

ELLE DECOR

festive
tables

Laid-back Luxe

Elegant Living in Chicago

Victoriana Goes Vavoom!

A Boston Loft Makeover

ELLE DECO
Design Award Winners



cozy chic



HEAVY LOAD

"It's kind of a case of form over function: big trays look great, but they can sometimes be too heavy or unwieldy to move around on a regular basis," says Post. "If a piece is large enough to support a lamp, some books, and knickknacks, it might work better as a side table."



SILVER SERVICE

"There's nothing more glamorous than serving drinks on—or eating off—a silver tray," says Post. "This one would be ideal for a bar setup too, though when you're done using it, fold it up. It's beautiful, but it wasn't designed as a stationary piece of furniture."



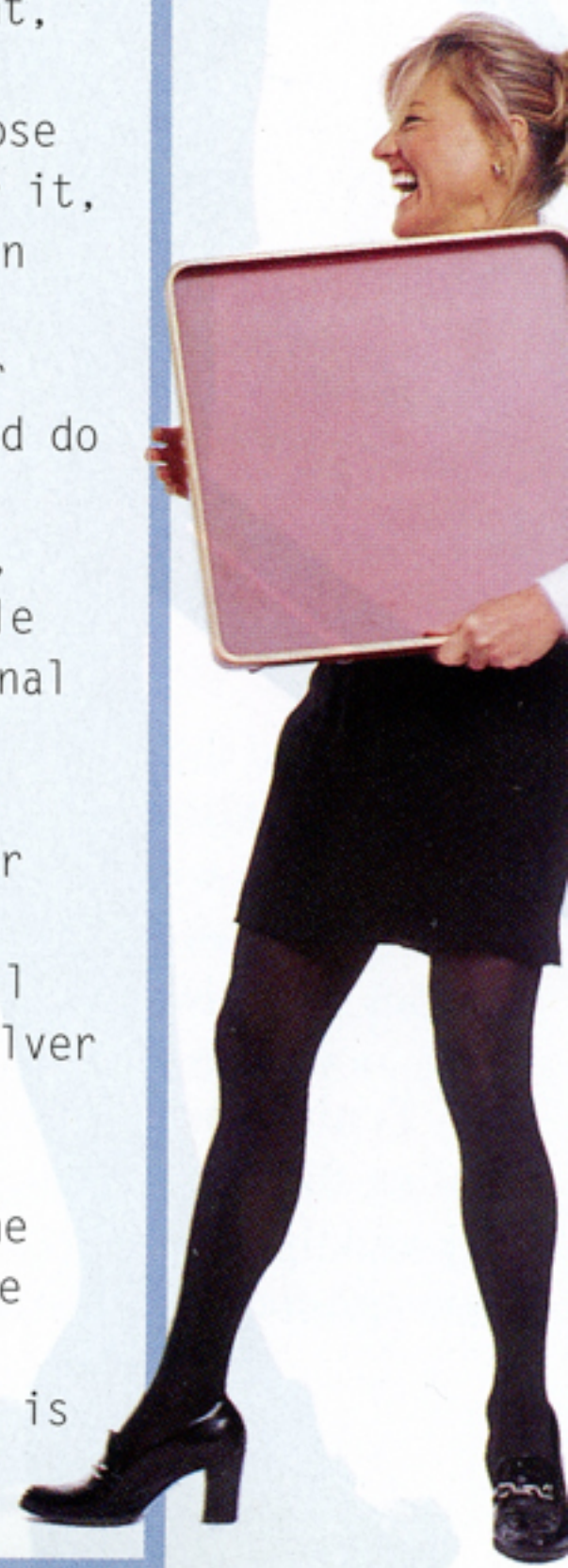
DOUBLE DUTY

"Two for the price of one!" says Nathan. "A two-tray table gives you a tray and a table—or two trays. You can take out the lower one and keep the other as the tabletop, which is nice if you leave your tray table out full-time." Post adds: "These trays are good-looking even on their own, which isn't always the case. And they're the perfect size."

trayed and true

Face it: you need a tray table. It may not be as essential as a bed or a sofa, but it *will* simplify your life. Think about size, height, weight, and material, then go get it!

- Do you want a table you can easily collapse and stash until the next occasion calls for it, or something stable and durable that you can leave out permanently?
- Will you be using the tray table only for entertaining, or for TV dinners as well? And do you need one or two detachable trays?
- If the tray table is higher than 26 inches, you can use it as a bar or as your own little dining table. Any lower and it's an occasional table. Keep in mind that a small tray is handy for serving hors d'oeuvres and drinks at parties, whereas a large one works better for meals.
- The more you use the tray, the more you'll need a finish that's not going to scuff. Silver and highly polished woods are fragile—keep cloth napkins and coasters handy.
- Check out the wobble factor: make sure the tray sits solidly on (or in) the frame. Pile some stuff on top and give the tray a test-drive. Can you carry it across the room, or is it too big and heavy?



