

Presenting our annual survey of what's new—and what's stayed the course—in the quest to uphold American crafts and manufacturing.

TEXT BY
Dora Vanette

A region-by-region roundup of our favorite furniture and accessories, all new for 2018.

Companies of various sizes and ages weigh in on domestic production issues big and small.

A spotlighted selection of some of the greatest hits in the history of American ingenuity.

Modern World



Wisconsin manufacturer Wooda maintains an open call for designers to submit ideas that put a new spin on their namesake material, like Alvaro Uribe's Small Elemental top.

MADE
IN AMERICA

WEST



REJUVENATION

Portland, Oregon

Taking its cue from the sweeping curves of medieval flying buttresses, the O&G Ames floor lamp features a cast base in brushed or burnished brass and is topped with a linen shade in white or black.

IACOLI & McALLISTER

Seattle, Washington

Composed of brass and powder-coated steel tubes that range in size from three to 18 inches, the Acis No. 7.1 hanging light system can be arranged in almost endless configurations on a 60-inch-long mount.

CROFT HOUSE

Los Angeles, California

Nestled in an ultra thin steel frame with the help of sturdy jute webbing, the Leather Sierra chair's seat is decidedly cushy. Like every piece made by Croft House, the lounge chair has many customizable options.

BEND

Los Angeles, California

Bend's wire furniture is all hand bent and spot welded using recyclable metals. The same is true of its custom macramé wall hanging, which combines wire with woven yarn in a range of bright, '70s-inspired colors.



JACOB BROMWELL

Los Angeles, California

DESIGNED IN 1819, THE JACOB BROMWELL CHEESE GRATER SET THE STANDARD FOR ALL SUCCESSORS. THE BOXY STAINLESS STEEL BODY INCLUDES THREE GRATING SURFACES, PLUS A SLICER. THE COMPANY, WHICH MANUFACTURES IN MULTIPLE STATES, ESTIMATES THAT ONE IN FOUR AMERICAN HOUSEHOLDS OWNS A BROMWELL GRATER.

EXPERIENCE

LESS
THAN 10 YEARS
OLD

FLOYD

Detroit, Michigan

EST. 2014

Direct-to-doorstep
furniture wunderkinds

Shipping

Manufacturing in the U.S. allows us to offer things like same-day shipping. If we were to outsource, the product would spend at least six to eight weeks on water. When you think about the footprint of shipping a large, heavy product like a sofa across the world, the wasted cost and the environmental impact are immense.

Tariffs

Policies that are meant to protect manufacturing can sometimes be detrimental. Before our bed frames are built in Virginia, we have to import a particular kind of birch that is difficult to source in the States. Even though the difference isn't huge, the tariffs that were recently implemented did impact how we have to price our product.

Crowdfunding

We launched on Kickstarter, so we were immediately accountable to our backers. Later, when we decided to design a sofa, we sent out a survey to our customer base and received 1,400 responses in the first 24 hours. We were able to integrate a lot of insights about what people wanted in terms of comfort, material, and color into that design.

ALEX O'DELL

Cofounder and COO

ILLUSTRATION: PETER OUMANSKI

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MIDWEST

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STUFF BY ANDREW NEYER
Mason, Ohio
Andrew Neyer designs whimsical lighting fixtures that can be grouped to form sculptural constellations. Together, the powder-coated aluminum shades of Dune, available in three sizes, mimic a rolling landscape.

2

BRUSH FACTORY
Cincinnati, Ohio
In a nod to Danish mid-century design, the Seb credenza features a rounded-edge profile and mortise-and-tenon joinery. Handmade from sustainably harvested hardwoods, it has a hole in the back to help with cord management.

3

MISEWELL
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Founded by brothers Vincent and Paul Georgeson, Misewell manufactures its furniture and lighting fixtures in seven states. Its simple Wave coat rack combines a solid ash frame and powder-coated steel wire chassis.

4

LOUISE GRAY
Minneapolis, Minnesota
A smaller version of Louise Gray's signature throw, the Ida Little quilt is nonetheless big on visual impact. Handmade in Minneapolis, it can be used as a baby blanket or displayed as a work of art.

