

Art Deco

By Donna Sapolin

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Image Above Courtesy of Decorati Partner: [Jeffrey Braun Furniture](#).

The Art Deco style, which was popular from 1925 until 1939, derived its name from a design exhibition held in Paris in 1925—the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes. Art Deco was first seen in the work of French designers who had been developing and refining a post-World War I machined-looking style in reaction to Art Nouveau’s fluid, sinuous motifs and emphasis on individual craftsman-made pieces. The streamlined designs of ocean liners and industrial machinery wielded a key influence on the clean-lined, sleek geometry of Art Deco forms and patterns as did the Tutankamun Exhibition, held in Paris in 1922. In general, this was a composite style shaped through the cross-fertilization of ideas between architects and designers of costumes, stage and ballet sets, jewelry, furniture, ceramics and glass. The style spread throughout Europe and to America, where it was a dominant design force throughout the 1930s.

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Art Deco furniture was made from rare woods and veneers-ebony among them-to the highest possible standards; wealth was required for acquisition of these pieces. Surfaces were often lacquered and unusual materials were utilized for decorative impact; these included sharkskin, snakeskin, forged iron, aluminum, and chrome-plated steel. The furniture that was made of steel not only captured a machine-age spirit but also was more affordable for middle-class consumers. Rounded fronts, mirrored accents, sleek lines, chrome hardware and glass tops were among the key features of Art Deco furniture. Famous designers of the period included: Jacques-Emile Ruhlman, Eileen Gray, and Paul Theodore Frankl.



Image Above Courtesy of Designer [Kathryn Waltzer](#).

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