the top 10: how they rate

Propeller Tray Table by Eric Brand Furniture from Profiles

"The architectural elements are exquisite!" raves Post. "It's the most stylish thing on the market." Nathan agrees: "I love the rich simplicity and leather detail—very Gucci. It's heavy, and the trays are tough to maneuver, but it works well as a side table." Height: 26"; width: 34"; depth: 22"; weight: 22 lbs.; material: alder wood with leather handles; delivery: 8-10 weeks; price: \$3,740

Sheraton Tray Stand from Bernardaud

"Very elegant—I can imagine Nick and Nora Charles serving cocktails on this," says Nathan. "You could use it as a bar or for impromptu dinners. It's incredibly glamorous, but I wouldn't leave it out—it could look like a room-service stand." Height: 23"; width: 28"; depth: 16½"; weight: 10 lbs.; material: wood base with silver-plate tray; delivery: immediate or up to 4 weeks; price: \$1,530

Butler's Tray by PierceMartin

"This one looks like an antique," says Nathan. "It's slightly wobbly, but it still feels strong. I'd put a vase full of flowers on top and keep the table in a spot where people wouldn't be likely to bump into it. It would also make a great bar—the height is right—or a good side table." Height: 33½"; width: 31½"; depth: 19½"; weight: 12 lbs.; material: elm; delivery: 2-4 weeks; price: \$750

Quinn Tray Table by Kerry Joyce for James Jennings Furniture from Holly Hunt New York

"So chic!" says Nathan. "It's beautifully made and finished, and the design is versatile—it would go easily with antiques or contemporary pieces. Two of these would be great as end tables." Height: 24"; diameter: 16½"; weight: 5 lbs.; material: mahogany or maple; delivery: 8 weeks; price: \$2,065

Mayfair Bamboo Double Tray Table by Suzanne B. Allen & Company

"This one looks like a grande dame bedside table," says Nathan, "but if mixed with other styles, it could add a nice touch of chinoiserie to a room. It would be great as an end table in a library or living room. The two trays make it especially handy." Height: 21"; width: 18½"; depth: 18½"; weight: 20 lbs.; material: lacquered maple; delivery: immediate; price: \$1,485

Rattan Butler Table from Garnet Hill

"Another old-fashioned charmer," says Nathan. "Claudette Colbert could have used it in Barbados. This one's such a great deal that you could alter it any way you like without risking too much. Paint it, stain it, whatever." Post concurs: "I love it. If you spill something on it, just wipe it down with a damp cloth. Perfect!" Height: 27½"; width: 27½"; depth: 17"; weight: 5 lbs.; material: rattan and wood; delivery: 2 weeks; price: \$185

Serengeti Tray Table by the Ralph Lauren Home Collection

"Ralph does it again," declares Post. "The tray is superpractical—big, strong, and light. It might be too 'Thai' to mix with other styles, but it would add exotic glamour to a porch or a terrace." Nathan says: "I see it in front of a batik-covered banquette." Height: 18½"; width: 38"; depth: 24"; weight: 20 lbs.; material: mahogany and faux bamboo with woven tray; delivery: 6-8 weeks; price: \$1,485

Lady Johnnie Tray Table by British Khaki Furniture

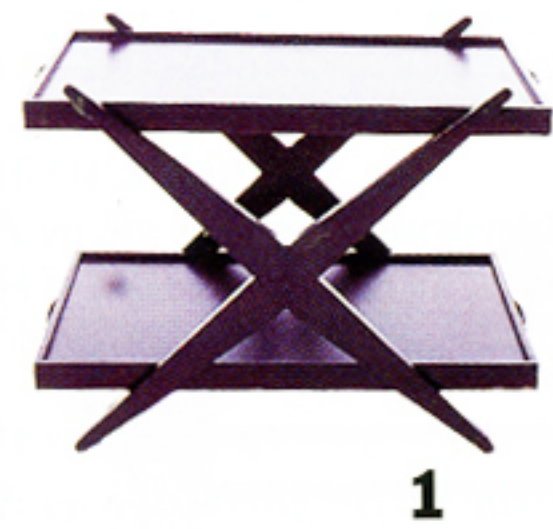
"A smart bit of Raj style," notes Post, "and incredibly light and easy to fold up. It would be great for dining à deux as well. The six legs make it sturdier than most, but I still wouldn't leave it out on a permanent basis. It's a handsome, useful piece." Height: 20"; diameter: 28½"; weight: 20 lbs.; material: mahogany; delivery: 4-6 weeks; price: \$2,270

Folding Metal Stand with Oval Tray by Mariette Himes Gomez Associates

"I like the mix of materials on this one," says Post, "and mahogany is a gorgeous material for trays—so luxe." Nathan adds: "It's light and practical, and would work in most decors." Height: 22"; width: 26"; depth: 21"; weight: 15 lbs.; material: lacquered-steel base and mahogany tray; delivery: 2-4 weeks; price: \$1,800

Camellia Tray Table by Newman Studio from Dennis Miller Associates

"The joinery gives this one a wonderful architectural feeling," says Post. "I even like it without the tray because the lines become that much simpler. I could do without the carved flower detail, though." Height: 19"; width: 24"; depth: 24"; weight: 13 lbs.; material: light ceruse oak; delivery: 12 weeks; price: \$2,710



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