

LUXURY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

Robb Report

**30th
Anniversary**

**BEST
OF THE
BEST**

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The line to enter the party was long. Janice Feldman's friends and guests streamed into her showroom on Via Fatebenefratelli during Milan Design Week in April. The founder of Janus et Cie, the luxury outdoor-furniture company with quintessential California style, was being feted for a major milestone: the brand's 40th anniversary. Feldman spent her whole career going to Milan as a buyer, culture seeker, and businessperson. But this time, 40 years after her first, she was the center of attention.

Anyone who has beautiful outdoor furnishings has Feldman to thank. An artist with an entrepreneurial mind (as an art school student she dashed to Europe and painted portraits for tourists), Feldman pioneered the luxury outdoor category. She presciently sensed our desire to be outdoors and away from technology years before the digital age, and presented elevated designs—from classical forms to clean, modernist pieces and accessories—to meet the lifestyle. Everything from the weave of an arm and curvature of a chaise to a UV coating is considered in full—from the niche it occupies to its placement in one of the brand's 19 global showrooms. "I take a very holistic approach to design," says Feldman. While the collection features a range of materials—fiber, teak, aluminum, stainless steel—two innovations, Janusfiber



JANICE FELDMAN

The woman who took us outside with style, art, and an early eco-verve.



Katachi armchairs and
Vino dining table



Vino collection

and Januswood, represent proprietary engineered creations that were green and eco-friendly well before their time (her extruded lumber, made from recycled milk containers, was developed in the late 1980s). "That's the combination of industry and craft," says Feldman. "It's performance, it's color and style, and then it's a final product that is completely done by hand. I celebrate craft. I love it because it's one of those things in our lives that's going away. . . . I'm into moving people closer to craft." She's also keeping us close to beauty. —A.N.



RALPH PUCCI

The man who transformed modern design for the home with his own cool and collected aesthetic.

Thirty years ago, before the "best of" lists and the seductive sorcery of Instagram, exceptional artisan design was nearly impossible to find. Your well-connected stylish friends didn't know about it. Furniture sets were purchased in department stores. *Atelier* was a dusty term from first-semester French. This is the world Ralph Pucci transformed with his seminal gallery, unleashing an exquisite new culture of high design that bypassed the gimmicky theatrics of an easy get. In 1988, he began with the work of Andrée Putman, a collaborator and friend, and 15,000 square feet in SoHo, calling on friends and friends of friends. "I'm not a furniture designer, so I had to put together the puzzle, the soundtrack to what we were trying to achieve," says Pucci. "I had beautiful pieces from Andrée and [Chris] Lehrecke. Then I reached out to Patrick Naggar, and little by little the soundtrack developed." Subverting even the seen-it-all types,



Pierre Paulin exhibit at
Ralph Pucci

Pucci was fueled by instinct, discovering, championing, and exclusively assembling a group of now-significant designers—Hervé Van der Straeten, India Mahdavi, Eric Schmitt, and Jim Zivic—that doubled down on quality and timelessness. "The aesthetic is always the same for me," he

says. "It really has to speak to me. It has to be the hand of the artist." All three of his galleries—in New York, Los Angeles, and Miami—reverberate with mood and cultural ascendancy. Recently, he staged an important showing of the late (and often overlooked) French

designer Pierre Paulin's work in L.A.—a respite from the city's midcentury-modern hangover. Looking back or forward, aesthetic salvation in Pucci's realm also comes with optimism. "I think we're in an era when design is meaningful," he says. —A.N.