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❖ Rethinking Furniture Design

These days, discerning consumers want furniture with a backstory. "Mass production was a 20th-century phenomenon that made a huge amount of goods available at an affordable price," explains London product designer Sam Hecht. "That repeatability is not special now. People want something more." Namely, the hand of the maker. But today's craftsmen are using new tools. Take Hecht's Branca chair: It looks simple, but its parts were cut by a robotic, computer-numerical-controlled (CNC) machine before being sanded by humans. The curves of Noë Duchaufour-Lawrance's Corvo chair sprang from a computer

but proved so complex that the piece had to be carved by hand. Paul Loebach's rough-hewn Great Camp series looks handmade, but it's shaped by a CNC machine that chops like a hatchet. And David Weeks' sculptural Hennen Mobile is a laser-cut-aluminum light fixture with an artisanal finish. These furnishings have the inviting quality of time-tested craftsmanship, but they reflect the present. Hecht compares this new approach to the shift from industrial food. "We've experienced the convenience and perils," he says, "and now we're searching for something that, in addition to technical proficiency, has a human essence."



Front to back: Branca chair by **Sam Hecht** for **Mattiazzi**, \$750, industrialfacility.co.uk. Corvo chair by **Noë Duchaufour-Lawrance** for **Bernhardt Design**, from \$1,300, bernhardt.com. Great Camp chair by **Paul Loebach** for **MatterMade**, \$26,500 for a set of four, mattermatters.com. Hennen Mobile No. 430 chandelier by **David Weeks** for **Ralph Pucci**, \$9,600, ralphpucci.net.

THE WAY WE LIVE