

# LUCHFORD APM

Title: FT How To Spend It

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Circulation: 183,904

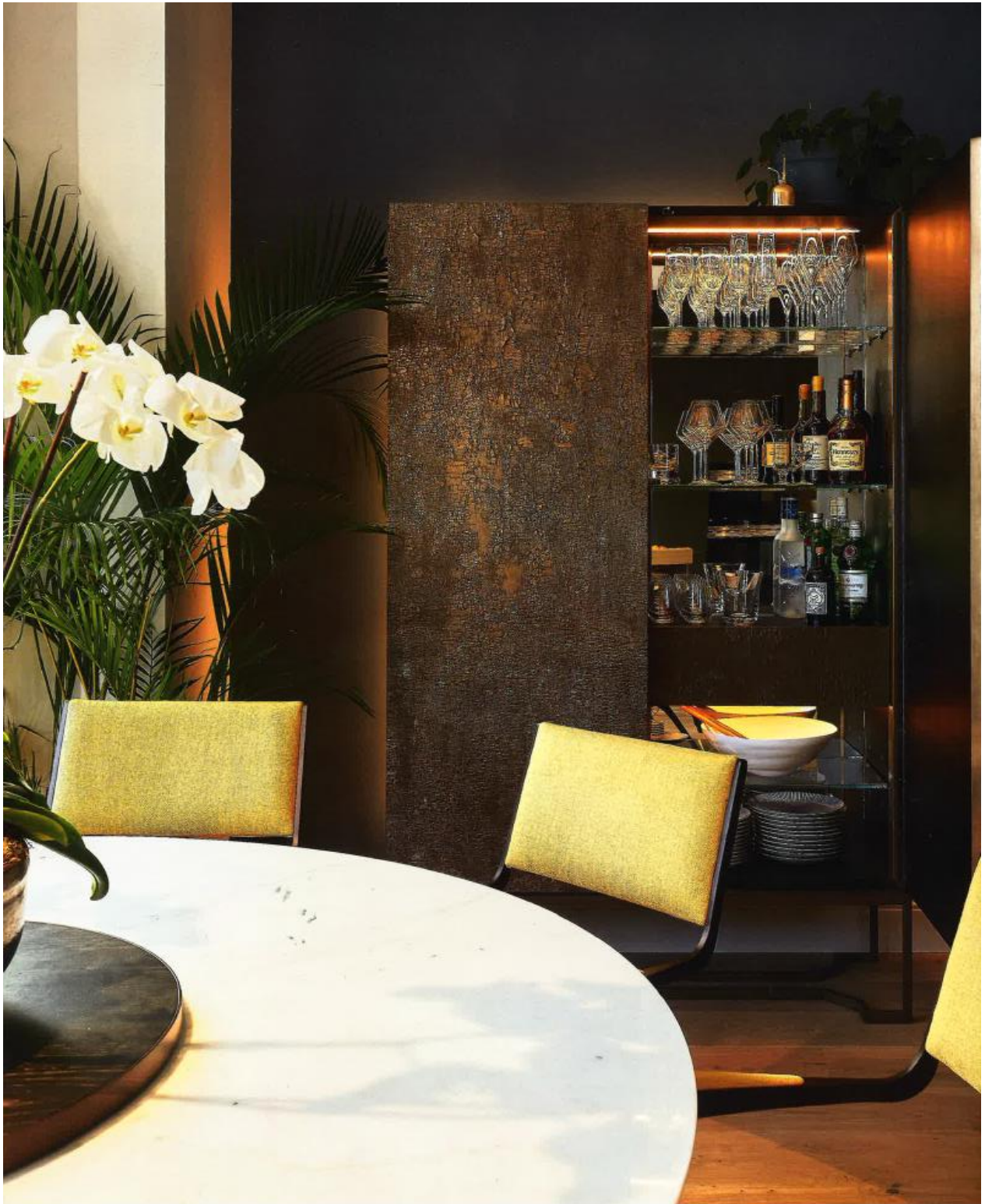


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# raising the spirits

Drinks carts and cabinets are making a comeback, channelling an aesthetic that's pure lounge-bar luxe, says **Charlotte Abrahams**

**I**nternational design house March & White is best known for its immaculate interiors, but this autumn it has produced an object – an exquisite custom-made drinks trolley it believes its clients will soon desire. “Our projects often include built-in bars,” says James White, who co-founded the company in 2010 with his business partner Elliot March, “but we liked the idea of a piece that could move around and which also connected the suave sophistication of a bygone cocktail era with the present.”

The Bar C(art) (£50,000, pictured overleaf), with its ocean-liner curves, lacquered finish and bronze fluted glass interior, pays homage to the Roaring Twenties, but also conceals high-tech accessories designed to assist the perfect host or hostess. In addition to classic features – like cocktail mixing sets and built-in ice buckets – extras range from a humidifier and caviar chiller to a connection point for an iPad or iPod with integrated speakers, transforming the cart into a music system. “It’s a beautiful object that becomes the functional centrepiece of a party when it’s in full swing,” says White.

