

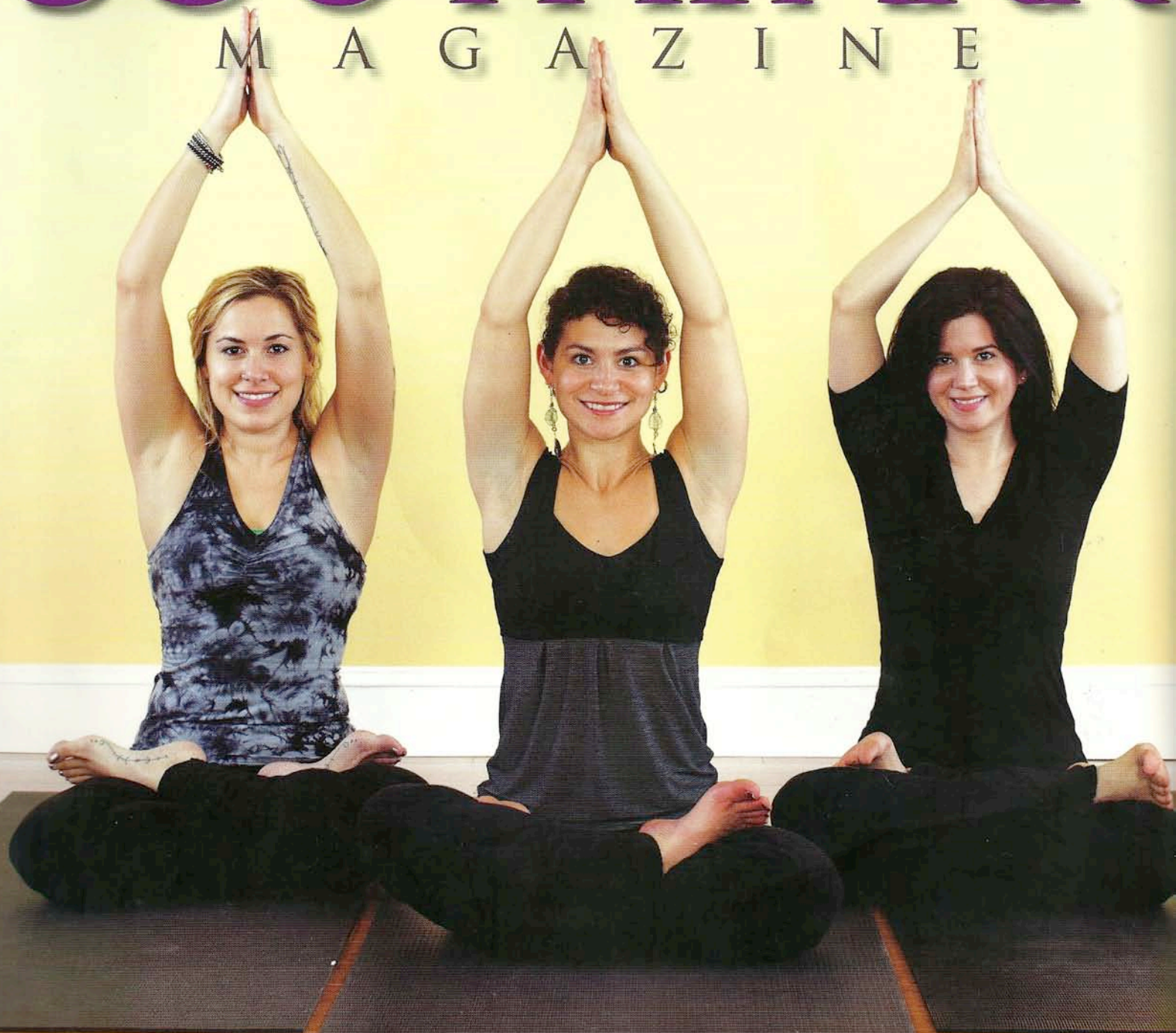
RECORDS GET A REPLAY
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Age of Acrylic

**ADD A
CONTEMPORARY
TWIST TO ANY SPACE**

BY LAURA KING EDWARDS

Clearer than glass,
more durable than
plastic, and no
unsightly seams? There's a reason
that acrylic furniture has emerged
as a major design trend. Naturally
clear but tinted if desired and
lacking glass's "green" edge,
acrylic may just be an interior
designer's dream with its ability
to bring balance to a room.

Acrylic chairs by Kartell add a modern twist to the breakfast area of a Myers Park home, designed by Holly Phillips of The English Room and architect Lindsay Smith.

“The clarity of acrylic is much like crystal, yet it adds a new, modern vibe that can easily be made to work.

— Victor Tanisaka

When it first burst onto the home decorating scene more than 50 years ago, people filled rooms with it. Now, designers and homeowners view acrylic as a great accent. Thoughtfully selected acrylic pieces add a sense of weightlessness, luminescence and a contemporary touch to any traditional space.

“So much of design is about blending opposites—such as soft with hard, or floral with stark,” says Holly Phillips, a Charlotte-based residential interior designer and owner of The English Room.

