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MOD SQUAD

RH enlists a who's who of contemporary designers to create furniture and accessories for its rapidly expanding collections



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There is such a wealth of creativity in the world," says Gary Friedman, the mastermind behind RH, the home-furnishings empire previously known as Restoration Hardware. "Our strategy has always been to find the best people." With that in mind, the company has recruited industry stars from around the world to contribute to the brand, which also encompasses a contemporary initiative, RH Modern, plus an alfresco collection, RH Outdoor. As Friedman explains, "We're working with a lot of personalities, but there is a shared set of beliefs about doing strong work and not cutting corners."

That a juggernaut business would nurture and promote outside minds is hardly a given. But RH appreciates the importance of intellectual cross-pollination. "By connecting with great talents you get great things," Friedman notes. *Architectural Digest* sat down with several of the designers at RH Modern's showrooms in Los Angeles and New York to learn more about their products. Meet the company's collaborators:

JONATHAN BROWNING

Following the debut of his wide-ranging collection of light fixtures for RH Modern, San Francisco-based Jonathan Browning turned his attention to another type of illumination—sleek outdoor lanterns made of warm solid brass. The line comprises three models, all decidedly more angular and pared down than RH's traditional offerings. Morency, Browning's personal favorite, takes its cues from midcentury experiments in bentwood (he cites the Cherner chair as an influence). "The design is one continuous ribbon of metal that forms the handle and the base," he says. "Its decorative appeal and function are one and the same, which is the essence of minimalism."

HARRISON AND NICHOLAS CONDOS

Simple forms meet coastal cool in the creations of Harrison and Nicholas Condos, Australian brothers who

From top: Jonathan Browning amid outdoor lanterns he created for RH. Brothers Harrison (left) and Nicholas Condos with chairs and a table from their Aegean line for the brand.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TREVOR TONDRO

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expanded their family's metalworking business to establish the trendsetting design studio Harbour Outdoor in 2009. At Friedman's behest, the duo has translated their trademark aesthetic into outdoor furniture in aluminum and sustainably harvested teak—from the Mustique collection, featuring classic X-back details, to the ultraspare Aegean line. As Harrison points out, "We went for proportions that are substantial but not overbearing."

XAVIER VAN LIL

Belgian designer Xavier Van Lil characterizes his Merida outdoor furniture line as having "distilled, unembellished forms with a warm spirit and an emphasis on comfort"—something akin to a classic 1950s slipper chair. "It's chic in a quiet, easygoing way that invites you to spend the whole afternoon lounging," he says. The pieces are crafted of Indonesian teak and have no extraneous ornament, in order to highlight the wood itself. Of his collaboration, which began with a fortuitous

conversation with Friedman at Paris's Maison & Objet show in 2015, Van Lil is positively sanguine: "When I met Gary it was like being with a lifelong friend!"

ANN MARIE VERING

Ann Marie Vering sketched the concept for her Paros range of outdoor furniture while relaxing poolside in Indonesia. "Java is the best place for teak," says the L.A.-based designer, who has created hotels, restaurants, and nightclubs around the globe. "Paros has a slender minimalist profile that requires precision in manufacturing, and the craftsmen there know how to work the material." The designs' signature decorative flourish is the paired metal

From top: Xavier Van Lil with pieces from his Merida outdoor collection. Barlas Baylar and his Wythe Live-Edge dining table. Ann Marie Vering devised the Paros sofa.

BOTTOM RIGHT: GENEVIEVE GARRUPPO



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cleats that reinforce the frames. (Vering got the idea from the classic Steve McQueen Heuer Monaco watch.) “RH Modern really encourages individual artistic expression,” she enthuses.

BARLAS BAYLAR

For his collaboration with RH Modern, Barlas Baylar, founder of the New York-based atelier Hudson Furniture, applied his love of bespoke workmanship to production on a larger scale. “Everything I do is usually one of a kind,” he reflects. “But I’ve discovered you can make quality pieces in quantity.” Take, for instance, the Wythe Live-Edge dining table, a clean-lined masculine beauty featuring a solid-walnut-slab top that—by virtue of its grain and natural contours—makes for a unique sculptural work. “The tables will become heirloom pieces,” he says, adding, “I pick the wood myself. It needs to be perfect.”



From top: Kerry Joyce surrounded by his outdoor pillow collection for RH. Ben Soleimani with carpets from his collaboration with RH Modern. Vicente Wolf seated on a cocktail table of his design.

KERRY JOYCE

“The goal was to create pieces that have an essence of the past yet are very much of today,” designer Kerry Joyce says of his new outdoor pillow collections. Whereas one series—distinguished by bold geometric patterns—draws from African kuba cloth, another riffs on timeless ikat fabrics. To emulate the craftsmanship of the handmade originals for a mass audience, Joyce employed a jacquard loom and state-of-the-art digital-weaving technology. Sunbrella yarns, meanwhile, fortify the pillows against the elements while staying soft to the touch. As Joyce notes, “You’d never realize they were meant for outside.”

BEN SOLEIMANI

“It’s all about texture,” says Ben Soleimani, remarking on the ever-growing collection of carpets he has conceived for RH since 2011. “I am always using weaves that are different, yarns that are different. Natural fibers give you something simple and beautiful.” Recent creations include a line of hand-knotted outdoor rugs (some bear a stripped-down diamond pattern, others a geometric motif modeled after Moroccan tilework), plus a vast array of beautifully subtle designs for RH Modern. “The company is making quality available to everyone, and that’s great,” he says. “After all, the rug is the foundation of any space.”

VICENTE WOLF

After buying himself a cocktail table of Vicente Wolf’s design, Friedman loved it so much that he added it to RH Modern’s offerings. “The table is almost a cross between a tray and a campaign chest,” says the New York-based Wolf, referring to the combination of stacked mahogany surfaces and tidy bronze fittings. “I wanted it to look like you could take it apart and reassemble it.” The piece served as the inspiration for the broader Avenida collection. Partnering with the company, the AD100 decorator muses, has allowed him to focus on design rather than logistics. “RH takes care of all the manufacturing—the design is never compromised.” *rh.com* —SAM COCHRAN AND MAYER RUS