March & White’s creation is timely, as drinks trolleys are making a serious comeback in the home. Brian Woulfe, founder of London-based studio Designed by Woulfe, has certainly seen demand for freestanding pieces that can be whisked out to impress guests when they come to call. “They are great in spaces where there is no natural niche for built-in joinery,” he says, “and they also allow people to have bars in unusual places.” Such as bathrooms – one of his clients recently asked him to source a trolley that would enable him to mix a gin martini from the bubbly comfort of the tub. That particular client wanted an antique, but Woulfe has seen a number of contemporary designers adding bar carts to their collections, with rather wonderful results – which can be seen in his design for a New York penthouse, where a drinks cart (from £300) sits in the corner of the glass-framed living space and is stocked with spirits that can be sipped while taking in the dramatic cityscape views.

Asprey introduced a gleaming silver-plate and tempered-glass art deco cocktail trolley (price on request, pictured on final page) to its barware and home collection earlier

From left: Designed by Woulfe charred-wood and bronze bar cabinet, £8,800, created for a living room in St John’s Wood. Northern oak and aluminium Loud bar cabinet, £1,677

this year, in response to what Mairread Daly, category director of silver, china and crystal, describes as a “notable increase” in demand for barware. In September the piece was showcased at London’s trend-setting Decorex fair, where



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as “a wistful nod to a glamorous age filled with dazzling parties”. Brian Woulfe couldn’t agree more, pointing to his residential project in St John’s Wood, where he created a bronzed, charred-timber bar cabinet (£8,800, pictured on previous pages) as a golden accent elevating the cool midcentury furniture and pops of colour in the living room. “Socialising at home is very much back in fashion – clients want furniture with a cocktail-hour vibe for their entertaining space, and that makes their guests feel they’re in a house where they’ll be well looked after.”

As the focus of the action at a home gathering, bar cabinets are often highly decorative – made to be the talking point at a party. Portuguese design brand Green Apple unveiled one such piece at Decorex. Its Bongó bar cabinet (€33,000, pictured below) has sliding Sahara Noir marble doors that are pure lounge-bar luxe, but the wow moment happens when the doors glide open to reveal the interior. “It’s finished in polished Patagonia granite that’s dramatically lit by LEDs,” says CEO Sérgio Rebola. “It’s exuberant because we wanted to create a piece that celebrates the pleasure of living.”

Clockwise from left: Muranti walnut, ceramic, lacquer, gold-leaf and brass Csarite bar cabinet, €11,400. Green Apple marble and granite Bongó bar cabinet, €33,000. March & White walnut, glass, nickel and lacquer Bar (Cart) drinks trolley, £50,000. Hugues Chevalier marble, wood and lacquer Vendôme bar cabinet, £18,600

French furniture brand Hugues Chevalier’s Vendôme cabinet (£18,600, pictured left) is also set aglow from within, as motion-sensitive LEDs bounce light off the mirrored interior, transforming displays of glassware into a sparkling spectacle. It’s an important touch. The rising popularity of spirits has led to an increased focus on the design of accessories, from tumblers and shot sets to tongs, shakers and coolers. Asprey highlights the success of its Hexagonal liqueur set (from £1,000), which was launched last year in clear and eye-catching amber crystal. Waterford is planning to follow its gin collection (from £75) with an expanded range of



Portuguese design company Porus Studio also presented an elegant asymmetric version (€3,670) in brass, glass and marble. Ireland-based furniture maker Zelouf & Bell (another standout at the event) says its limited edition citrine tay veneer and black bolivar Spyglass champagne trolley boosted champagne sales fourfold when it was introduced to Dublin’s Michelin-starred Restaurant Patrick Guilbaud in 2017. It has just delivered its latest handmade champagne cart to a private client, and while the Serpent in the Maze design (€24,000) may not include ingenious devices, its Diamond Python pattern slithering across a maze of bird’s-eye maple and ripple sycamore marquetry transforms the art of serving champagne and cocktails into a rather fabulous piece of theatre.

And this is what lies at the heart of the trend. Many people, having enjoyed the glamorous ambience of the cocktail bars in fine hotels and restaurants, want to conjure the same atmosphere at home, just as the party set of the 1920s had done when drinks carts were introduced. As antiques dealer and barware specialist Dee Zammit explains, when Prohibition was imposed in America, bright young things were forced to take their gin slings indoors, with the most fashionable among them opting to emulate not just the drinks, but the indulgent aesthetic too.

Adding an extra touch of magic to that aesthetic is the bar cabinet. “People want more fun and a bit of naughtiness in their lives,” says Zelouf & Bell’s co-founder and co-designer Susan Zelouf. The brand’s latest design – a Macassar-ebony cabinet (€48,000, pictured overleaf) inlaid with a magnificent marquetry jaguar and crow – was envisaged

