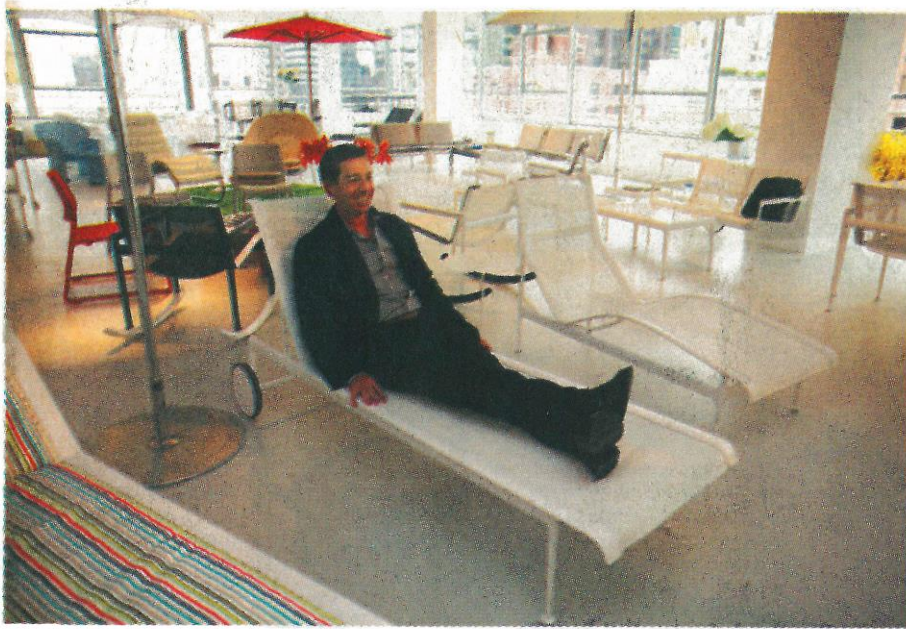


SHOPPING WITH

ALEC GUNN

Enforced Idleness

The chaise longue insists: lie back and do nothing.



HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

TOUGH WORK The landscape architect Alec Gunn tries out the 1966 adjustable chaise longue at the Richard Schultz showroom in Midtown Manhattan.

THINK of the outdoor chaise longue as the antithesis of the office chair. As the New York landscape architect Alec Gunn observed, it's well suited for only one thing: doing nothing.

"They're uncomfortable for working with an iPad or laptop," he said. "All you can do in them is lie and daydream, or read a magazine."

Not that Mr. Gunn has had much time for lounging himself. At 43, he has designed a range of projects, from private Manhattan rooftops and Hamptons estates to public spaces like the spa terraces at Trump SoHo.

But being fluent in outdoor furniture is part of his job. "Instead of creating something that's just visually nice, I want people to experience my spaces," he said. "Getting people into the space is the first threshold to cross. After that, it's getting people to stay there."

Which means "really comfortable furniture is critical."

Fortunately, finding it is easier than it used to be. "Outdoor furniture is light-years beyond what it was" a decade or so ago, Mr. Gunn said. "There's a much better selection and better quality. It's just a total sea change."

In search of chaise longues, he went to West Elm in Chelsea, where he found the Baltic Lounger, a well-built piece with eucalyptus wood slats over a powder-coated aluminum

frame, "a really nice style," he said. Also, "it has limited moving parts, which are typically a weak point."

At the Richard Schultz showroom in the Decoration and Design Building in Midtown, he picked out a more classic piece: the 1966 adjustable chaise longue. With a mesh fabric for the seat, rather than cushy upholstery or wood, "water and air flow right through," Mr. Gunn said. "I really like the big wheels, too," he added, for their visual presence and the way they make it easy to move the piece around — an important point if you're chasing shade (or sun) around a pool deck.

