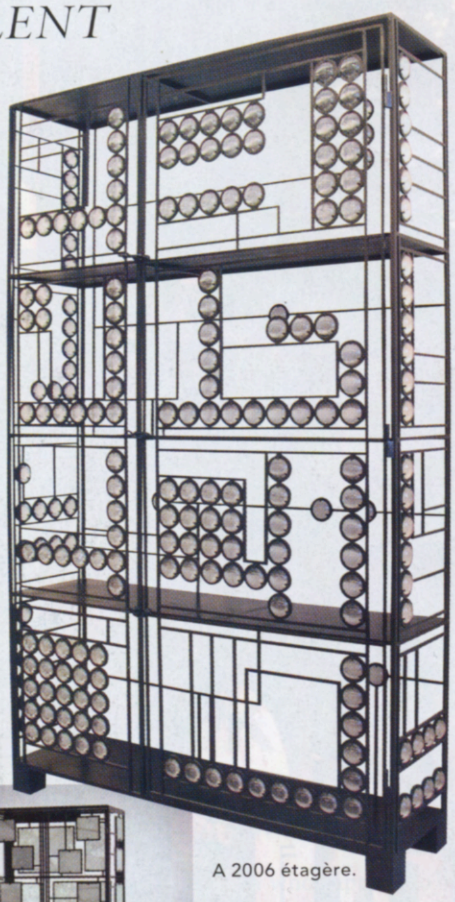
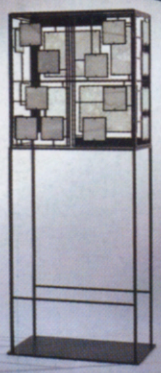


A 2006 étagère.

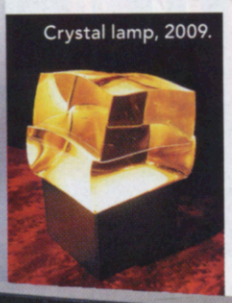
Christophe Côme in his Paris studio.

IRON MAN

Paris designer Christophe Côme uses traditional techniques to create up-to-the-minute works in metal and glass



Onyx cabinet, 2002.

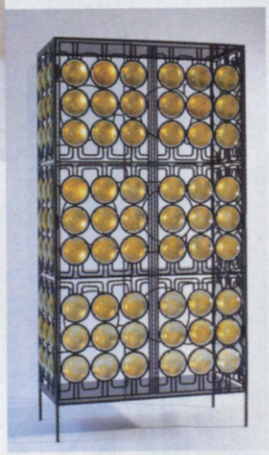


Crystal lamp, 2009.

A 2006 cabinet.

Lava cabinet, 2011.

Side table, 2007.



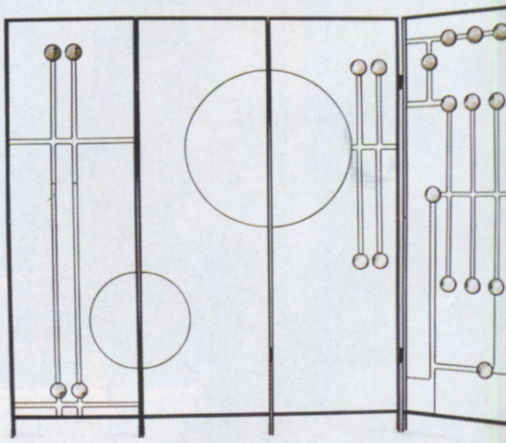
A 2003 étagère.

French designer Christophe Côme has a long list of fans. Couturier Karl Lagerfeld was an early devotee, furnishing his bathroom in Paris with one of Côme's signature iron-and-glass cabinets. Another is decorator Michael S. Smith, who last year organized a one-man show of Côme's work at his West Hollywood gallery, Duke & Duke.

Côme is sought after by collectors such as Beth Rudin DeWoody and Aby Rosen for his originality, and has created custom pieces for decorators including Alberto Pinto and David Collins. In his Paris studio last fall, he unveiled a pair of cocktail tables topped with flamed granite. They had been commissioned by architect Peter Marino for the new Chanel flagship on avenue Montaigne.

"I love his craftsmanship—there's such refinement and timelessness to his pieces," says Cristina Grajales, who is planning her own exhibition of his work at her New York gallery this fall.

Côme's go-to material is most often glass, and he prefers the thick kind frequently used for industrial purposes, such as telescope lenses and radiation-blocking walls. The designer puts it to striking use in his lamps, many of which feature cube-shaped blocks of glass on bases of patinated steel or bronze. Sometimes he uses glass tinted orange, pale yellow, or green. Or he'll heat the glass and twist the shapes, transforming them into what he calls "Turkish delights."



Circle screen, 2005.

His most ambitious creation to date is a sculptural bed whose head and foot were made from 265-pound chunks of white crystal. He also designs dazzling, geometrically patterned screens, cabinets, and tables that incorporate circles of glass, sometimes accented with silver- or gold leaf. Recently he has started to work with enameled-lava tiles produced in collaboration with his uncle, a 78-year-old ceramist.

Côme's eye was honed not by the design world per se, but by artists; he says he's inspired by Donald Judd, Barnett Newman, and Richard Pousette-Dart. His own style is "simple and elementary," he explains.

"I don't have the desire to do anything baroque or especially decorative," Côme continues. "I like the rigor of the metal forms."

IAN PHILLIPS