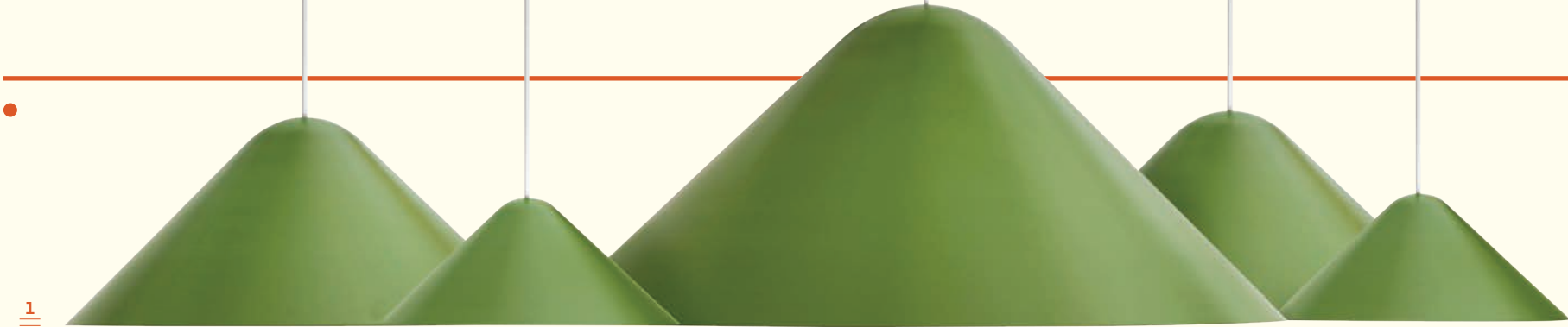
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CORBÉ
Detroit, Michigan
Designers Kaitlyn and Ryan Lawless of Corbé craft all their porcelain wares by hand. Their Medium planter comes in a rounded or angular silhouette with several glaze options, including a rich satin-matte orange.

6

BLU DOT
Minneapolis, Minnesota
The sheltering high back of Blu Dot's Bloke Velvet lounge chair forms a comfortable nook. Part of a collection that also includes a sectional, the seat rests on a hardwood frame and powder-coated steel legs.

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ILLUSTRATION: PETER OUMANSKI

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AIRSTREAM | Jackson Center, Ohio

MORE THAN HALF THE AIRSTREAMS BUILT SINCE WALLY BYAM DESIGNED THE FIRST TRAVEL TRAILER, IN 1929, ARE STILL TAKING TO THE ROAD. LIKE ALL AIRSTREAMS, THE ICONIC BAMBI, INTRODUCED IN 1961, HAS AN AERODYNAMIC SHAPE AND LIGHTWEIGHT ALUMINUM CONSTRUCTION THAT MAKES IT A BREEZE TO TOW. ELEMENTS OF ITS DESIGN LIVE ON IN CURRENT MODELS.

◆ EXPERIENCE

10-25

YEARS
OLD

DAVID WEEKS
New York, New York
EST. 1996

Independent
downtown
design studio

Small Business
When you build something from scratch, there's this weird moment when you realize, if I walk away, this would just be gone—it would be like dust. Until you reach a certain scale and there is significant equity and several partners, a business is actually very ephemeral.

Competition
All the retail is going to Amazon, so manufacturing is one of the few opportunities left to create something. In the past, everyone used to think they had to compete with IKEA. In the end, there's no point. The best thing to do is just to find your own market.

Knockoffs
You want to be bitter about it, but to go after anybody takes an incredible amount of effort. In the end, you'll spend more time dealing with legal issues than making. For me, the reason I got into this industry was not to spend my time in court, but to come up with new ideas.

DAVID WEEKS
Owner

25-50

YEARS
OLD

THOS. MOSER
Freeport, Maine
EST. 1972

New England
woodworking
revivalists

Word-of-mouth
Our customers-in-residence programs allow people to come to Maine and participate in the making of their piece. Repeat business and referral work is probably our single largest market segment. Our customers' living rooms are some of the best showrooms we could possibly create.

