

# Table Read

There's no skirting the issue here: Two designers take sides on whether the skirted table is a versatile classic or an impractical nuisance.



VERSUS



**Ashley Gilbreath**

Montgomery, Alabama

The appeal of the skirted table is about function *and* form. In an office space, a skirted console neatly hides a printer and the not-so-pretty everyday essentials you need when working from home. In a bedroom, the skirt hides phone cords and sound machines that you don't want to see daily. The same is true in dining rooms, foyers and anywhere else you have something to tuck away. You can also manipulate the size so that the piece's scale is perfect—a level of flexibility you don't always have when working with casegoods. Aesthetically, skirted tables give you the opportunity to bring unique details to any space through color, pattern and texture. We have used everything from bold, large-scale patterns to solid wools and polished cottons, and I love to add an applied trim for a more tailored look. I've also found that if you have all hard materials in a space, it makes for a really cold visual, and adding a skirt gives you a much-needed layer of softness and warmth. More than that, skirting is a way to broaden your horizons and be more creative—and isn't that what we're here for?



**Vani Sayeed**

Newton, Massachusetts

For me, skirted tables read as an excuse for unattractive furniture. When did shapely, good-looking legs go out of fashion? If you're eager to add textiles and trims to a space, there are better ways to wear a skirt—on a sofa, for example, or on a streamlined valance. And if storage is what you're after, there are other options for achieving that goal as well. I often put pretty baskets under a table to add texture and volume in addition to hiding the mess of daily life, or design custom casegoods that incorporate wire management. Day-to-day living with skirted tables irks me. They are hard to use and difficult to maintain—you have to add a glass top in order to use the surface, and you may also need Velcro on the edges so that the fabric doesn't move. The tables are also hard to clean under, and you have to make sure the fabric falls back correctly each time you access the storage below. Eventually, the skirt's edges get dirty from constant use—where's the beauty in that? It's not even a question of style: Skirted tables are endlessly impractical and a definite no-no for me! ■