

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
Wicker from **Atelier Vime**, **Amara**,
Aerin, **Soane Britain**, **Meg Braff**
Designs, **Mecox Gardens**, **Amanda**
Lindroth, **Made Goods**, and **Justin**
Van Breda. Wallcovering,
Schumacher. Lampshade and chair
cushion fabric, **Fermole**. Vase,
Frances Palmer. For more details,
see *The Sourcebook* (pg. 114).

WICKER IMMORTAL

It's been around for centuries, prized for both the beauty of its craft and a familiarity that's become almost foundational. And yet, of late, the woven art seems to have hit a fever pitch—even cult status—an affirmation, perhaps, that across styles and eras, every room can benefit from a good piece of wicker.

WICKER IS DESIGN ALCHEMY, turning humble natural fibers such as rattan, cane, and raffia to gold by weaving them into topographies unimaginable for more refined materials. But the greater magic is that wicker turns moments to gold as well. It tugs at the too-tight necktie of a formal room, offers a tactile reprieve from idealized surfaces, and playfully reminds us that the color tan can in fact be fabulous.

And the alchemy is as strong as ever. From its first grand moment in the 19th century to a showy turn mid-20th, wicker is in the throes of a right-now renaissance as France's Atelier Vime produces a breathtaking range of pieces and designers Amanda Lindroth and Justin Van Breda launch their own fresh lines. Meanwhile, the weave is anchoring notable design projects from Harbour Island to Southern California.

The material does inspire fealty bordering on obsession. Oscar de la Renta long channeled his Dominican heritage when placing wicker pieces in society (and most recently in an exuberant update of his Tortuga Bay Hotel in Punta Cana). Hubert de Givenchy and Philippe Venet went famously wicker-mad in their French country

retreat Le Jonchet. Italian art collector and style icon Marella Agnelli (influenced by Renzo Mongiardino) filled her rooms with it, as did American horticultural genius Bunny Mellon. But who can out-obsess Lee Radziwill? No one. The renowned socialite and interior designer left the world last year in—of all things—a casket woven exquisitely of wicker.

◆ ◆ ◆
“Wicker tugs at the too-tight necktie of a formal room, offers a tactile reprieve from idealized surfaces, and playfully reminds us that the color tan can in fact be fabulous.”



Custom wicker and wood paneling by 150-year-old French shop Atelier Vime. Price upon request; ateliervime.com.

◆
**WICKER
ON
WALLS**
◆

◆
**WICKER
IN THE
1950s**
◆

→ A palace for prized greenery, this **vintage French planter stand** has dyed woven borders akin to tilework. \$2,400; shopcourtneybarton.com.



