

Beth Martin and Aurélien Gallet with cocktail tables by Damien Langlois-Meurinne for Pouenat Ferronnier, left, and CB2. See Resources.



THE TOP 10 COCKTAIL TABLES

Designers Aurélien Gallet and Beth Martin toast these modern-day essentials that take a dramatic leading role in virtually every living room

Given the pride of place the cocktail table holds in today's living rooms, it's hard to believe the piece is only a 20th-century invention. In earlier eras, tea services and drinks were set on taller, more formal tables. But the cocktail craze of the 1920s and '30s popularized a new, lower table placed near the sofa. By midcentury, fashion writer Eugenia Sheppard called it "the heart, soul, and center of a home."

"The cocktail table is something shared with others," says designer Aurélien Gallet, referring to its

spot in the middle of a seating area. But he doesn't believe in loading it with books and objects: "The cocktail table should be bare, ready to use."

For decorator Beth Martin, some tables benefit from a bit of styling—textured accessories can warm up a high-shine piece, for example—but a sculptural table makes a statement on its own. And when the living room needs a face-lift, the cocktail table is a great place to start, she says. "Sometimes just changing one element can be all you need." ▸

THE EXPERTS

AURÉLIEN GALLET

The French-born New York designer brings a moody, edgy vibe to his projects, which include a Barbados home and a Manhattan restaurant. His tables are available at Maison Gerard. aureliengallet.com

BETH MARTIN

With her nuanced eye for color, the San Francisco decorator creates sophisticated, livable spaces. She is currently updating a 1907 house by Bernard Maybeck. civ2bethmartindesign.com



6 / SQUARE BAR TABLE BY FRAN TAUBMAN FOR RALPH PUCCI INTERNATIONAL

This table's bronze bars earn Gallet's approval. "I love geometric designs, and this is so well crafted," he says. To Martin, the interlocking base has an architectural look. "It recalls the girders of a building," she says, "and the glass top lets you see the structure from various directions." She imagines it as a functional art piece, providing a place for drinks during parties but otherwise free of clutter. The table (available to the trade) is also offered in copper. 48" w. x 30" d. x 18" h.; \$9,960; ralphpucci.net



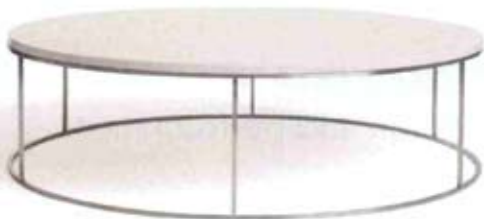
7 / FULL HOUSE TABLE BY CHRISTINA STRAND FROM SUITE NEW YORK

"Simple but very sculptural," says Gallet of this two-piece walnut table, which extends to 54" wide. Martin would display objects on the higher level and keep the lower one clear for everyday use. With its crisp lines and classic craftsmanship, this could freshen up a traditional room, she adds. Other woods and finishes are available. 38" w. x 20" d. x 17" h.; \$2,845; suiteiny.com



8 / AURORA COCKTAIL TABLE BY ARHAUS

"If you're looking for a Hollywood Regency-style piece, this is a steal," Martin says, pointing out the beveled edges of the mirrored top and legs. To tone down the shine, she would decorate it with objects in different materials, such as wood and lacquer. "The tapered legs are elegant," Gallet says, adding that he imagines it adding sparkle to a formal interior. 43" w. x 20" d. x 20" h.; \$649; arhaus.com



9 / TYNE COCKTAIL TABLE BY ROOM & BOARD

Martin is a fan of this pared-down table, which has a stainless steel base and a quartz-composite top. "The proportions of the frame are so fine, but this is a workhorse," she says, noting that the shape is child friendly. Gallet sees it in a contemporary loft atop a sisal rug. A smaller size, a natural steel base, and various tops are offered. 42" dia. x 12" h.; \$1,379; roomandboard.com



10 / SWEDISH ROCOCO COCKTAIL TABLE BY TARA SHAW MAISON

With its juxtaposition of an ornate form and a plaster-like finish, this pine table strikes a balance between feminine and masculine, says Gallet. The mix of fanciful and humble qualities also means this can work in a variety of settings, says Martin. "It's compact enough for small spaces," she adds. A gold-leaf finish is also available. 40" w. x 24" d. x 16" h.; \$2,095; tarashaw.com