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# OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

Lillian August's newest outdoor collection refines its indoor connection

By Adelaide Elliott

One of the most important elements underpinning Lillian August's introductory outdoor collection last summer was offering designs that closely mirrored their indoor counterparts and that could be utilized as easily indoors as out.

That same painstaking attention to detail and versatility is reflected in the company's latest introductions to be unveiled at the upcoming October High Point Market. Working hand-in-hand with Sherrill Furniture, the Lillian August Outdoor collection is built around two distinct but complementary design styles.

"One is this idea of blurring lines between indoor and outdoor," explained Dan Weiss, president of Lillian August and son of the designer behind the eponymous multi category brand. "The other is a more organic, material-driven look that feels more natural."

That divide between the collection's two themes is, in part, reflective of the brand's design process. Weiss and his mother design the products together resulting in what he described with a chuckle as, "a little bit of two-headed monster," during the process.

August comes from a classical design perspective, in part because of her background in interior decorating. She is especially invested in color and unique textile options, a signature of her upholstery products. Weiss prefers experimenting in material, form and function. Together, their differing perspectives improve each product on which they collaborate.

"The way we work comes together in the end," said Weiss. "That's really come out in this outdoor collection and that's kind of how we're growing the line."

The initial collaboration resulted in what Weiss described as a, "very decorative" introduction, encompassing everything from concrete, ceramic and teak to cast aluminum, brass, stainless steel, stone and rattan. That expansive approach has been taken even further with the brand's second introduction this fall.

"We're moving more into outdoor rattan, teak and wovens," said Weiss. "I love concrete, so we worked on some new concrete colors and we're introducing terrazzo. We've also got some really organic pieces out of Indonesia coming."

The long list of material mixes is the result

of Lillian August Outdoor's design philosophy, centered on replicating the company's indoor designs for seamless outdoor use.

In duplicating indoor pieces for outdoor use, such as its driftwood gray Burleigh cocktail table new, outdoor-safe teak had to be sourced and a similarly outdoor-safe driftwood-gray finish had to be developed. This same challenging development process was undertaken when adapting commonly used indoor materials, such as brass and stainless steel, to withstand the rigors of outdoor use. According to Weiss this latter effort took several tries by Lillian August's outdoor consultants and engineers.

Similarly, outdoor seating designs were adapted from their indoor cousins. For example, the popular Shelter Island collection of fully upholstered seating, introduced last September, is the outdoor rendition of Lillian August's indoor-only Corso sofa. According to Weiss, all fully upholstered pieces in the outdoor line were made and modeled after Lillian August's indoor pieces.

"You have all these great companies outdoors but their seating tends to be very modern

and it's a little colder," explain Weiss. "We're trying to create the warmth, the plushness, you'd have indoors."

Versatility and carefully designed functionality are hallmarks of the collection and can be seen in its interchangeable table tops and bases made in varying styles and of diverse materials. The result is an assortment that allows consumers to switch out their look both inside and out.



Brass was an important indoor look for the brand to get right outdoors.

"It was one of the foundations of our indoor-outdoor offerings," said Weiss. "It was having that interchangeable base and top program that can go indoors and outdoors, so we kept adding to it this time in terms of top sizes and styles."

Much of the success of products like indoor-outdoor upholstery Weiss credits to Sherrill Furniture's experience crafting

domestic upholstery. Combining this expertise with Lillian August's signature style, which utilizes classic indoor designs like traditional cabriole legs and flourishes on collections like Marseilles helps fulfill the brand's mission of elegance, style and beauty, indoors or out.

And it's that combination of versatility and style, paired with trusted experience that has helped Lillian August Outdoor get out of the gate quickly, according to Patrick Foster, brand manager for Lillian August.

"If someone is spending that much money on a sofa, they obviously want to know the quality," said Foster. "Sherrill's been doing upholstery for 70 years. That, paired with the Lillian August brand, reassures customers even though we are new... We actually had people coming up thinking it was indoor furniture at first, especially when they saw the logo. They were blown away when they realized it was all outdoor furniture."

The connection between the two brands are also part of what Foster thinks makes Lillian August Outdoor such a good option for a variety of buyer audiences. Designers familiar with the Lillian August and Sherrill Furniture brands are



Pieces from the Marseilles collection.

comfortable adding the looks they love indoors to their outdoor projects. Correspondingly, high-end casual retailers can merchandise the indoor-inspired pieces, trusting the new brand's commitment and quality because of its long-standing history indoors.

"We want everyone to see us, first and foremost, as different," explained Weiss. "We're taking a sort-of outsider's approach to the outdoor business, if you will. We come from the design world, the interior decorating world and also from retail. But we've been in the industry long enough to know what we are doing."

The newest additions to Lillian August Outdoor will be on display in October at their High Point Market showroom at 309 N Hamilton St.



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Pictured alongside some outdoor upholstery from Lillian August Outdoor is the brand's Hamptons Bay cocktail and end table, which were based on the brand's indoor Burleigh tables.