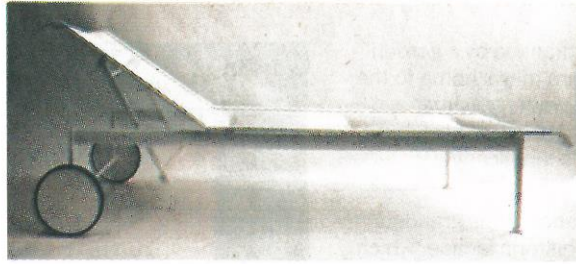
For something even more visually arresting, he liked the Cyclone Lounger by Uhuru Design in Brooklyn, a chair made with ipe wood from the Coney Island Boardwalk over a weblike steel frame.

"It's a piece of sculpture," he said, "and totally different from anything else."

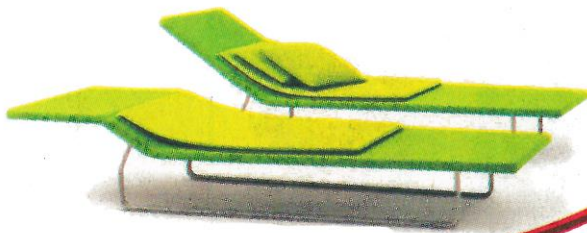
The Extempore Sun Bed by Extremis, from Karkula in TriBeCa, had a more minimalist appeal. "I love that when it folds flat, it's just one piece, like a bench," he said.

And when the back lifts up, a couple of the jatoba (also known as Brazilian cherry) wood slats on either side stay put, a detail that provides functionality of the most important kind, he noted: "It's great for putting a drink on."

TIM McKEOUGH



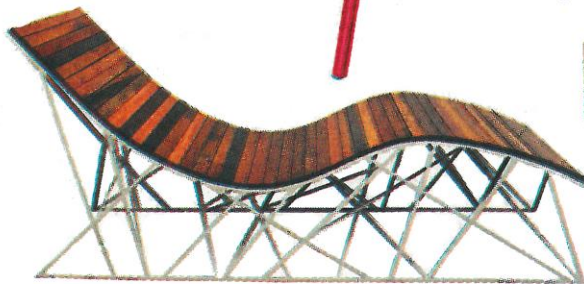
1966 adjustable chaise longue; \$3,990 at Richard Schultz, (212) 688-3620, richardschultz.com.



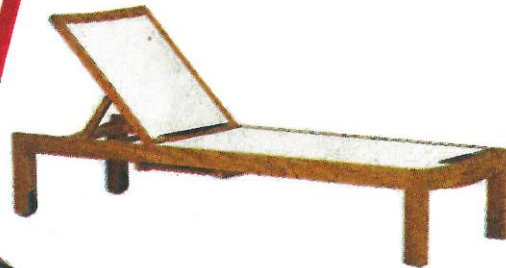
Paola Lenti Surf sun bed; from \$4,720 at Domus Design Collection, (212) 685-0800, ddcnyc.com.



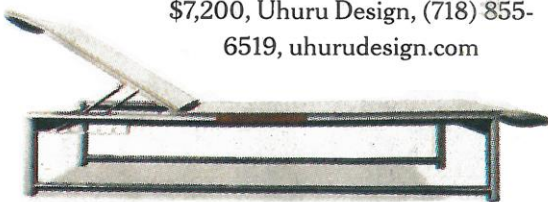
Alizé deck chair with removable footrest by Fermob; \$1,056 at Viesso, (877) 884-3776, viesso.com.



Cyclone Lounger has boardwalk slats; \$7,200, Uhuru Design, (718) 855-6519, uhurudesign.com



Regatta teak and mesh chaise lounge; \$899 at Crate & Barrel, (800) 967-6696, crateandbarrel.com.



Breeze Sun Lounge by Harbour Outdoor; \$1,880 at Walters Wicker, (212) 758-0472, walterswicker.com



Baltic Lounger, with eucalyptus slats; from about \$250 at West Elm, (888) 922-4119, westelm.com.



Extempore Sun Bed by Extremis; \$4,195 at Karkula, (212) 645-2216, karkula.com.