



Country Classic

A Bevy of Baskets

These timeless carryalls evoke glorious days spent outdoors and offer stylish storage solutions back at home.

MAIN IMAGE, CARLOS GARCIA; INTERIORS, PHOTOGRAPHS BY (OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP) MANOLO YLLERA, DESIGNER: LORENZO CASTILLO; JANE BEILES/NANTUCKET HOUSE ANTIQUES; CHRISTOPHER HORWOOD, DESIGNER: NATASHA HOWARD.



Object Lesson

Basketry Basics: Handwoven baskets have always been the workhorses of daily country life—think of them as the original tote bags. Many shapes were specifically created for farm tasks, from flat flower-gathering baskets and double-bowled buttocks baskets (designed to keep eggs from rolling around) to bushel baskets for collecting and measuring produce. These days, larger designs can restore order to all manner of odds and ends, like the miscellany of the mudroom and quilts and blankets in bedrooms. And they're just as pretty when not in use, whether grouped on top of a cabinet or hanging from hooks.

Woven into Community: Many places in the country maintain centuries-old, local basketmaking traditions. The mold-woven, rattan-and-wood “Nantucket Lightship” baskets, like in the window of Nantucket House Antiques (below; nantuckethouse.com), are named for the island's lighthouse ships of the 1800s, whose crews passed time at sea by weaving.

Continued on pg. 14.



Material Matters: While often used interchangeably, wicker and rattan are actually not the same. Rattan, a relative of the palm tree, is a material, while wicker refers to the weaving technique used to create baskets from any pliable plant materials, including rattan, willow, or rush. Many American baskets are also traditionally woven from splint hardwoods like ash, oak, and hickory, which, when properly cared for, can last a lifetime's worth of picnics, market trips, and country chores.

Makers to Know: Most baskets were—and still are—woven by individuals and aren't identifiable, but New Hampshire's Peterboro Basket Co. (peterborobasket.com) is the longest-running U.S. manufacturer, making baskets by hand since 1854. More recent well-known companies include Ashwood Basket Co. and Longaberger (longaberger.com).
Find yours at far right.



Topped with a cushion, a sturdy basket trunk becomes the perfect mudroom seat, like in this nook by designer Bee Osborn.



Bring It Home

Go Old...

In general, older baskets are heavier, with a darker, well-worn patina. Many reed and willow versions (**1, 5, 7**) have French or English origins. For antique American collectibles, be on the lookout for splintwood versions (**2, 3**), including the instantly recognizable buttocks basket (**9**), aka egg-gathering basket. Early examples of all styles will cost \$200 and up from dealers like **Black Sheep Antiques** (@uniqueblacksheep), **Straw London** (strawlondon.co.uk), and **Adams Antiques & the Potager** (adamsantiquesandthepotager.com).

...or New

You'll pay more for heirloom handwoven pieces by artisans, such as this (**8**) white oak basket by Maine's **Billy Ray Sims** (billyraysimbaskets.com). Larger companies, such as **Peterboro Basket Co.**, sell new versions of historic designs, like this (**6**) corn basket (\$115; peterborobasket.com).

For baskets inspired by European styles, look to Georgia's **Mainly Baskets**, with designs like this (**4**) wildflowers basket (\$210; mainlybaskets.com) inspired by the French countryside.

