



Above: Thea Speke's own Audoux-Minnet oval rope mirror. Right: Audoux-Minnet rope mirror, £345, eyespystore.co.uk. Far right: designer Charlotte Perriand in 1963. Below: Audoux-Minnet rolling table, POA, ateliervime.com. Below right: Audoux-Minnet 1940s low console (already sold), betonbrut.co.uk



AUDOUX-MINNET ROPE CHAIR, £6,000 FOR PAIR, BETONBRUT.CO.UK

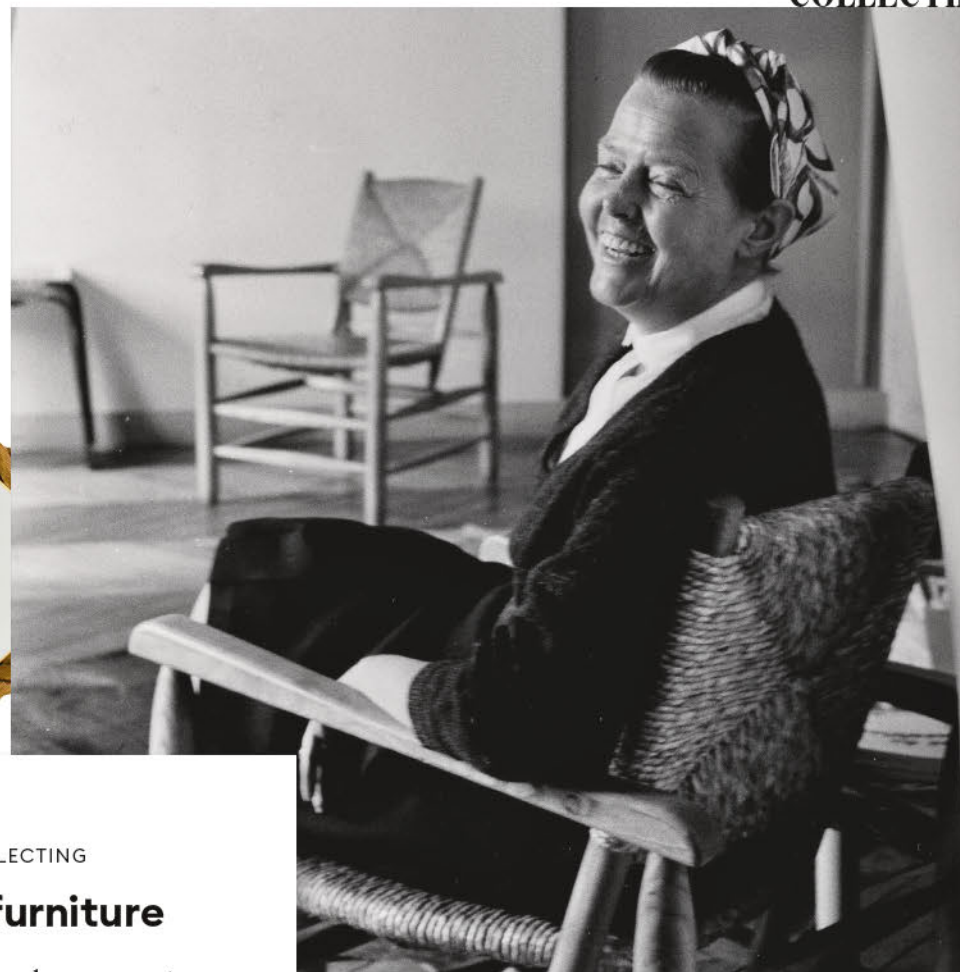
We must rise up against everything that looks rich," was the manifesto of the Union des Artistes Modernes – a group of designers who in 1929 collectively rallied against the lavish aesthetic of the art deco style. With Charlotte Perriand and Jean Prouvé among their ranks, their modernist vision favoured function over decoration, in more down-to-earth materials. As well as wood and tubular steel, one recurring feature was rope cord.

"I've sold rope pieces by several of the group's famous names: cord chairs by Perriand, a rope chair by Francis Jourdain, among others," says Sophie Pearce, the director of east London design store Béton Brut. "The irony, of course, is that these designers wanted to move away from elitism and use more humble, accessible materials, but now the rope furniture they made is very collectable."

