



## For Porch & Patio

BY MARY ELLEN POLSON

**O**UTDOOR FURNITURE has a long and fashionable history. George Washington routinely left a collection of painted Windsor chairs outside at Mount Vernon. Cast-iron table sets with lacy Rococo ferns and leaves graced Victorian gardens as early as the 1850s, followed by novelty wire

furniture like the courting bench. Rustic branch and bark settees appealed to those roughing it at Adirondack Great Camps in the 1890s, and there were even versions in cast concrete. The now ubiquitous Adirondack chair was patented as the Westport in 1905. Cushioned wicker easy chairs, rockers, and sofas were wildly popular for porches in the 1920s and beyond. In the 1940s and '50s, colorful metal chairs and gliders were a hit with suburbanites, who often added cushions decked in tropical-themed fabrics.

Most of these outdoor furniture types are not only still available, they're made of materials that can be both period sympathetic and weather-resistant. Take the Windsor chair from Charleston Gardens. Painted in bright colors, the proportions look correct, but surprise—it's made of aluminum. Good facsimiles of Victorian cast iron, with its characteristic pierced cutouts and foliage, are

now made of either powder-coated aluminum or resin. (Finishes mimic the classic white or verdigris green of Victorian cast iron.) Wire benches and bistro sets are factory woven of lightweight aluminum, steel, or other metals. Better ones are zinc-coated to prevent rust, then painted with powder-coated finishes.

Outdoor furniture in the rustic steam-bent twig and bark style continues to thrive in the styles famous from the Adirondacks and Pacific Northwest, although the makers are more likely to be based in Midwest Amish country than in the Northeast. A few companies, notably Old Hickory Furniture, are still making the classic woven-back

**LEFT:** A take on Adirondack, Tim Celeski's Limbert-inspired 'Leschi' chairs feature sliding tapered dovetail and mortise-and-tenon joints. **TOP LEFT:** Wicker furniture from Lloyd Flanders' 'Nantucket' series retains all the character of 1920s originals and is weather-resistant, too. **TOP RIGHT:** Glide and bounce on this vintage-style lawn suite from Country Door.

