

CASUAL LIVING®

DECEMBER 2018

OUTDOOR INTELLIGENCE. OUTDOOR STYLE. OUTDOOR FUN.

CASUALLIVING.COM

2018 in Review
*Inside Look:
State of the Industry*



December 2018

ON THE
WEB

#keepitcasual



We share news and trends with you so you can share your favorites with your friends.



- Follow along with our **Casual Cause** web series to see how outdoor companies are giving back to their local communities and the world in extraordinary ways.
- Starting in January, we'll have a new **Product of the Day** feature on our website. If you'd like one of your products to be highlighted, email a high-res image and a brief description to amilstein@casualliving.com.
- Check out our website and social media channels for the latest on **ITA Showtime**, and be sure to read the full market report in the January issue.
- Have a certain topic that you want us to write about? We'd love to hear it! Send pitches to amilstein@casualliving.com.



- IMC announces new exec team following Atlanta acquisition
- [@equalman](#) to keynote ICFA Educational Conference
- IHFRA surveys members on impact of China tariffs
- [@PindlerCorp](#) releases new Sunbelievable fabrics, Wanderlust trims
- [@Suryasocial](#) founder, president named 2019 Spirit of Life Award honorees



In a special on-location edition of Casual Friday, Editor Waynette Goodson talks with potter Joseph Sand about his process for crafting oversized outdoor sculptures and fountains.



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FOCUS ON

by Jennifer Bringle

Zuo Modern

These planters exude midcentury cool with their round shape and blue-on-metallic finish. zuomod.com



Heavy Metal

From brass to bronze, metallics shine even brighter outside



A Elaine Smith

Metallics add a modern touch to this sophisticated pattern that works indoors or out. elainessmith.com



Beatriz Ball

From the midcentury modern collection, the Oda bowl is handcast in a metal alloy that never needs polishing. beatrizball.com



◀ Woodstock Chimes
Bronze tubes and shimmering prairie jasper stone add sparkle to this wind chime from Woodstock Chimes.
chimes.com



◀ Watermark Living
Made of recycled glass with a multi-tonal aluminum stand, this sand dollar piece brings coastal style to rooms indoors or out.
watermark-living.com



▲ Surya
Whether used as a garden stool or an accent table, the Chantilly is certain to dress up any space with its shiny copper finish.
surya.com

INSIDE *Design*

What designers want, need and see trend-wise outside

WE'RE CLOSING OUT 2018, AND IT'S HARD TO believe we're heading into a new year. As much as I enjoy ending the last quarter strong, I always like to set goals in December for the next year. After the post-holiday "hangover" in January, it's too hard to start thinking about targets.

But if you figure it all out in December, you've got your game plan set, and as soon as they've cleared the last piece of confetti in Times Square, you're ready to hit the ground running.

I chatted with a few interior designers recently about what they're wanting, needing and seeing trend-wise outside. I also wanted to find out their biggest challenges with outdoor products. I've taken their feedback and added in some strategies that might help you get ahead of the challenges, quandaries and consumer complaints.

Libby Langdon: *How important is outdoor decor to your clients and your business? What do you think drives that?*

"Currently, we're designing five outdoor patios, so to me, the design of the exterior space of a home is just as important as the interior spaces. Our clients care just as much about relaxing, entertaining and using the



To me, the design of the exterior space of a home is just as important as the interior spaces. Our clients care just as much about relaxing, entertaining and using the outdoor spaces as the extension of their home.

—Traci Connell

outdoor spaces as the extension of their home. We want to make the most out of the area, especially living in Texas where most people spend a lot of time outdoors—thus, the drive behind the importance of these designs."

—Traci Connell,

Traci Connell Interiors, Dallas

"Outdoor furniture and outdoor spaces are extremely important to clients; it expands their living space and can sometimes be the least expensive addition you can do."

—Greg McKenzie,

Greg McKenzie Design,
East Hampton, N.Y.

The Takeaway: This is a great opportunity to sharpen the story of who you are as a business and what you're offering in a succinct value mission statement. It helps you share the importance of outdoor décor and how it can help people enjoy their home's exterior spaces as much as their interior spaces.

LL: What are the biggest wants for a client with outdoor spaces?

"The biggest wants from our clients for an outdoor space are the durability and clean-ability of the products. They want to make sure the products can stand the sun, rain, kids, dogs, etc. We have also had many requests for 'outdoor air conditioning' as well as 'ceiling heaters.'"

—Traci Connell

"We're getting more and more requests for hanging chairs, hanging daybeds and furniture that has a lounge-like quality. People want to re-create the feel of a chic hotel-type outdoor space; they want to have that vibe in their own home."

We also have clients who want us to design exterior spaces that are comfortable and practical for a young family and flexible for different types of entertaining."

—Sarah Danielson,
Santa Barbara, Calif.

"I think just as in interior spaces, clients want beauty, functionality and spaces that are comfortable. They're focused on worry-free design and a complement to their interiors, but I do see people



Outdoor spaces are extremely important to clients; it expands their living space and can sometimes be the least expensive addition you can do.