Wicker, Well Lit



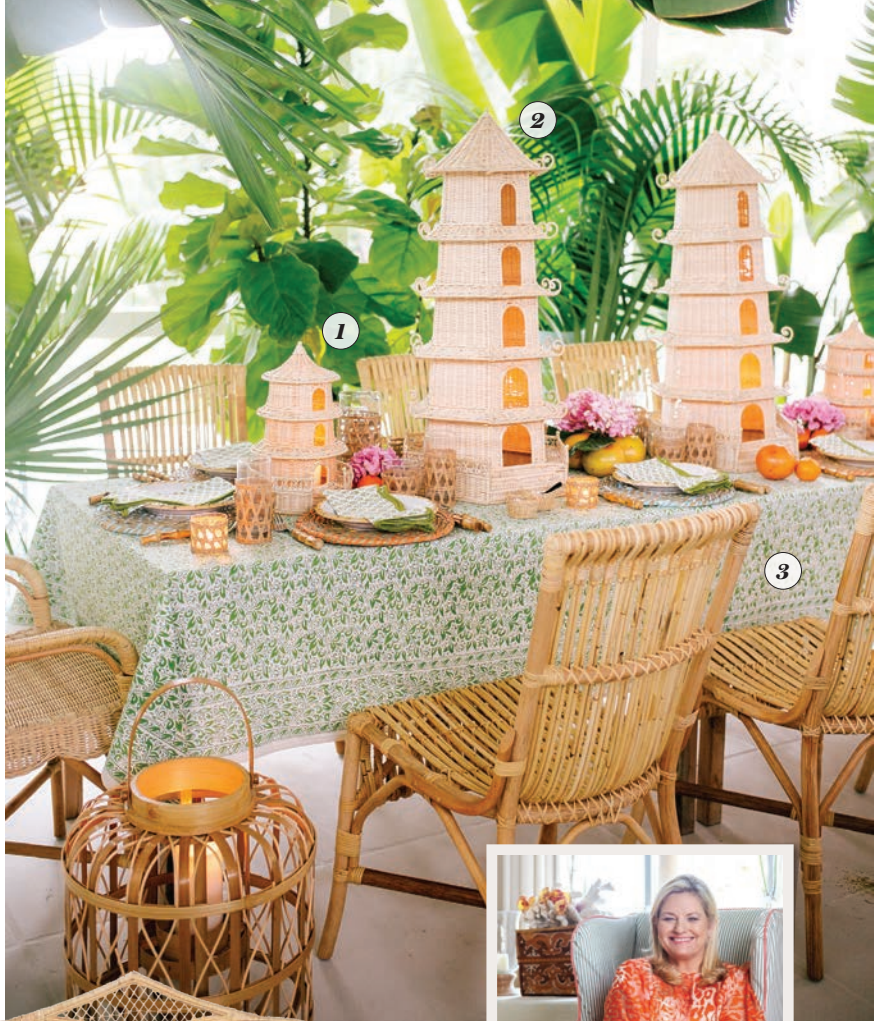
Celerie Kemble **Terrace floor lamp**, \$965; arteriorshome.com. • **Antibes chandelier**, \$2,410; curreyandcompany.com. • Mario Lopez Torres **Cockatoo table lamp**, \$2,900 for a pair; circawho.com.

MAIN IMAGE COURTESY OF ATELIER VIME

LINDROTH'S DASHING DEBUT

In an elemental embrace of her beloved Bahamas, **the queen of rattan** unveils a furniture collection aimed at preserving the island art form.

RATTAN AND WICKER are a central part of my decorating DNA," proclaims Amanda Lindroth, the island whisperer whose design sensibility practically comes with a cold drink under a slowly rotating ceiling fan. No wonder, then, that Lindroth, who lives part-time in the Bahamas, would offer us a peacock chair (a double one at that) to sink into. The piece is one of 25 in her first furniture collection, which debuts this spring. "I had been collecting sketches," she says, adding that vintage items have become scarcer and scarcer. The collection—produced exclusively by Lindroth and created by artisans, craftspeople, and specialty factories—preserves and deftly modernizes the aesthetic, from wicker tables for dining and drinks to a 1930s-inspired rattan side chair and a pagoda étagère. And like the pieces' designer, each is as relaxed as it is relaxed.



"Can you ever have too many pagodas?"

—DESIGNER AMANDA LINDROTH



1. Round pagoda, \$255. 2. Tall pagoda, \$399.
3. Ca'Liza side chair, \$799 for set of 2. 4. Double Peacock chair, \$2,499. 5. Paradise canopy bed, \$4,299 for a queen. 6. Lyford bar table, \$699.
7. Harbour Island lantern, \$249. 8. Brighton étagère, \$1,999. amandalindroth.com.

Game of Thrones

You wouldn't congregate in a 19th-century garden without one: a look at **the wicker chair's majestic journey** from garden essential to power seat (curtsy optional)



1885

Maison Drucker debuts its bistro chair, which goes on to define Parisian café culture. maisonlouisdrucker.com



1882

The *strandkorb* (meaning "beach basket") is designed in Germany by Wilhelm Bartelmann for convalescents to take in the sea air and sunshine.



19TH CENTURY

The American high-back armchair by Whitney Reed & Co. brings Victorian-era flourishes stateside. 1stdibs.com



19TH CENTURY

British imperialism popularizes wicker in Europe, India, and the West Indies. Here, English travelers gather for tea in Jaipur.



1912

Rattan deck seating at Café Parisien onboard the *Titanic*.



