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Andy Cohen, senior vice president of programming and production at Bravo, with me at an event at the W New York Union Square hotel. You should check out Andy's daily blog—one of my favorites—at [bravotv.com](http://bravotv.com)

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ne of the big surprises about working on *Top Design* was realizing that massive numbers of people spend hours and hours reading and responding to blogs. Clearly, I'm among the last to know. The greatest shock, however, was learning that I was expected to write weekly for Bravo's website, a fact relayed only shortly before the first installment was due. E-mailed to the network at 7 P.M. the night of the series premiere, my recap blog was posted just a few hours later—adding a last-minute, panic-inducing dimension to yet another dreaded deadline. The immediacy of blogging is astounding.

*Top Design* host Todd Oldham and judges Jonathan Adler, Kelly Wearstler, and I all wrote blogs, and most of the online responses we received were insightful and helpful. Others, however, were truly mind-boggling. Who knew how passionate—and angry—people could get about reality TV? Posts ranged from fawning to critical (someone labeled me “callus [sic], opinionated, cold, and tunnel visioned”) and downright brutal; we read them at the office for comic relief. But the various messages made me aware of how extraordinarily powerful online forums are as a tool for communication. That, and the simple fact that some commenters are just plain crazy!

Having to write for Bravo inspired me to read lots of blogs, which made writing my own seem far less intimidating. Now, I regularly skim several sites covering news, politics, fashion, real estate, gardening, and, of course, interior design. I never miss my friend Andy Cohen's daily blog at [bravotv.com](http://bravotv.com). Andy leads a fascinating, fast-paced life, and writes with a self-deprecating humor that's both charming and clever; his random musings express his quirky personality. Blogs like Andy's are smart, fun, and quick—perfect for those of us with limited patience and short attention spans.

Some of my favorite design blogs and websites include [stylecourt.blogspot.com](http://stylecourt.blogspot.com); [designsponge.blogspot.com](http://designsponge.blogspot.com); [apartmenttherapy.com](http://apartmenttherapy.com); [shelterrific.com](http://shelterrific.com); [decor8.blogspot.com](http://decor8.blogspot.com); [anothershadeofgrey.blogspot.com](http://anothershadeofgrey.blogspot.com); [chameleon-interiors.blogspot.com](http://chameleon-interiors.blogspot.com); [thecoolhunter.net](http://thecoolhunter.net); and [thenestmaker.com](http://thenestmaker.com). Feel free to e-mail me sites that you follow and, while you're at it, let me know what you'd like to see online. Your input is important because this summer [elledecor.com](http://elledecor.com) is getting a face-lift and also will be linked to a new shelter portal—[pointclickhome.com](http://pointclickhome.com)—soon to be launched by our parent company, Hachette Filipacchi Media. Not only are we redesigning our site, we'll be posting editors' blogs, airing behind-the-scenes photo-shoot videos, and featuring images from our events and parties—including DIFFA's Dining by Design. So send us your website wish list and stay tuned.

Margaret.

Margaret Russell, Editor in Chief  
[elledecor@hfmus.com](mailto:elledecor@hfmus.com)

# The 10 Best Tables for the Great Outdoors

Designers Christopher Coleman and Sheila Bridges rate these seasonal sensations

Text by Sophie Donelson

Photography by William A. Boyd Jr.

Produced by Alison Hall

Elevating the arrangement of your outdoor quarters from an assemblage of humdrum pieces to a smashing alfresco living room couldn't be simpler these days. The market is bursting with seriously stylish, weather-friendly goods for sunroom, terrace, poolside, and beyond. Tables both fanciful and functional are central to creating an inviting area for open-air lounging—where else to park a drink, a book, or even one's feet?

This month's experts in interior design survey ELLE DECOR's choices for shapely side tables that deserve a place in the sun. Television host and author Sheila Bridges has recently put the finishing touches on a signature collection of outdoor furniture, while Christopher Coleman's bold sense of color enlivens projects both indoors and out from Manhattan to Caracas.

Both designers agree that even one small table can pack a powerful punch, from the Asian appeal of Chinese Chippendale fretwork to a contemporary twist on traditional teak. What they don't advise, however, is investing in a full furniture suite. "Then it looks too much like a showroom," says Coleman. "People should approach outdoor spaces the same as they do interiors," adds Bridges. "Mix shapes and materials and layer in fabrics and accessories just as you would inside." ▶



Interior designers Sheila Bridges and Christopher Coleman, with side tables by O'Brien Ironworks (left), and Oscar de la Renta Home for Century Furniture. See Resources