—Greg McKenzie

taking more chances with color and pattern in their exterior rooms."

—Greg McKenzie

The Takeaway: You don't have to fill your retail showroom with all the latest and greatest outdoor trends; it makes sense that most of your retail floor is housing your tried-and-true best sellers. But to have a nifty



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—Sarah Danielson

bar cart, chic fire table or a hanging daybed peppered in as a conversation starter, there's value in that.

It's sometimes about creating excitement and inspiring the consumer about a sale. Even if they end up buying your best seller, they leave energized about making the most of their outdoor rooms.

LL: What's your biggest complaint about outdoor products and why?

"The biggest complaint about outdoor products would have to be timing. Everyone wants to order their outdoor products at the beginning of summer.

Typically things tend to be back-ordered by then, and we push our install dates to later summer/beginning of fall."

—Traci Connell

"My biggest complaint about outdoor furniture would be the long lead times and expense versus the quality. I think many times a client pays huge prices for outdoor furniture that just does not hit the mark when it comes to quality. Some specific types: teak, aluminum and cast iron are expensive and not always long lasting."

—Greg McKenzie

The Takeaway: We know in cool weather climates folks

don't want to even think about outdoor furniture in February or March. However, maybe some consideration should be given to doing an event? Why not partner with a designer to do an outdoor design seminar giving tips on patio layouts featuring your products?

Offer summer cocktails and bites and run a pre-season sale with a delayed delivery schedule. It's a potential way to excite the consumer when there isn't a whole lot happening off season. Brainstorm with your sales staff on ways you can engage the consumer in an off time of the year.

LL: Is there something you think is missing in the outdoor furniture/outdoor decor category, and if so, what is it?

"I think the biggest missing element in outdoor living is lighting, such as transitional outdoor table lamps, standing lamps and chandeliers—all are hard to find. Most outdoor lighting is just not attractive; it's too modern, or once again, it's not well-made."

—Greg McKenzie

"I'd like to see more products that allow me to hide wireless speakers. All of my clients want to play music when they're enjoying their outdoor spaces, but it's unsightly to have speakers mounted everywhere."

I found a company that hides speakers in flower/tree planters, but they're incredibly expensive. If I could find a moderately priced version, I would use them repeatedly."

—Sarah Danielson

"A category of outdoor stand-alone storage, bar cabinets and bar carts is missing. One of our current clients

has a blank wall on their patio that faces directly inside. We wanted to do something other than a bench or outdoor art, so we looked for an outdoor bar cabinet, but didn't have much luck. The solution was for us to design a built-in counter/bar cabinet."

—Traci Connell

and when they come into your store they will see you are just as on point.

LL: When you're presenting potential design styles of outdoor furniture to a client, what's the best sales tool or tactic you find to help them to finalize a decision and commit to buying it?

the worry. The design style of the furniture tends to be a bit easier, as it coordinates beautifully with their interior furnishings."

—Traci Connell

"When I present outdoor items to a client, I think the biggest obstacle is price. I share with them that outdoor areas are important to continue the feel and vibe of their interiors. It's worth it to make it attractive and cozy, and I'm selling them on quality products that will last."

—Greg McKenzie

"I think the biggest factor that gets my clients to commit is when I can show them imagery of the product in a beautiful outdoor setting. If they can see it, they can visualize themselves sitting there and enjoying it. Pretty pictures are a great tool to help get them over the hump and buy into it."

—Sarah Danielson

The Takeaway: No matter what part of the country you're working in, a common thread we're hearing is the winning combination of strong visuals, product quality and value pricing.

It's not a new story, but it's good to hear it straight from the consumer's mouth. Having this information lets you look at what you'll be offering and ways to craft your selling story for 2019.

In today's market, we all must be good storytellers by sharing what makes your products unique through your presentation and what sets your sales staff apart. After you craft your sales story, the next step is to get the word out through every channel you have available. I encourage you to end the year with a bang and set mile-high goals for next year. ■

I think the biggest missing element in outdoor living is lighting; transitional outdoor table lamps, standing lamps and chandeliers are all hard to find.

—Greg McKenzie



SquareRoot planter/speaker from Rockustics is omni-directional, full-range and weatherproof.



Surya outdoor accent lamp

I'd like to see more products that allow me to hide wireless speakers.

—Sarah Danielson

The Takeaway: It's always great to hear from folks that are one-on-one with the consumer and hearing what's missing in the marketplace.

You might be able to devote a concentrated display area in your showroom or store and label it 'What's New, What's Next.' This can act as a spot for people to see that you are in tune with trends in outdoor living. They will easily see these trends online

"When presenting an outdoor design, I communicate durability of each product to our clients. We put a lot of effort into picking out the right fabrics and finishes.

Taking the time to tell them that the rug can be hosed off, or the fact that the pillows can be left in the rain, really helps the clients decide. I call it 'Ease of Glamour.' It looks high-maintenance, but it's without