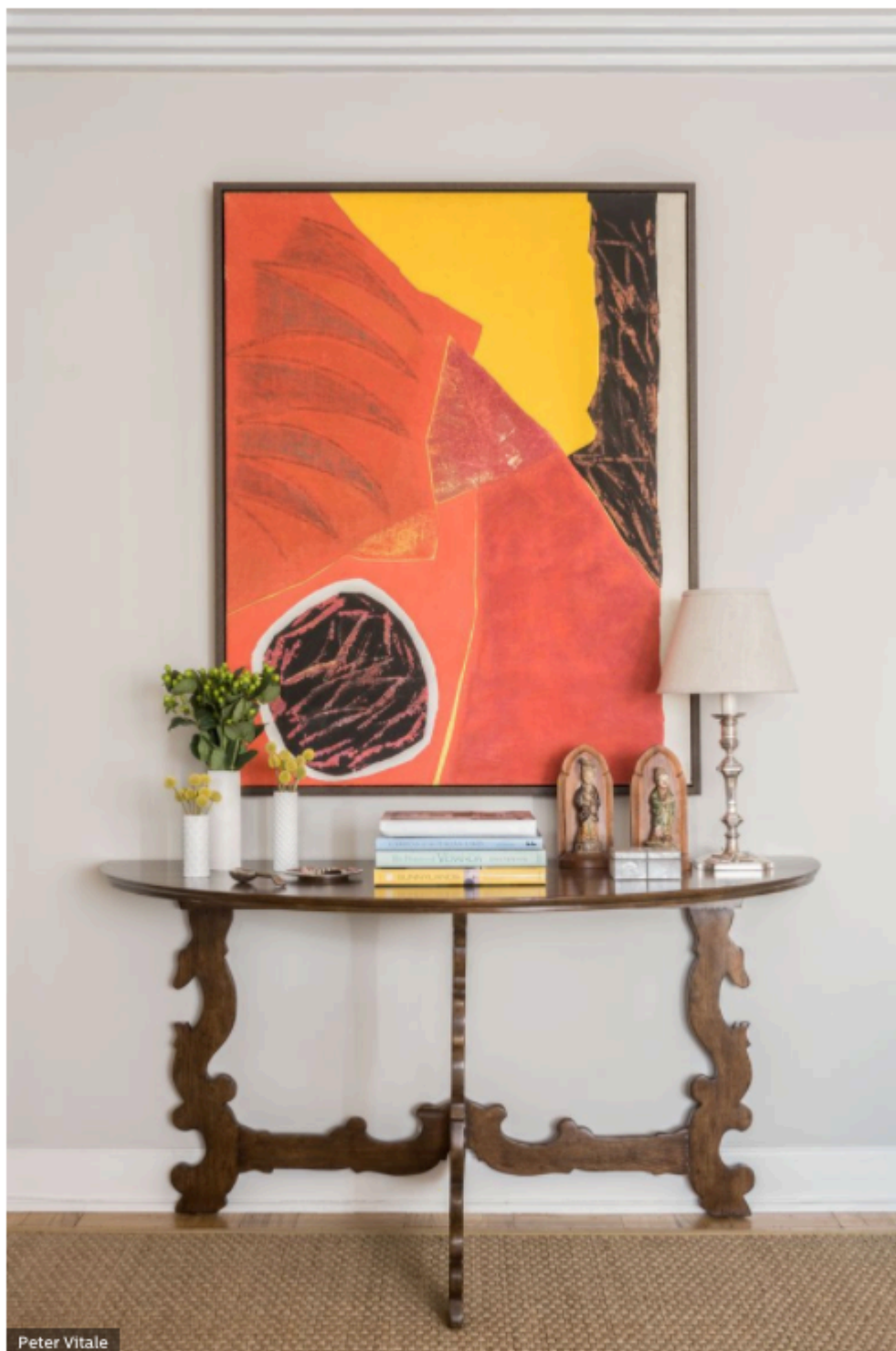


IS A CONSOLE TABLE THE PIECE YOUR HOME IS MISSING?

Part accent, part catchall, this slim table is a workhorse.



By [KELLEY CARTER](#) MAR 30, 2020



Peter Vitale

In the hierarchy of the table family, those made for dining and serving [coffee](#) pull rank. They're ubiquitous, dutiful, and usually take center stage. And [side tables](#), while very cute, exist to serve. But what do we really know about the underestimated [console tables](#)? They're extremely versatile, swinging between baroquely over-the-top and quietly minimal. But any way a console looks, they demand our attention.

WHAT IS A CONSOLE TABLE?

First introduced in France in the 17th century as a rectangular slab supported by wall-mounted brackets, console tables have evolved quite a bit. Today, they are typically 30 to 36 inches high and feature wide, shallow tops—they're usually square or rectangular, but demi-lunes are an elegant alternative.

Because of its unobtrusive presence, console tables are perfect for narrow spaces like entryways and hallways. And when square footage is really at a premium, they can act as bars, vanities, or desks. You can also butt one against the back of a sofa and top it with lighting or other decorative pieces.

CONSOLE TABLE VS. SIDE TABLE

Unlike a console table that can stand alone or against a wall, a side table is best used beside sofas and chairs. The low height makes it convenient to rest and reach items like drinks, books, and phones. Whereas a console is wide and narrow and about counter height, the ideal side table is 20 to 24 inches tall and 16 to 22 inches wide.



Didier Delmas

DESIGNER-APPROVED STYLING TIPS

We tapped two pros, Alison Pickart and Elaine Griffin, for shopping tips and tricks for putting a versatile console to work.

- To keep ultra-tight spaces as airy as possible, go for a console with an open-legged base, says San Francisco-based interior designer [Alison Pickart](#).
- Especially in an entryway, consoles tend to be catchalls. Keep it classy, people. “Bring in a beautiful seagrass basket for keys, change, and your wallet,” Pickart says. “It’ll add texture and save your foyer from unsightly clutter.”
- For an entryway or hallway, the narrower the better—“figure 12 to 15 inches deep at most,” says the St. Simon’s-based interior designer, [Elaine Griffin](#).
- Just because it’s slim doesn’t mean it can’t have big style. “Go bold with interesting details like turned legs or a unique finish like cast resin,” Pickart says.
- Using a console behind a sofa? “The table shouldn’t be taller than the seating,” Griffin says. “Ideally it should be one inch lower than the back of the sofa.”
- “Use the open space underneath for ottomans that can be pulled out for additional seating,” Griffin says.
- It’s functional, but it’s also a great place to showcase your favorite objects. “Layer with books, a tray, decorative boxes, and found objects to create an artful composition,” Pickart says.
- Want symmetry? “Place a matching table lamp on each side of the table,” Griffin says.
- “Use a console as an anchor for a big piece of art or oversized mirror,” Griffin says.