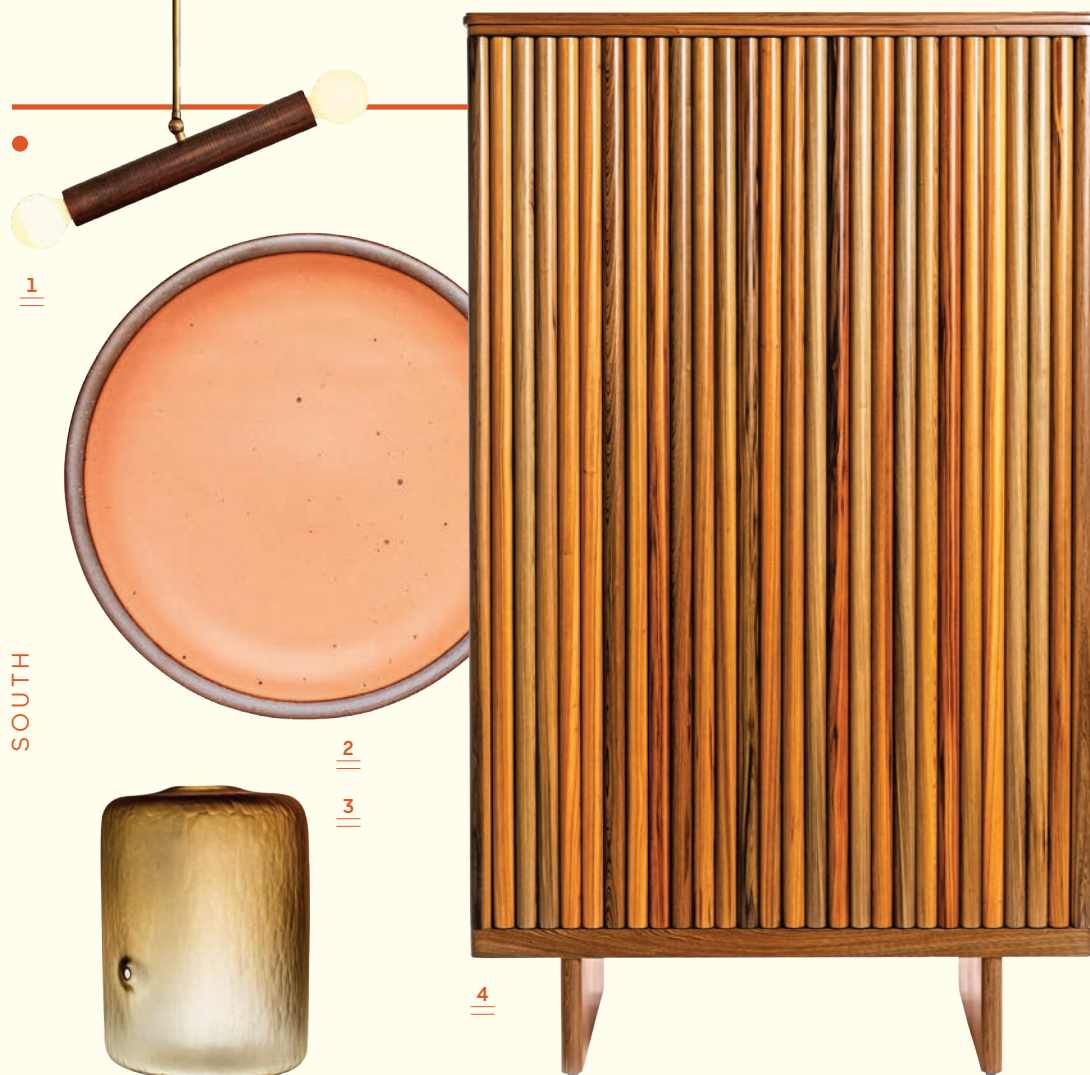
Digital
The online world is the ultimate equalizer, since it is easy from 10 feet away to make any table look beautiful. We want to use our online platform as a place for people to read stories—the idea of knowing not only where your furniture came from, but also who made it for you.

Craftsmanship
Some of the best woodworkers we have, and I'm sure this applies to many other companies, live woodworking. When they go home on the weekend, what do you think they do? They do woodworking. It's part of their DNA.

AARON MOSER
President and CEO

MADE
IN AMERICA

SOUTH



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ELIJAH LEED

Durham, North Carolina

Constructed of etched walnut and brushed brass, the elemental Ada pendant features a pivoting arm that can be adjusted into a slanted or perpendicular position from a drop of 16 to 48 inches.

EAST FORK

Asheville, North Carolina

While its warm rust color makes the Utah line of dinnerware perfect for display, the collection is also strong enough for everyday use. The hand-glazed pieces are made from regional materials and are dishwasher-safe.