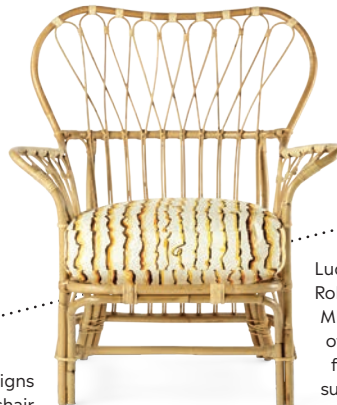
1925

The Paris chair by Danish architect Arne Jacobsen wins a silver medal at the Paris-Art-Deco exhibition. sika-design.com



1950s

Billy Baldwin introduces his rattan-wrapped Parsons chair. incollect.com



1930s

Josef Frank designs the rattan Armchair 311 for Svenskt Tenn. svenskttenn.se

1927

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe introduces the MR chair, as he and other modernists favor wicker as a sub for upholstery. knoll.com



1957

The PK22 lounge chair by Poul Kjærholm is awarded the Grand Prix at the Milan Triennale. fritzhanzen.com



1950s

Mathieu Matégot's wicker basket chair. 1stdibs.com



1973

Princess Irene Galitzine lounges with her poodle in Vittorio Bonacina's Bourlon armchair, a favorite of her designer, Renzo Mongiardino. bonacina1889.com

CIRCA 2005

Soane Britain's shapely Rattan Venus chair. soane.com



STRANDKORB CHAIR, GETTY IMAGES; COLONIAL ARCHIVE IMAGE REPRINTED FROM THE ROMANCE OF BRITISH COLONIAL STYLE, BY TRICIA FOLEY, COPYRIGHT © 1993, PUBLISHED BY CLARKSON POTTER/PUBLISHERS, AN IMPRINT OF PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE, LLC; TITANIC DECK CHAIRS, THE TITANIC COLLECTION/AGE FOTOSTOCK; MONGIARDINO INTERIOR, HENRY CLARKE/GETTY IMAGES.



Material Matters



LEFT TO RIGHT: Nina Campbell
Nina dogbed and Justin Van
Breda **Empire mirror** and
Octagon sideboard, all to the
trade; justinvanbreda.com.

ABOVE RIGHT: A Cape Town
artisan handcrafts a piece
for Van Breda's collection.



DREAM WEAVERS

Designed by a Who's Who of A-list aesthetes, **Justin Van Breda's** new Cape Weaver rattan and cane pieces are born at the hands of blind artisans in his native South Africa.

IT BEGAN WITH A DOG BED. Exquisitely woven, the charming wicker piece had been one of several in Justin Van Breda's family home in Cape Town—along with laundry and picnic baskets, veranda furniture, and a white rattan chair his mother kept in her bedroom. "It had a scratchy wool cushion on it," the designer, now based in London, recalls. "I think it matched her curtains." The pieces were all handmade at the Cape Town Society for the Blind, a cooperative

of blind artisans founded in 1929 (previously the Civilian Blind Society).

Years later, the designer was struck while watching rattan being made in Morocco. "I rang up my mum and said, 'Can you find out if the Society will make pieces of my own design?' And we were off! My mother is a bit of a force of nature."

Quickly, the dream expanded. Van Breda secured commitments from colleagues in a montage-worthy series of conversations: Nina Campbell, Lauren

DeLoach, Bill Peace, Joe Lucas, Cynthia Ferguson (who drew up a bench on the spot in Van Breda's notebook), Mally Skok, Serena Crawford, Amanda Lindroth, Nicky Haslam, and Veere Grenney (whom Van Breda "chased up La Cienega Boulevard" in Los Angeles).

The Cape Weaver collection—which embodies the high style of its creators as well as the superb techniques of its makers—is a triumph of beauty and heart. About 30 weavers, all visually impaired, work on-site at the Society, while others have their own studios. "There's an amazing atmosphere of community and care for others there," Van Breda says. "As a child of Africa who was rather spoiled, I needed to participate."



Beyond the woven placemat: This custom **wicker tureen** has centerpiece potential in spades. \$448; casalopez.com.

