a roll call of Mexican makers, among them the late Mr Pani. Says Mr Cruz: "Pani's furniture is becoming more and more popular, so it's also becoming harder to get." You heard it here first. blackmancruz.com

FLAT TABLE



For many years Japanese architect Mr Jo Nagasaka has been making furniture on the side, reclaiming bits of wood and coating them in coloured resin. His latest series, entitled “Flat Tables”, was on show this summer at Gallery Libby Sellers and featured salvaged workstations and tabletops layered with brightly coloured resin, which reveals the textures of the woods and their time-weathered surfaces. Of course the process is not as simple as it sounds and Mr Nagasaka’s tables are collectibles in their own right. libbysellers.com