

Dining by Design

WITH A SEXY CROP OF TABLES TO CHOOSE FROM, WE TURNED TO **INDIA HICKS** AND **MARTIN BRUDNIZKI** FOR ADVICE ON SELECTING THE BEST ONE FOR YOUR SPACE.

INTERVIEW BY CHARLES CURKIN

PRODUCED BY LAUREL J. BENEDUM



< **INDIA HICKS**

is a former model turned designer and entrepreneur. Based in the Bahamas, she is the author of *Island Style* and is working on a new book about entertaining.



MARTIN BRUDNIZKI >

is an ED A-List interior designer whose projects include Annabel's club in London and his latest, Baur's restaurant at Zurich's Baur au Lac hotel.

What do you look for in a dining table?

INDIA HICKS: I ask the question, Is it something I plan to use for family or for entertaining? My preference is to have a smaller table.

If I have guests, I'll slide a piece of plywood over the surface and cover it with a tablecloth—that way I can have 16 friends for dinner.

MARTIN BRUDNIZKI: It has to be 28 to 30 inches tall, which is the right height. That's most important.

Is a dining table among the first or last pieces of furniture you select for a room?

IH: I cheat because I live in the Bahamas, so I eat outdoors a lot, but in general a dining table is one of the first things on my list.

MB: It always comes first. *What's the best material for a dining table to be made of?*

IH: Wood. I like the softer materials—they're more inviting.

MB: It depends on the room. I'm doing a dining table right now in onyx. I have

also had them made in marble, limestone, and metal. The ones I put in the Rose Room at Annabel's have mirrored tops.

And the best shape?

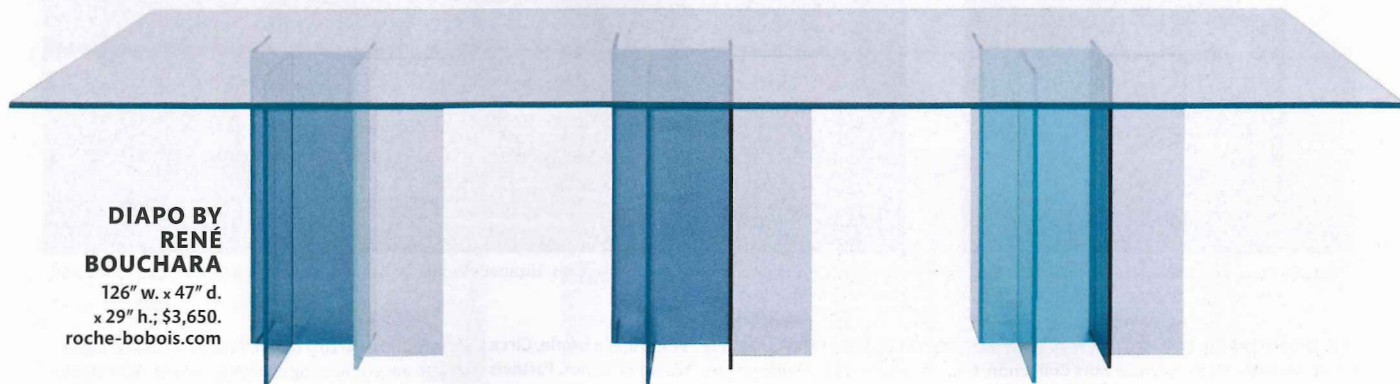
IH: A rectangle is an easier table to fill. If you've got a big group, a round table won't feel as cozy because the distance becomes greater the larger the circle.

MB: But if you have a small dining room, the table should be round and 48 inches in diameter, an intimate size. For a bigger dining room, it should be rectangular.

Vintage or brand-new?

IH: I prefer vintage. Nowadays, you can find something well priced and beautiful at auction. I like tables from the Regency period—they come with a huge amount of intrigue and history.

MB: I like both new and old. It's entirely dependent on the mix of the other elements in the room. But I will say the home >



DIAPO BY RENÉ BOUCHARA

126" w. x 47" d.
x 29" h.; \$3,650.
roche-bobois.com

TRUTH IN DECORATING

is about your story and your life. If everything is new, then it reads a bit plastic.

Chairs or benches?

IH: Benches are good because you can accommodate more bottoms. But don't put them on both sides because if you have a 90-year-old mother, she won't want to sit for long without back support. She would need a real chair.

MB: If I had an apartment on Park Avenue, I wouldn't have a bench. If it's a rustic house, a bench could work. It's a very informal way of dining. *Aesthetically, what was the best era for dining tables?*

MB: I love Art Deco dining tables, like the ones by Paul Dupré-Lafon, for the beauty of their geometry.

How often should someone use their dining table?

IH: I have five kids, and I find it's important that we meet around the table either for lunch or dinner. That's when the table becomes the heart of the home.

MB: You should use every space you have every day. Real estate is expensive, so get maximum use out of it.

Who from history would you most like to have seated at your table?

IH: Amelia Earhart. She must have been fascinating to be that courageous. Also, if she were at my table, she wouldn't be missing, which would be extra surprising.

MB: Cecil Beaton, because he was such a polyglot; he devoured culture and had great style.

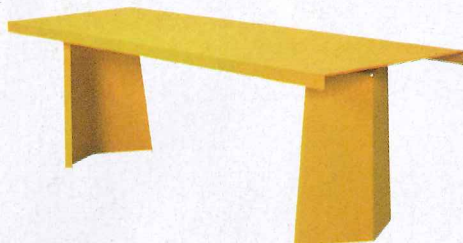
How do you set your dining table?

IH: I do everything. For certain occasions, I like to have it very formal with white starch napkins. For others, I prefer to use paper throw-away napkins. I like to change it up. Be adventurous! ■

ED picks the BEST DINING TABLES

PLI BY VICTORIA WILMOTTE

71" w. x 55" d. x 29" h.; \$10,866.
classicon.com



PALLAS BY KONSTANTIN GRČIĆ

94" w. x 30" d. x 28" h.; \$6,330.
hivemodern.com



LONG AND SHORT OF IT

48" dia. x 30" h., extends to 144" w.; \$3,600.
caracole.com



DIAGONALE BY INDIA MAHDAVI

51" dia. x 28" h.; \$16,680.
ralphpucci.net



BRASS TABLE BY BRIAN THOREN

102" w. x 44" d. x 30" h.; \$38,000.
1stdibs.com



DOUBLE HOLTZ

108" w. x 60" d. x 28.5" h.;
\$60,000. nakashima
woodworkers.com