In Pearce's current stock are two pairs of midcentury, wooden-framed, rope-seated armchairs – a design she refers to as "a rising star" and priced at £6,000 a pair – by a name that may not resonate: Audoux-Minnet. Details are scarce about the French-Swiss, husband-and-wife design duo of Adrien Audoux and Frida Minnet, who were based in the Côte d'Azur resort of Golfe-Juan between 1940s and 1960s. The latter's name is often spelt Minet (although the metal plaque on their pieces suggests that "Minnet" is correct). And "the absence of a catalogue for the Audoux-Minnet company allows only partial knowledge of their products", suggests Félix Marcilhac Jr, director of Galerie Marcilhac in Paris.

"Just two or three years ago you would only have seen Audoux-Minnet things in antique markets in southern France," says Pearce. Today, however, their furniture and accessories, woven in the same abaca hemp cord historically used by sailors, are at the forefront of a rope renaissance. Pearce has recently sourced Audoux-Minnet chairs for homes from the Cotswolds to California. "They work in both minimalist spaces and those with a craft-maximalist-antique vibe," she adds.

"There's been a massive resurgence in 1950s arts and crafts," agrees Ottalie Stride, a creative director of interior design studio Albion Nord. "Our aesthetic is based around natural materials: beautiful timbers like pippy oak, as well as natural cords and rope." In the studio's new online shop of antique finds, a recent highlight, adds Stride, was



COLLECTING

Rope furniture

Design aficionados are paying good money for old rope

WORDS BY VICTORIA WOODCOCK

"a beautiful pair of woven cord poufs attributed to Audoux-Minnet, which I really didn't want to let go".

As well as chairs, rope light fixtures and mirrors are having a moment, cropping up in many interior design projects, from the coastal Australian homes conceived by Tamsin Johnson to the Wiltshire retreat of interiors consultant and antiques dealer Thea Speke. In an Upper East Side townhouse designed by Virginia Tupker, a tiny powder room's smart marble sink is playfully paired with a looping rope wall light. Meanwhile, Beata Heuman used a large rope chandelier in a seaside-y bedroom

in Nantucket, and in her own London home a swirling Audoux-Minnet ceiling lamp hangs in her children's bedroom. "It adds a touch of theatre

"THEY WORK IN MINIMALIST SPACES OR WITH A CRAFT-ANTIQUE VIBE"



without feeling too over the top," says the Swedish designer.

All of this interest puts dealers on high alert for good rope goods, says Pearce. "It creates a mass hunt for them." Current Audoux-Minnet offerings range from a rare pair of c1940 armchairs (€48,000) at Galerie Marcilhac, to a ceiling lamp

coiled into an anchor shape (€2,100) at online vintage site Design Market. Its mirrors are also proving popular, says Clare Cornish, co-owner of Bristol-based dealership Eyespy, whose steady supply – small and large, round and oval-shaped, from around £300 – always sells out quickly.

Another key proponent of rustic Riviera chic is Atelier Vime, the antiques dealer and design studio based in an atmospheric 18th-century hôtel particulier in Provence. Its rope pieces currently include several sconces, a floor lamp and a rare rolling table, which "represents all the French Riviera spirit, with cocktails around a swimming pool", says co-founder Anthony Watson. "My grandparents used to spend three months each year in Vallauris and started a collection of furniture by Audoux-Minnet in the early '50s."

At Béton Brut, however, the rarest rope pieces that Pearce has sold weren't French, but Indian: two chairs by Mini Boga, who established her midcentury furniture brand Taaru in New Delhi. "Annoyingly, I sold them not knowing who they were by – but someone knew," laughs Pearce of the boxy 1960s teak-framed lounge chairs now listed on 1stdibs for €17,500. A similar low and lounge-y Boga design with a more intricately woven seat and back is another sought-after rope rarity; a pair sold by New York dealer Patrick Parrish was priced at \$24,000. It's a different take on the rope trend, but with the same powerful design pull. ■HTS



AUDOUX-MINNET PENDANT LAMP, €2,100, DESIGNMKT.COM

WHERE TO BUY

1stdibs 1stdibs.com
Albion Nord albion-nord.com
Atelier Vime ateliervime.com
Béton Brut betonbrut.co.uk
Design Market design-mkt.com
Eyespy eyespystore.co.uk
Patrick Parrish patrickparrish.com
R&Company r-and-company.com
Thea Speke theaspeke.com

HOW TO STYLE

Albion Nord albion-nord.com
Beata Heuman beataheuman.com
Rose Uniacke roseuniacke.com
Tamsin Johnson tamsinjohnson.com
Thea Speke theaspeke.com
Virginia Tupker virginiatupker.com



Above: Taaru lounge chairs, €17,500 for pair, 1stdibs.com