



Henry Hall's new cocoon hammock.

Photo: Henry Hall Designs (www.henryhalldesigns.com)

Outdoor Fabrics: The Sky's the Limit

An explosion of outdoor fabrics with interior design textures and patterns brings outdoor living some amazing style.

BY BEANDRA BEY

THE SKY IS TRULY YOUR LIMIT when you entertain outdoors. The latest crop of outdoor fabrics available in the 2007 marketplace takes that fact very seriously, redefining conventional notions about interior and exterior style. It's all about selection, says Martinez-based Deborah Ogden of Ogden Studio. "There are so many more colors, patterns, and fabrics than ever before."

Color is still king, says Judith Clark, president of the International Furnishings and Design Association (IFDA) and owner of Design Elements, a home furnishings store located in Danville. "A traditional outdoor color pairing of bright, vivid green and white stripe, translates now

to a softer-edged gold and aqua, formerly exclusively used for interiors," Judith says.

Brown is the new black, adds Deborah. "We're also seeing patterns combining trendy colors, including chocolate with robin's egg blue, silhouette patterns in black and white, or leafy designs in green and white." Expect to see spa-influenced colors, like glacier and mineral blue, and sea foam, as well as earth tones like wheat, khaki, sage, rust, and burnt orange.

The Home & Garden Line from Maxwell Fabrics has geometrics and chevron patterns that are emblematic of a trend in larger-scale prints. Reversible patterns make >>





Photos: Maxwell Fabrics (www.maxwellfabrics.com)



Maxwell Home & Garden. Pattern: Tennis. Color: #4603 Aloe.



Maxwell Home & Garden. Pattern: Thoroughfare. Color: #1 Ocean.

a fun statement in umbrellas, cushions, and throw pillows. The cultural palette has shifted, too, Judith explains. "We're seeing less of a Polynesian motif and more of a formal French look like fleur-de-lis or damask prints."

Indoor fabric design is losing its monopoly on texture. Outdoor-strength jacquards and the woven textures featured in Stroheim and Romann's collection are available this year with interesting textures like chenille and French damask also vying for the spotlight.

This 2007 outdoor fabric story wouldn't be possible without an explanation and brief history of solution-dyed acrylics. Historically fabrics for outdoor use were canvases that would fade and rip from exposure to the sun, elements, and heavy usage. The first company to make a solution-dyed acrylic fabric for outdoor use was Sunbrella, and these fabrics were made to withstand the rigors of outdoor exposure.

"Solution-dyed acrylics' color is permeated at the liquid and not the yarn level. This technique makes them impervious to the sun, and consequently their colors do not fade. They are also very durable, and resist mildew and such stains as ketchup, ink, nail polish, paint, and shoe polish," says Judith. These stellar attributes make them perfect candidates for indoor use, too. "They make great additions as coverings in children's rooms or family rooms," she adds.

Solution-dyed acrylics also signaled the beginning of today's hot outdoor fabric designs. Fabric that was silk-screened was never used outdoors until solution-dyed acrylics came along.

Do-it-yourselfers can expect to pay at least \$40 a yard for moderately priced, good-quality fabric. Buyers of the higher-end lines will part with upwards of \$150 per yard.

With outdoor kitchens evolving into entertainment centers, the variety of products that need outdoor fabrics is expanding. Watch for outdoor sofas and carpets to complement this trend, with coordinated solution-dyed area rugs and drapery rounding out the scene. The lines between outdoor and indoor fabrics continue to blur, bringing a refined sensibility of colors, textures, and materials to enhance outdoor style. **THM**

The Verandah collection from Summer Classics.



Photo: Summer Classics (www.summerclassics.com)