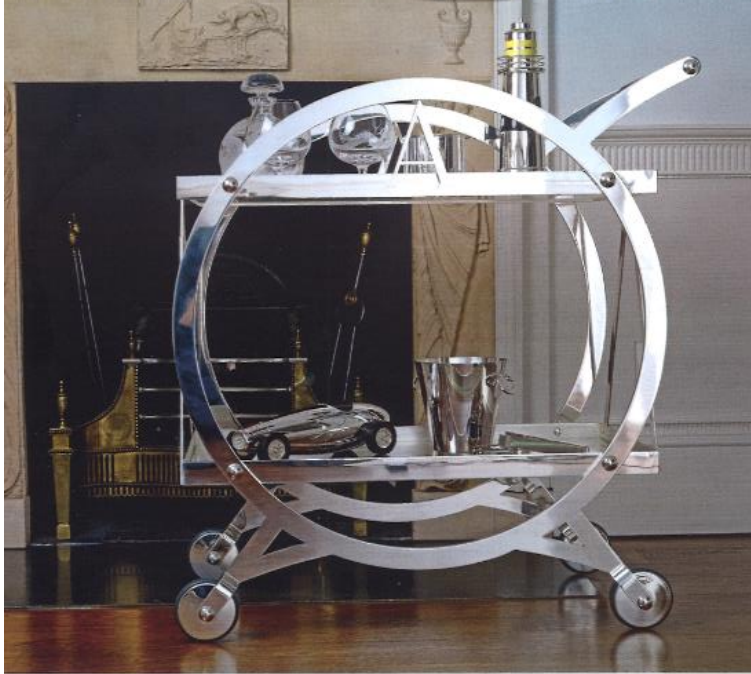


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*The notion of a jewel box concealing spirituous delights inspires many designers*



cocktail glasses and is considering highball glasses designed for tall – hotly tipped as the next big thing in spirits – while Marc Larminaux, creative director of French fine-crystal house Lalique, is currently working on a new barware collection that responds to the trend for oversized ice cubes. The maison has also added a stainless-steel insert to its classic Bacchantes vase (€1,950) after discovering that many of its customers were using it as a champagne cooler. “Beautiful glasses and accessories make the everyday an occasion,” says Waterford’s design director Matt Kehoe.

It was the desire to “highlight the elegant rituals of serving drinks” that inspired Morten Skjærpe Knarum, creative director of Norwegian furniture, lighting and accessories brand Northern, to commission design duo Fredrik Färg and Emma Marga Blanche to create its first bar cabinet. Loud (L1,677, pictured on opening pages) is compact but chic – and made from solid oak and oak veneer wrapped in a thin layer of highly reflective aluminium, which glints attractively. “It’s more than a cabinet, it’s a showcase for bottles and glasses,” he says.

The notion of creating a jewel box concealing spirituous delights inspires many of the most decadent designs. Csarite (€11,400, pictured on previous page) by Muranti is well considered, with adjustable drawers and shelves, but these are secreted away behind American walnut doors, which are adorned like a puzzle with

Clockwise from top left: **Asprey silver-plate art deco cocktail trolley, price on request. Malabar Artistic Furniture wood, mirror, gold-leaf and lacquer Mondo bar cabinet, €11,880. Zelouf & Bell Macassar-ebony, marquetry, shagreen, brass and leather Jaguar and the Crow bar cabinet, €48,000, and maple, sycamore, quartz and brass Serpents bar cart, €24,000. Malabar Artistic Furniture Ironwood and gold-leaf interior Templo II bar cabinet, €11,880**

rows of windows in Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer’s headquarters for Mondadori, while Templo II (€11,880, pictured above left) is painstakingly handpainted to appear as though clad in ceramic tiles, betraying the influence of Gaudi. “Portugal has a long history of finely detailed ornamental cabinet making,” says Salete Peixinho, project manager at Associative Design, a venture established to promote the best of Portuguese design. “We’ve noticed an upswing in demand for these

walnut, ceramic, lacquer and gold leaf. The Mondo and Templo II cabinets, both by Portuguese brand Malabar Artistic Furniture, take inspiration from architecture and art: Mondo (€11,880, pictured top right) is a double-cabinet design studded with grids of gold mirror tiles recalling the

pieces worldwide, in line with the interest in serving fine wines and spirits at home.”

For Susan Zelouf, it matters not whether you’re a wine and spirits connoisseur or a social butterfly, as she says that just owning a statement piece is enough to raise the spirits. “Opening a sexy door to a dazzling array of bottles and barware feels so decadent.” We’ll drink to that. ♦

#### CALLED TO THE BAR

**Asprey**, 020-7493 6767; asprey.com. **Clippings**, clippings.com. **Dee Zammit**, 01992-574 760; deezammit.com. **Designed by Wouffe**, 020-3957 9863; designedbywouffe.com. **Green Apple**, +35196-795 2518; greenapple.pt. **Hugues Chevalier**, hugueschevalier.com and see Marc de Dery. **Lalique**, 020-7292 0444; lalique.com. **Malabar Artistic Furniture**, +35122-014 3048; malabar.com.pt. **Marc de Berny**, 020-8616 0480; marcdeberny.com. **March & White**, 020-7240 3464; marchandwhite.com. **Muranti**, +35122-519 1762; muranti.com. **Northern**, northern.no and see Clippings. **Porus Studio**, +35193-438 0452; porustudio.com. **Waterford**, 01782-204 141; waterford.co.uk. **Zelouf & Bell**, +35387-230 5386; zeloufandbell.com.