

# STRONG AND STYLISH



STAINLESS STEEL,  
ALUMINUM AND  
WROUGHT-IRON ARE THE  
MEDIA OF THE MOMENT  
IN HOME FURNISHINGS

BY DEBRA MCGAUGHEY AND  
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Admit it: When you consider the fortunate task of acquiring new furniture for your home, the idea of sitting on cold, hard steel doesn't intuitively come to mind. There is, after all, your burning desire to create warmth and comfort in your environment. How can a twisted piece of wrought iron ever hope to accomplish this?

**ABOVE:** *The Bongo High Dining Table and Bongo Barstools can turn a nook into a trendy dining area or even a bar. Thick quarter-sawn stained walnut veneer tops out the satin nickel-plated square tube iron base with neat parallel lines. Table, about \$300; barstools, about \$140 each at CB2.*

**BELOW:** *The GulfStream collection by Richard Frinier for Century Furniture uses precision-welded, marine-grade stainless steel to reflect the best of coastal living, indoors and out. The product line includes sectionals with corner units, lounge chairs, ottoman and more. See the Richard Frinier groupings at Robb & Stucky.*



**STRONG AND STYLISH**



**ABOVE:** Comfortable seating indoors or out, Brown Jordan's Vu line comes in gleaming stainless steel with a wide assortment of fabric colors and textures for seat cushions. Find Brown Jordan products at the Decorative Center in Dallas.



**LEFT:** Pamper yourself with The Tiffany Collection by John Le Shane for Johnston Casuals Furniture. The vanity, mirror and stool shown are in a Topaz powder coat with a Pink Chicago Leather seat. More details include a specially cut and shaped 1/2-inch glass top with two round insets. Suggested retail price is about \$1,800. Cantoni is a local dealer.

That is where many people make a most unfortunate mistake. The latest productions in metal furniture suggest nothing of a cold, unforgiving form, designed only for those who appreciate its hard lines or industrial rawness. Today's metal offerings are stylishly clean, delightfully retro and fused with a cross-section of woods, fabrics, cushions and finishes that make them one of the most sought-after furniture trends available on the planet.

**TIMELESS METAL**

"There is a timelessness to metal," says David Boxer, senior buyer for Cantoni in Dallas. "It won't go out of style in a short period of time."

Mixing metal and wood or other materials can add sophistication to a room. "You've got wood with its warmth, texture and grain, and that is accentuated by incorporating smooth, clean, cool metal next to it," Boxer says.

Alexa Grossman, owner of Ligne Roset in Dallas, says many homeowners like furniture that combines various elements. "The last 10 years, people have started turning to clean-line design more often and incorporating clean pieces, which often include metal, glass, wood and fabrics," she says.

While some might think metal furniture is used only in modern design, nothing could be further from the truth. Orlando Artigliere Jr., owner of The Concrete Studio in Dallas, specializes in designing and fabricating custom concrete and metal installations and furniture. "We do everything from old world and traditional to progressive and contemporary," he says.

Metal furniture can be incorporated into all types of rooms, and styles can be mixed, according to Boxer. "You can take an ornate metal piece and incorporate it into a modern room, or you can take a clean, modern piece of metal furniture and work it into a traditional room," he says.

Grossman agrees. "You can certainly mix a gorgeous chrome side table

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ABOVE: *Cantoni's Madera bed is a modern, yet warm design that combines steel panels and wood veneer. About \$7,979 in king size*

with an antique armchair," she says. "We love the contrast of styles, finishes and materials."

**TYPES OF METAL**

Boxer says stainless steel is the No. 1 metal choice for furniture, which he says is a practical choice because it's easy to clean. The Tulip collection is popular at Cantoni and includes a dining table, console, buffet and more. The dining table has a glass top and a polished stainless steel base. It retails for \$4,869. Another sleek find is the Madera bed, which retails for \$7,979 in king size. "The Madera bed is a phenomenal use of stainless steel and exotic wood veneer," Boxer says.

Grossman says in the past two years, chrome has been the hot metal of choice, with offerings at Ligne Roset including chrome barstool pedestals, lamp bases and furniture legs. At her shop, the Pam barstool is a favorite. It has an adjustable height chrome pedestal and costs from \$480 to \$520.

Both Boxer and Grossman say aluminum is another popular metal choice.

**CUSTOM OPTIONS**

For those who want custom-designed or custom-crafted metal furniture, The Concrete Studio offers a wide variety of options.

"Our customers don't shop at Ikea or Pier 1," Artigliere says. "They want something that is one of a kind."

While Artigliere does make some all-metal pieces, most of his work incorporates metal and concrete. "I think putting the concrete with the metal is very unique and not a lot of people are doing it," he says. "Metal is so easy to manipulate."

One of the reasons Artigliere likes working with concrete and metal is because both are recyclable, "green" materials. "It comes



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**ABOVE:** *The Ray, a sleek dining table design from Cantoni, features a glass top with three chrome legs. About \$2,729*

from the earth," he says. "I don't think people realize metal and concrete are sustainable items. You can have a piece of furniture that was recycled from a car 100 years ago."

In his own home, Artigliere has a table built out of carbon steel and concrete. "I like knowing that one day if I don't sell it or give it away that it's recyclable and will end up exactly where it came from," he says.

Some of the most often requested items from clients are dining tables, coffee tables and consoles. A recent custom order was a steel china cabinet and buffet with the client's children's artwork laser cut into the surface. "Now they have family heirlooms that can be passed down to the children when they are older," he adds.

When designing a custom piece, Artigliere sketches out a design. During the fabrication process, Artigliere procures the metal, cuts it, welds it and then selects a finish. What is the price of a custom piece? A small table runs around \$850, whereas a more exotic piece could be anywhere from \$5,000 to \$7,000.

**OUTDOOR BEAUTIES**

Of course, outdoor use of metal furniture always is in fashion. Some of the most classic, clean patio furniture available for homeowners can be found in collections by Brown Jordan. While the vast majority of its furniture is made from aluminum, two of its collections, Nxt and Vu, come in gleaming stainless steel with a wide assortment of fabric colors and textures for seat cushions.

Boxer says most outdoor furniture incorporates metal. Several items in Cantoni's outdoor furniture line have anodized aluminum with a powder coat finish.

Artigliere also creates some custom outdoor pieces, mixing metal and concrete and sometimes teak or ipe wood. "Metal works well outdoors," he says. "It can withstand the elements."



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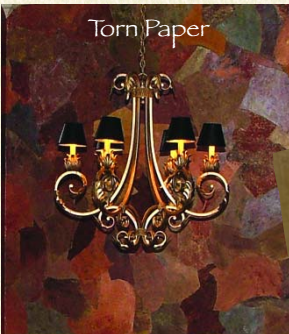
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**ABOVE:** At The Concrete Studio in Dallas, owner Orlando Artigliere Jr. specializes in designing and fabricating custom concrete and metal installations and furniture.



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