

**SHOPPING WITH**  
STEVEN JOHANKNECHT

# Seasonal Equipment

Entertaining Pieces for the 'Indoor-Outdoor Life'

**S**TEVEN JOHANKNECHT, a New Yorker who moved to California 11 years ago, found the transition easy, except for one aspect of life: earthquakes. "I adjusted to some occasional tremors," he said. "But some of my things did not adjust so easily."

His new "indoor-outdoor life" also meant he needed things that were resilient enough to be used for entertaining outside, he said. "The idea of 'unbreakable' became more of a factor."

Mr. Johanknecht, 51, is a founding partner of Commune, a Los Angeles firm that has designed the Ace Hotel in Palm Springs, Calif.; Opening Ceremony's Tokyo store; and the new boutique for Oliver Peoples on Madison Avenue.

In his work, he gravitates toward the unexpected, juxtaposing objects from different eras, in various styles and materials. "We're all about a mix, with an appreciation for a handmade touch," he said.

The same could be said of the way he entertains. Mr. Johanknecht admits that on occasion he has dragged his dining room table outside, along with many other things most people wouldn't think to use outdoors — including pieces made of sterling silver, hand-carved wood and leather.

"You may not want to bring sterling silver to the beach, but you can bring it to the backyard," he said. "In doing so, you're using something you already have instead of buying something new, which is actually very 'green.'"

On a recent visit to Manhattan, Mr. Johanknecht went looking for similar pieces.

At Buccellati on East 57th Street, he eagerly surveyed the 260-year-old company's silver, picking out the Thistle salt-and-pepper set. "I love the whimsy and the humor," he said. "The simple act of seasoning your meal becomes a dramatic gesture."

Uptown, at Barneys New York, he spotted the Sol y Luna leather-covered cooler in the window. "Now that is a luxury cool-



ROBERT WRIGHT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

**POLISHED SILVER** Steven Johanknecht, a founding partner of Commune, admires the Thistle salt-and-pepper set; \$3,000 at Buccellati, (212) 308-2900, buccellati.com.

er," he said. "The leather will just get better with age."

Online, he found an oak bowl with waxed linen stitches on the artist George Peterson's Web site. "You can't have enough wooden bowls — they serve a multitude of functions, whether to serve a salad or as a place to put napkins and silverware," he said. "I also like that the artist is a California skateboarding guy now living in North Carolina making these things by hand."

Of course, plastic also appeals to Mr. Johanknecht, who picked out Massimo Vignelli's line of dinnerware at the Conran Shop. "It's the quintessential example of form and function, and I like the white with the wood and the silver," he said. "These would look really good on my table."

RIMA SUQI



Osaka acrylic bar glasses; double old-fashioned, \$3.50; cooler, \$3.95, at Crate & Barrel, (212) 308-0011, crateandbarrel.com.



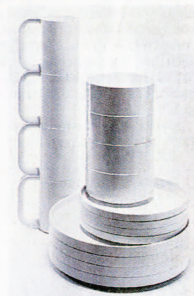
Mango serving slabs by Roost; \$110 at Velocity Art and Design, (866) 781-9494, velocityartanddesign.com.



Gigante candlestick by Match; \$917 at Michael C. Fina, (800) 289-3462, michaelcina.com.



Sun-Tipped flatware; \$98 for a five-piece setting at Anthropologie, (800) 309-2500, anthropologie.com.



Heller dishes by Massimo Vignelli; plate, \$12; small plate, bowl and mug, \$10 each, at the Conran Shop, (866) 755-9079, conranusa.com.



Crocheted rubber bowl by Neo; small, \$48; medium, \$64; large, \$89, at Gretel Home, (786) 247-9003, gretelhome.com.



Circle Factory bowls by George Peterson; \$165 to \$450, at OK, (323) 653-3501, okstore.la.

Leather-covered cooler by Sol y Luna; \$287 at Barneys New York, (212) 826-8900, barneys.com.