ORBIX HOT GLASS

Fort Payne, Alabama

Husband-and-wife Cal and Christy Breed create colorful handcrafted glassware in Alabama's Appalachian foothills. Caelum is a series of blown vessels with carved surfaces that resemble chiseled wood.

SKYLAR MORGAN

Atlanta, Georgia

The sinker cypress Hillock armoire uses that most basic of forms—the half moon dowel—to great visual effect. The six-foot-tall cabinet is lined in maple and outfitted with leather shelves and a hanging rod.

EXPERIENCE

50–75 | YEARS OLD

HEATH

San Francisco, California

EST. 1948

Champions of
handcrafted ceramics

Scaling

When we first bought the business 15 years ago, it was hard to find people who were interested in working for us, let alone who had the right experience. It still remains challenging. This does limit the size of our operation. If there are only six people who are good at something, then why would I hire someone who isn't good, just to have a bigger business?

Knockoffs

Initially it was hard to resist reacting, but when we stepped back we realized our only competition should be ourselves. You need to push and make yourself better and make your product better, because that is what will make you original and keep you ahead of the game. You need to keep on striving for your own level of greatness.

E-commerce

Online, we try to replicate what makes our products feel special in stores. Although nothing can take the place of picking up a bowl and feeling its heft, we try to mimic that simple, expressive feeling on our website.

ROBIN PETRAVIC

Co-owner

CAPEL RUGS

Troy, North Carolina



IN 1917, ANTICIPATING THE IMPACT OF MECHANICAL TRACTORS ON HIS BUSINESS PRODUCING COTTON ENDS FOR PLOW LINES, A. LEON CAPEL SHIFTED GEARS. INSTEAD OF MAKING ROPE FOR MULE REINS, HE BRAIDED THE COTTON INTO OVAL RUGS. THEY WERE PICKED UP BY SEARS ROEBUCK AND JC PENNEY, AND THE NOW 100-YEAR-OLD BRAND TOOK OFF.

**PFEIFER STUDIO**

Bernalillo, New Mexico

Each La Cueva table is a unique artwork. The cubes—perfect for a nightstand or side table—are hewn from Ponderosa pine wood and handpainted by New Mexico artists in abstract, modern shapes and bold colors by Benjamin Moore.

DOUBLEBUTTER

Denver, Colorado

The backless Roadrunner bench has an ergonomic seat that's higher in the front, following the angle of the thigh. Available in oak, walnut, and maple, the bench is assembled using traditional mortise-and-tenon joints.

MODERN FOLK WARE

Santa Fe, New Mexico

Ceramicist Jennie Johnsrud likes to finish her hand-made wheel-thrown pottery with a simple clear glaze, and her teapot is no exception. It comes with a built-in strainer, a loop under the lid for hanging a tea ball, and a sturdy oak handle.

MODFIRE

Phoenix, Arizona

A “regal” midcentury-inspired firepit, the Royalfire measures 30 inches in diameter, with an interior channel that can be filled with decorative rocks or fire glass. Fuel options include wood, natural gas, and propane.

◆ EXPERIENCE

75–100 | YEARS OLD

FIESTANewell, West Virginia
EST. 1936

Purveyor of collector-favorite tableware

Outsourcing

So many companies have left the U.S., and there's only one reason for that: It's cheaper to make products somewhere else. But we've always been committed to keeping jobs in our community. In the late 1970s, when many jobs left the upper Ohio River Valley, we chose to stay and keep the doors open for the people who work here. It's as simple as that.

Brick and Mortar

Dishware is a very personal product, so it's important for us to maintain stores. Pictures say a lot, but when it comes to dishware, you need to be able to pick it up and hold it.

Community

There is a Fiesta collectors group that meets annually. Every other year they come to tour our plant in West Virginia, and they hold a convention that revolves around the brand. They always give us wonderful feedback. They share ideas on how to decorate with Fiesta and post pictures on social media. People love taking pictures of their tablescapes. They'll set their tables with different Fiesta colors and vintage tablecloths. It's remarkable how creative they are.

LIZ McILVAINPresident,
Homer Laughlin
China Co.**IGLOO** | Katy, Texas

BECAUSE IGLOO BEGAN AS A METAL SHOP, ITS FIRST BEVERAGE COOLERS, INTRODUCED IN THE 1950s, LOOKED LESS LIKE PLASTIC CARRYALLS AND MORE LIKE INSULATED STEEL DRUMS. IT WASN'T UNTIL 1971 THAT THE COMPANY HIT ON ITS SIGNATURE ITEM: THE PERSONAL-SIZE, SWIVEL-LID PLAYMATE. IT'S BEEN A PICNIC FIXTURE EVER SINCE, OFTEN IN RED.



