

# “How do I style my coffee table?”

—JANET MORGAN, HENDERSON, KY

In her debut column, designer and Southern style expert Phoebe Howard (at right) solves one of our most pressing decorating dilemmas, offering her foolproof formula for arranging a coffee table



White Chinese Coffee Table (\$600) from Phoebe's Atlanta store, Mrs. Howard. For more information, visit [phoebehoward.net](http://phoebehoward.net). (While you're there, check out her blog!)

## THE FORMULA

Using these elements, you can apply Phoebe's chic and simple method to any space or tabletop.

1

### SOMETHING TALL

Hurricane vases or candlesticks are great because when you light candles, they add sparkle and make everything festive.

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2

### ONE ODDBALL OBJECT

Choose something that's sculptural and quirky to express your personality. Some ideas: a piece of coral, a glass orb, or a small ginger jar.

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### SOMETHING FRESH

A nice pot of ivy, a fern, or some fresh-cut flowers add life and easy-to-change color to the room.

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4

### A STACK OF BOOKS

Use a few large, pretty art books to make a stack, and top it off with something decorative. ⇨

## Find Your Style

See how Phoebe applies her formula to a variety of coffee tables, from traditional to modern.



### CLASSIC PARSONS

This iconic, clean-lined table never loses its appeal, and it can work in both modern and more traditional settings. "It is truly a timeless design," Phoebe says.



### MID-CENTURY MODERN

The warm materials and elegant simplicity of mid-century Danish coffee tables pair well with traditional upholstered pieces. Even in a darker finish, they have a light and airy feel.



### BRASS AND GLASS

Every Southern living room needs a little gilt! This combination adds sparkle and shine to any space and has the added advantage of being super easy to clean (no coasters required).



### EAST MEETS WEST

Often low and spacious, these tables are good for displaying objects and also for propping up your feet. They tend to be substantial in appearance and can help anchor a large room.

## Shop the Look

In the market for something new? Check out Phoebe's favorites.



**Good Life Cocktail Table**  
by Drexel Heritage, \$1,629,  
38" x 24" x 20"; [drexelheritage.com](http://drexelheritage.com)



**Nadia Coffee Table**  
by Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams,  
\$690, 54" x 26" x 18";  
[mgbwhome.com](http://mgbwhome.com)



**Jacqui Coffee Table  
in Green Lacquer**  
by Bungalow 5, \$689, 40" x 22" x 16";  
[bungalow5.com](http://bungalow5.com)