◆
**WICKER
ON THE
TABLE**
◆



◆
**COCKTAIL
HOUR
WICKER**
◆

A **wicker credenza** with braided edges, wrapped ring pulls, and revelry for days. \$6,065; hollywoodathome.com.

INSIDE THE ARTIST'S STUDIO

Since **Soane Britain** cofounder **Lulu Lytle** rescued the U.K.'s last rattan workshop in 2010, the designer has become something of a standard-bearer for wicker today. Here, she offers a peek at the transformation from cane to console at the hands of her craftspeople.



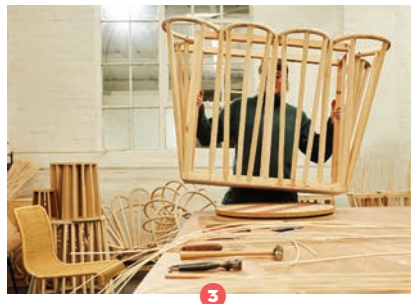
STEAMING THE WOOD

Stronger and more durable than most other plants, rattan is a vine with sturdy, flexible stems that scrambles through and over other vegetation. The plant arrives at the workshop as long canes of varying diameters that have to be steamed to make them malleable.



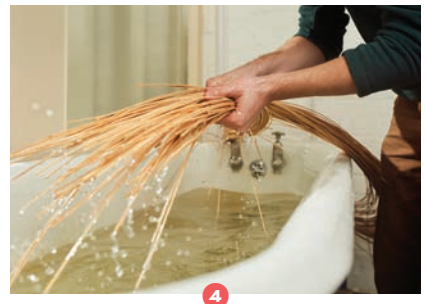
BENDING AND SHAPING

After steaming, each cane is guided by a gifted craftsperson around a machine called a bender and then formed into shapes while still hot and flexible using wooden jigs and an oak hook called a commander.



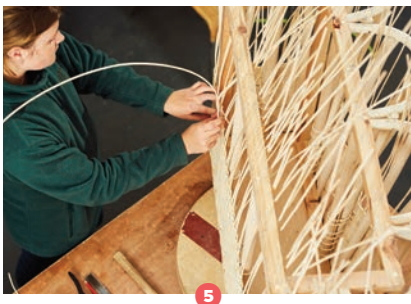
BUILDING THE SKELETON

Before the rattan cools, the craftsperson bends everything into a specific frame—in this case, Soane's popular Rattan Ripple Console—and pins connections into place while the material gains back some of its rigidity.



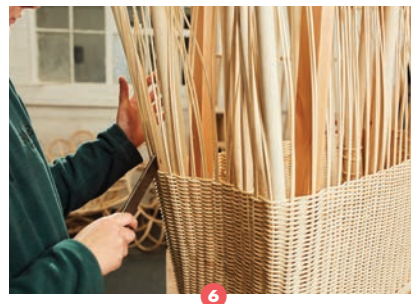
BATHING SMALLER STRANDS

With the frame ready, thinner rattan strands are soaked in water baths to make them pliable before randing (weaving strands between rattan stakes) and wrapping, where craftspeople bind them around cane frames.



RANDING BY HAND

Once soft enough, the rattan strands are woven by hand—a bit like knitting without the needles, Lytle says. Randing is yet another labor-intensive step that makes each handcrafted rattan piece so valuable.



CURING THE PIECE

As the rattan dries, each strand contracts, giving the piece a tight finish. It can take a skilled weaver up to three days to make a lampshade and more than a month to weave a large sofa. (This console takes around 7 to 10 days.)



PREENING AND FINISHING

Craftspeople singe off loose hairs, then paint, stain, or seal. And it's a process for the ages: While machine-made wicker uses split canes that can grow brittle over time, a handcrafted piece is as strong as it is beautiful. ♦

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF SOANE BRITAIN; FIAT JOLLY; DARIN SCHNABEL COURTESY OF RM SOTHEBY'S.

Wicker on Wheels

French country farmer's cart, \$623; mainlybaskets.com. • 1962 Fiat 600 Jolly, estimated at auction \$60,000–\$80,000; rmsothebys.com. • Vintage wicker bike, \$1,150; chairish.com.

