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OCTOBER 2008
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The 10 Most Amazing Occasional Chairs

Truth in Decorating:
Designers Campion Platt and Jennifer
Post contemplate this
jack-of-all-trades seating option

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Though it may not take pride of place in most rooms, an occasional chair can be one of the most valuable players in a home. Intended primarily for use as "pull-up" seating, any style—flat- or curved-back, charmingly traditional or sleekly mod—qualifies, as long as it's lightweight and portable enough to move easily when called into action. Consummate multitaskers, these part-time perches may flank a console in an entryway, supply extra places at the dining table, offer a spot to stack books in an office, or simply provide aesthetic relief from acres of upholstery in a living room.

Just be sure to use occasional chairs sparingly: According to architect and decorator Campion Platt, they should anchor a space, not overwhelm it, so avoid grouping them together. When it comes to proper proportions, "pay attention to the elements of the room," Platt says. A spacious setting, for instance, dictates a generous seat and frame. Interior designer Jennifer Post recommends choosing a style that transcends a standard dining chair. Sacrifice a modicum of comfort for eye-catching details such as polished-metal frames, sculptural backs, smart cane seats, and shapely legs. "It should be attractive from every angle," she advises. "So no matter where you place the chair in a room, it will look stellar."

Here, Post and Platt evaluate ELLE DECOR's selections of the ten best. ▷



Jennifer Post perches on a Daphné chair by H el ene Aumont, and Campion Platt stands by an Alisa Vanity chair by Madeline Stuart Collection. See Resources.



1 DYNA CHAIR BY CALLIGARIS

"This is my favorite," Jennifer Post raves. "I like its simplicity and the inviting curve of the seat back." Its graphic look lends itself to possible pairings with a dressing table or a breakfast nook, she adds. "It would also be fun painted a flamboyant pink for a woman's boudoir or a beach cabana." Height: 31"; width: 21"; depth: 22"; seat height: 18"; material: beech in white-lacquer finish with fire-retardant-foam cushion in Rio black fabric (also available in wenge finish, non-fire-retardant-foam fill, and other fabrics); delivery: 4 weeks; price: \$399



2 ALISA VANITY CHAIR BY MADELINE STUART COLLECTION FROM JERRY PAIR

Campion Platt is wild about this polished stunner. "Metal chairs make everything pop," he says. Platt advises maximizing the effect of its sculptural shape by placing it next to a formal wood piece or a modern sideboard. Height: 36.5"; width: 21.5"; depth: 19"; seat height: 18.5"; material: polished stainless steel with foam-and-fiberfill tufted cushion; delivery: 14-16 weeks; price: \$2,965 c.o.m.



3 THE ODEON SIDE CHAIR BY DUANE MODERN

Platt admires this take on a 1940s Moderne-style chair. "It's a contemporary nod to an iconic design—and I like this version in glossy patent leather," he says. He also favors the "deep, enveloping back that makes you want to sit and stay a while" and pictures it in a den or a club room. Height: 37"; width: 21.5"; depth: 21"; seat height: 18"; material: dark-stained poplar with Dacron-wrapped-foam fill (custom finishes available); delivery: 10-12 weeks; price: \$2,000 c.o.m.



4 NAPOLÉON III CHAIR BY GRANGE

"Grange respects tradition," Post proclaims. "They don't deviate from the history books when reproducing furniture." She calls this 19th-century design "darling for a country home or cottage." The elegant upholstered seat reminds her of French fauteuils, and she fancies the shapely carved details for a feminine bedroom. Height: 36"; width: 18"; depth: 21"; seat height: 18"; material: French hardwood in brigue finish with foam cushion (other finishes available); delivery: 12-14 weeks; price: \$985 c.o.m.



5 MR. IMPOSSIBLE CHAIR BY PHILIPPE STARCK FOR KARTELL

"Starck's done it again," Post announces. "He's reinvented his signature Soft Egg chair." She lauds its "brilliant" construction—the clear legs are blown into the chair's body—and durable material, which she deems perfect for a terrace or kitchen when paired with a round Lucite table. Height: 32.5"; width: 21.5"; depth: 16"; seat height: 19"; material: polycarbonate in smoke; delivery: 3-10 days; price: \$490



6 SOLID BAMBOO CHAIR BY PIERCEMARTIN

"Sassy fun," Post says. "It's a conversation piece and ideal for use at a games table." Post also praises smart details like the bone accents on the back and the bamboo motif echoed in the parallel supports. Height: 39.5"; width: 17.5"; depth: 21.5"; seat height: 18"; material: solid bamboo with cane seat and bone accents in red-lacquer finish (custom finishes and colors available); delivery: 4-6 weeks; price: \$2,110



7 DAPHNÉ CHAIR BY HÉLÈNE AUMONT FROM PROFILES

Platt appreciates the sturdy build, tailored upholstery—"it makes it feel more cozy"—and handsome button tufting. He calls it a "transitionalist's chair" for its modern seat and classic legs. Height: 36"; width: 19.5"; depth: 20"; seat height: 18.5"; material: alder wood in ebonized finish with poly-Dacron-fill seat (custom finishes and sizes available); delivery: 14 weeks; price: \$2,667 c.o.m.



8 L XVI COLONNE CHAIR FROM LARS BOLANDER

"I love the back's fluted columns," Platt declares. "They give the chair a sense of verticality." With its trim upholstered seat, he can see it in the entrance hall of a casual country house. Height: 36"; width: 17.5"; depth: 15.5"; seat height: 18"; material: beech in antique gray finish #06 with Dacron-wrapped-foam cushion (other finishes and fills available); delivery: 20-22 weeks; price: \$2,400 c.o.m.



9 LOUIS DINING SIDE CHAIR BY BAKER

"I like the extra-wide seat," Platt says. "It reminds me of vintage French dining chairs, which allow you to sit a spell and enjoy your meal." But the high comfort level and thoughtful accents, including the back's carved trim, transcend mealtime: "This would work well as a side chair in a big bedroom," he notes. Height: 38"; width: 24.5"; depth: 25"; seat height: 19.5"; material: mahogany in white-lacquer finish with urethane-foam cushion (other finishes available); delivery: 6-8 weeks; price: \$1,932 c.o.m.



10 LOOP DINING CHAIR BY JAN SHOWERS

"The back is the hero," Post points out. "It's fluid, which makes it inviting." She would cover the ample seat in a solid mohair or cashmere to add a luxe touch. "It's a very graceful piece that would fit well in nearly any room in the house," she says. Height: 37"; width: 22"; depth: 23.5"; seat height: 19"; material: maple in ebony finish with spring cushion (other finishes available); delivery: 12-14 weeks; price: \$3,700 c.o.m.