If your style is more traditional than contemporary, you may think acrylic is not for you. But an acrylic piece may be exactly what you need to complete your home's look. “Don't be afraid of the modern edge that acrylic has,” says Victor Tanisaka, director of operations for Alexandra Von Furstenberg, a Los Angeles-based designer of high-end acrylic furniture. “The juxtaposition of modern and traditional modernizes a home without going too modern. And the clarity of acrylic is much like crystal, yet it adds a new, modern vibe that can easily be made to work.”

Not sure where to start? A console and a coffee table are both introductions to acrylic; for example, an acrylic coffee table can provide a light feel in the middle of a room without adding weight. Ghost chairs are also non-committal entries into the world of high-quality acrylic furniture; you can purchase a pair for around \$300 and display them unadorned or easily dress them up. “You can get a great look by pairing ghost chairs with cool pillows and placing them in an entry hall on either side of an antique chest,” says Phillips, who loves the ghost chair she pairs with the twig table in her mountain home because of its ability to make a crowded corner feel more open.

Tinted pieces by Alexandra Von Furstenberg are a great introduction to acrylic.



Plexi-Craft designs standard pieces like this bench and chair, but also offers customization for hard-to-fit areas.



When it comes to acrylic, it's not all about the clear stuff. Today's high-end furniture designers pair beautiful, custom upholstered cushions with clear acrylic chairs and benches. A splash of color brings a soft element, and many people gravitate toward clear acrylic furniture's rainbow-hued cousins. Phillips loves Alexandra Von Furstenberg's tinted acrylic furniture and accessories. "I've used her chairs in many different colors," she says. "They're very expensive but very well-received by my clients."

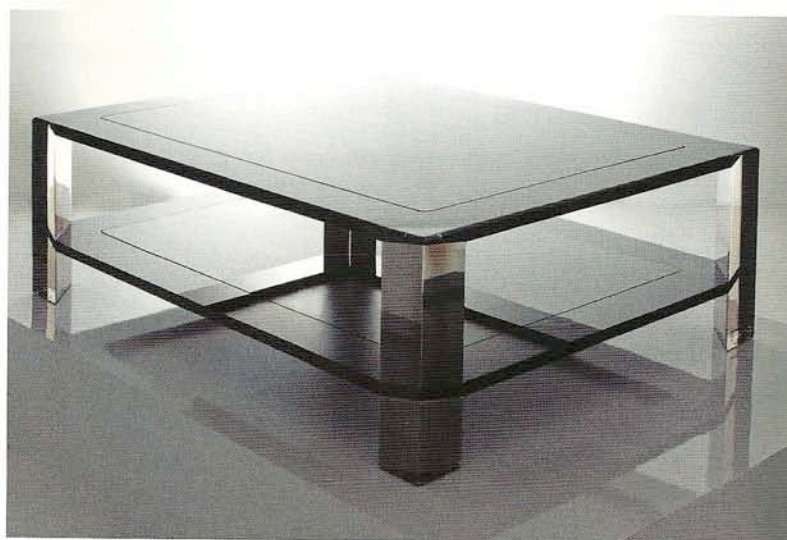
Tanisaka says colored acrylic adds a pop to just about any room's existing décor. "Our color palette ranges from neon brights and deep jewel tones to smoky bronzes and sophisticated neutrals," he says. "While clear acrylic is beautiful in itself and can

In the Clear

Once you get the piece of your dreams, make sure you know how to care for it—though it is naturally low-maintenance relative to other materials. Compared to a traditional wood coffee table, an acrylic coffee table is much less likely to suffer red wine stains, and pets typically don't use acrylic

furniture as scratching posts or chew toys. Acrylic will also stand up to long-term exposure to direct sunlight. In fact, caring for acrylic is so easy that by simply wiping it down regularly, you can keep it looking new forever. Just take care to avoid scratches, which you can do by using a very soft cloth moistened

with warm water. Never use window cleaner, ammonia products or other chemical cleaners on acrylic—even if they are mild or non-scented—and use a separate cloth to care for your acrylic furniture, since other cloths can retain residue from household cleaners even after they have been washed.



A smaller acrylic piece, like this console or coffee table by Alexandra Von Furstenberg, can open up a living space.

blend perfectly into a room, Alexandra's colored, accented acrylic makes a statement and adds life."

If you're ready to hit the local shops for your first luxury acrylic furniture purchase, prepare yourself to look both in Charlotte and beyond. "Occasionally I'll see [acrylic] in Cotswold Marketplace and Slate Interiors," says Phillips, "but high-end pieces

typically must be custom-ordered from designers like Alexandra Von Furstenberg, Plexi-Craft, Jan Showers and Serge de Troyer Collection."

With a custom order, you can accommodate that hard-to-fit spot around the house that requires an unusual size, plus you can personalize the finish, thickness and other features, such as shelves, drawers and

cushions.

Acrylic furniture has been around the block, but it isn't likely to disappear anytime soon. "These days, you can't go through a good trade magazine without seeing a piece of it," says Phillips. "It's a hot item, but it's stayed hot for more than 50 years—and you know what? I think it's only going to get bigger." ☐

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