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CHAIRS



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The Top 10 Dining Chairs

Truth in Decorating:
Katie Leede and
Jeffrey Alan Marks settle in to
consider the best seating
arrangements



The food you serve may be delicious, and the dinner-table conversation might sparkle, but if your chairs aren't comfortable, the meal will fall short of a four-star feast. "I look for a chair I can sit in for a good hour and a half without fidgeting," says interior designer Jeffrey Alan Marks. "That's why a wide seat and good support are critical."

Style, of course, is also key, and interior and textile designer Katie Leede recommends you pay particular attention to the back of a chair. "It's the most important part because you see it first, so it should

be attractive," she explains. Openwork backs feel light and airy, while solid ones offer strength and presence. In addition, make certain the seats complement the table in terms of scale to avoid an ill-matched look. "You don't want them to dwarf the table or the room—or vice versa," Leede says. And if you choose chairs upholstered in costly yardage, consider slipcovers as a protective measure. "You can just throw the slipcovers in the wash if they get stained by food or wine," Leede notes. So sit back, settle in, and read on. ▶

Text by Mitchell Owens · Photography by Joshua McHugh · Produced by Parker Bowie and Patrick Mele



1 NAILHEAD UPHOLSTERED CHAIR BY RESTORATION HARDWARE
 "I adore this," raves Jeffrey Alan Marks, admiring its traditional form, understated linen, and the wood's weathered finish. "The pitch of the back is great, and the arms aren't confining." With its generous width, it will work best with a large table, he says. Height: 39"; width: 23"; depth: 27"; seat height: 19"; material: oak frame in weathered-oak finish with Dacron-wrapped-foam fill, sand Belgian-linen upholstery, and antiqued-brass-nailhead trim (also available in brown-oak finish and other fabrics); delivery: 1-2 weeks; price: \$399; restorationhardware.com



2 FEBO CHAIR BY ANTONIO CITTERIO FOR MAXALTO FROM B&B ITALIA
 "The soft, sensual shape is inviting and a throwback to Italian designs of the 1970s," remarks Katie Leede. She also praises the stylish topstitching as well as the "unusual and striking" upholstered legs. Because of its glamorous look, she pictures a set surrounding a bronze dining table. Height: 31"; width: 19.6"; depth: 23.6"; seat height: 18.5" (other sizes available); material: upholstered steel frame with polyurethane-foam fill; delivery: 14-16 weeks; price: \$1,484 c.o.m.; maxalto.it



3 WHO DINING CHAIR BY RODOLFO DORDONI FOR MOLteni&C
 "Fantastic," Marks says. "The wood and the simple silhouette recall Danish furniture. And I love the rounded rail on the back because it's easy to grab." He also appreciates the lightly padded leather seat, which is cushy enough for long meals, and says its slim frame is just right for a small antique table. Height: 33.5"; width: 17.75"; depth: 22.5"; seat height: 17.75"; material: dark-oak frame with Sinfonia chocolate-brown leather seat (also available as an armchair and in other woods and leathers); delivery: 8-10 weeks; price: \$1,428; molteniada.com



4 #455 DINING SIDE CHAIR BY A. RUDIN
 "This is very versatile," Leede says. "Depending on the fabric, it can work with a variety of styles and settings." To give the clean-lined design added oomph, she would upholster it in a suzani for an exotic look. It's also the most comfortable of the group, according to Leede, so it could double as a desk chair. Height: 39"; width: 20"; depth: 26"; seat height: 20"; material: alder wood in tobacco finish with Dacron-wrapped-foam fill (custom sizes and finishes available); delivery: 10-12 weeks; price: \$1,760 c.o.m.; arudin.com



5 PIANOFORTE CHAIR BY GREGORYSUNG FOR ROCHE BOBOIS
 With its graceful profile and glossy lacquer finish, Marks likens this to "a chic Jean Nouvel piece of furniture—and the red stripe along the front reminds me of the crimson soles of Christian Louboutin shoes." The sleek style would work well in a sophisticated urban apartment, he points out. Height: 33.5"; width: 20"; depth: 22"; seat height: 18"; material: beech frame in glossy-black-lacquer finish with foam fill and black Softan-leather seat (other lacquer finishes and leathers available); delivery: 12-14 weeks; price: \$1,350; roche-bobois.com



6 CHIPPENDALE SIDE CHAIR BY ETHAN ALLEN
 "The tall back is terrific because it's executed in a playful, easygoing way," Leede says. "The scale is exaggerated, but the ornate motif isn't fussy." She also lauds the black finish, which "lends drama," especially in a gallery-like white interior. Height: 40"; width: 21"; depth: 22.5"; seat height: 19.5"; material: birch-and-poplar frame in antique-black finish with foam fill and black Keats upholstery (also available in Southport antique finish and other fabrics); delivery: 4 weeks; price: \$349; ethanallen.com



7 NAKASHIMA STRAIGHT BACKED CHAIR FROM DESIGN WITHIN REACH
 "A design classic and very well made," Marks observes, citing its sculptural curves and the contoured-for-comfort seat. The walnut and hickory will also acquire a beautiful patina and are extremely durable, he says, "so it's great for kids." Marks envisions it with a glass table so "the chair is the star." Height: 30"; width: 22.5"; depth: 17.5"; seat height: 17"; material: solid-walnut frame with solid-hickory spindles; delivery: 10 days; price: \$634; dwr.com



8 LEAF CHAIR BY JOHN DERIAN
 "Charming and incredibly comfortable," Leede raves. "It recalls a traditional English scroll-back chair, but it's sturdier and plusher than an antique." Another selling point: the "lean and elegant" turned legs, whose casters provide "mobility and an old-world vibe." With its compact proportions, she sees it in a small space. Height: 31.5"; width: 18"; depth: 23"; seat height: 19"; material: maple frame in dark-cherry-stain finish with soy-based-foam fill; delivery: 8-10 weeks; price: \$1,875 c.o.m.; johnderian.com



9 BELLA SIDE CHAIR BY TROSCAN DESIGN FROM HOLLY HUNT
 "Even though the seat has no cushioning, it's comfortable enough to sit in for hours," marvels Marks. And with a leather-covered back, it's handsome from behind, he says. Because of its slightly rustic vibe, Marks visualizes it in a country house, but would opt for brightly colored upholstery to offset the wood. Height: 30.5"; width: 19.75"; depth: 21.75"; seat height: 18.25"; material: claro-walnut frame in natural finish with oxblood leather seat and back (also available as an armchair and in other woods, finishes, and leathers); delivery: 10 weeks; price: \$1,988; hollyhunt.com



10 MARIE SIDE CHAIR BY ROOM & BOARD
 Leede finds this frill-free chair thoroughly practical, but suggests adding a white canvas or linen slipcover: "It would soften the boxy lines and legs but still keep it very tailored and fresh, like a piece by Christian Liaigre." The chair also happens to be "a fantastic value," she says. Height: 34"; width: 21"; depth: 25"; seat height: 21"; material: maple frame in ebony-stain finish with Dacron-wrapped-foam fill and black leather upholstery (also available as an armchair and in other finishes and fabrics); delivery: 10-14 days; price: \$429; roomandboard.com

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