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ALLIED MAKER
Glen Cove, New York
A collaboration between the lighting studio Allied Maker and ceramic artist Michele Quan, the Mquan Circle sconce pairs simple hardware with hand-painted stoneware backplates that resemble celestial bodies.

CULINARIUM
Portland, Maine
The newest version of the Module 6/6 stacking salt and spice cellar is made from a patented concrete mix that's impervious to water and oil and resistant to chipping and scratching. (The company is soon to relocate to South Carolina.)

SIMON PEARCE
Queechee, Vermont
Part of the Woodbury collection, which includes pitchers, glasses, and coasters, the cocktail carafe has a slim, angular profile, its silhouette broken only by an elegant spout and an indentation that takes the place of a handle.

O&G STUDIO
Warren, Rhode Island
The austere, Shaker-style Athenaeum settee, designed by Andrew Mau, is built of maple or ash and comes in four sizes, up to nine and a half feet. It can be finished in any of the woodworking studio's many signature stains.

VERMONT FARM TABLE
Bristol, Vermont
The slight upward curve of the nesting Modern Wooden dishes, handmade in white oak or walnut, makes them ideal for serving appetizers, salads, and pastas. The largest of the three pieces measures 13 inches square.

CAROLINE Z HURLEY
Brooklyn, New York
Inspired by the colors and textures of the Southwest, the Overlapping Dashes pillow is made of fabric block-printed in New Bedford, Massachusetts, a once-thriving textile hub that Caroline Z Hurley is helping to revitalize.



ILLUSTRATION: PETER OUMANSKI



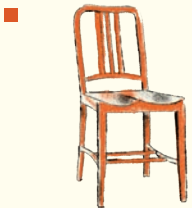
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EMECO | Hanover, Pennsylvania

DESIGNED TO WITHSTAND SALT AIR AND EXTREME CONDITIONS, THE VIRTUALLY INDESTRUCTIBLE 1006 NAVY CHAIR WAS FIRST BUILT IN 1944 FOR USE ON U.S. SUBMARINES. TO THIS DAY, THE ASTONISHINGLY LIGHT ALUMINUM CHAIR IS MOLDED THROUGH A 77-STEP PROCESS THAT TAKES UP TO 14 ARTISANS SEVERAL DAYS TO COMPLETE. THE RESULT IS A CHAIR SO TOUGH IT HAS A 150-YEAR GUARANTEE.

◆ EXPERIENCE

100-150

YEARS
OLD

MORE
THAN

150

YEARS
OLD

BERNHARDT
Lenoir, North Carolina
EST. 1889

PENDLETON
Portland, Oregon
EST. 1863

Not-so-small
family furniture
business

Spinners of
iconic
Americana

Supply Chain

There are so many furniture parts that you can no longer source in America. That supply chain is gone, so you have to go off-shore. But an even bigger challenge is finding people, particularly talented craftspeople. When so much manufacturing left the U.S. 20 years ago, many young people saw their parents lose their careers, so the idea of working in manufacturing became undesirable. This generation has opted to do almost anything else. So the problem is, you have an aging workforce and no one coming in behind it.

Efficiency

Having a mill in the U.S. means we can turn things around quickly. We just finished a blanket project that we took from concept to delivery in three weeks. We wouldn't have been able to do it if our mill was in Asia.

Brick and Mortar

Online retail has increased our focus on stores. They're not as important as they used to be for storing inventory, but they need to be better than they were before at telling stories. There's a lot to be said for somebody who is walking down the street and looks in the window and decides to come through the door.

Instincts

You have to do what you think is right. You can't be looking over your shoulder at what everybody else is doing or trying to anticipate what the consumer is going to want next. If it doesn't feel right and if it isn't what you stand for, you can waste a lot of energy in the process. If you do good work, people will find you.

Data

We have emotional reactions to products, just like consumers do. But as business managers, we need to watch the data as well. We just marked the 10th anniversary of the Lehman collapse. That was the beginning of a big challenge for us and others. Following the numbers became paramount.

JERRY HELLING
President,
Bernhardt Design

JOHN BISHOP
President and CEO