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by Laurie Rudd

THE FABRIC OF EXTERIOR DESIGN

FROM PLANS TO PILLOWS, THE VITAL ROLE OF PERFORMANCE TEXTILES
IN ATTRACTING PROFESSIONALS TO OUTDOOR DÉCOR

PROFESSIONALLY ASSEMBLED VISUAL

boards featuring color palettes, textural swatches, accent elements and furnishings are used every day by professional designers bringing their expertise and their client's vision together into a dream living space. Today, this same expert touch and planned approach is being asked of professional designers, not only for interior spaces, but for exteriors as well.

Visual boards recently served as a roadmap for a lake home of clients of Baker Design Group, a Carrollton, Texas design firm. Under the direction of Heather Mattox, head of outdoor design, the firm crafted a plan to coordinate outdoor magic for thousands of square feet of exterior living space.

For this project, as well as a growing number of professionally planned exterior spaces, the use of textiles is the key to accomplishing cohesive and flowing style. With the depth and variety of outdoor fabrics currently available, the textile category is playing a defining role in exterior design for professionals across the country.

"Because of the many spaces (in the lake home project), our designers definitely had to dive into the wealth of outdoor fabrics available to make everything coordinate, but not appear redundant," Mattox said. "Everything from umbrellas to lounge cushions, to dining chairs and throw pil-



point for most of my outdoor projects," she said. Exploring professional designers' uses of outdoor fabrics from the planning stage to the final reveal further illustrates a professional point of view.

LAUREN NICOLE DESIGNS

Ashburn, Va.
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Performance textiles played an important role in the exterior décor plans for a lake home by Baker Design Group, Carrollton, Texas.

lows, was affected by the fabric sources we employed to get the job done."

With diversity in color to complements, patterns to price points, performance textiles are now a favorite tool for professional interior and exterior designers. Unlike other elements of outdoor living, textiles can be utilized for everything from pops of color to pulling an entire outdoor space together. More design firms are entering

the world of decorating open spaces, and for all, the availability and options in exterior textiles is central to this work.

The current abundance of performance fabrics is at the heart of creating outdoor designs for clients of Lauren Riddiough Clement, owner of Ashburn, Va.-based Lauren Nicole Designs. "Outdoor fabrics are usually the main source of color and texture in the space, so their selection is the starting

Clement's featured project involved a male homeowner and a two-week deadline for completion prior to an NFL Kickoff party for 40 people. "This client had the outdoor structure complete, meaning the patio and fireplace, and had his dining table and lounge chairs," Clement said. "But he requested a more vibrant look and one that was pulled together and complete with accessories and the 'wow' factor."

The client wanted the outdoor space to be as finished looking as one of his indoor rooms, which Clement's firm also had decorated. "To me, the fabric selection is huge and especially in this project as the fabrics were the keys to the pop of color and excitement in the space," Clement said.

For the exterior redo, Clement had all the cushions made specifically to replace the stock khaki colored cushions on existing lounge chairs. "We chose a warmer tone for the lounge chairs and jazzed them up with a fun animal print on the accent pillows," Clement

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said. "My client asked for a little bit of 'jungle' in the space." Clement also brought in red for the dining chair cushions to give the space, in her words, "life and personality."

As the cushioning and pillows were utilized as the focal point of the project, durability and design were key to the design plan. "Bringing in the dining chair cushions was done with ease as that fabric will hold up over time to dirty food spills as well as outdoor wear and tear," Clement said. "If the fabrics were not so advanced, I may have not suggested bringing in more fabric." Clement primarily used Sunbrella brand fabrics for the upholstery pieces. Other outdoor fabrics used in this and other projects for pillows, draperies or cushions were from manufacturers such as Kasmir Fabrics and JF Fabrics.

Clement recognizes the growth in performance fabric sources. "Most (fabric) lines now incorporate an outdoor line for upholstery and for window treatments since the demand for outdoor fabric has gone way up," she said.

RENEE MEYER INTERIORS

Irvine, Calif.

reneemeyerinteriors.com

For a major exterior project that continues to be in the works, Renee Meyer of Renee Meyer Interiors of Irvine, Calif., utilized performance fabrics to not only tie the project together but also to create a continuation of the pallet used in the interior spaces. "We wanted to maintain the color scheme from the interior of the home through to the outdoor areas," Meyer said. "I enjoy mixing many fabrics together,



With a male homeowner and a tight deadline, Lauren Nicole Designs, Ashburn, Va, relied on outdoor fabrics to add interest and pop to multiple outdoor groupings.

so we tried to achieve this with the outdoor furniture areas."

Brown, gold and black were used in all areas in differing mixtures for each area. "There are so many great fabrics to choose from these days, it is a shame not to take advantage of them," Meyer said. Continuing to create the connection with the interior décor, Meyer also used sun-safe trims for the exterior pillows and drapery.

Meyer defined areas within the project similar to those areas within the interior of the home. The space off the formal dining and living rooms was determined to be the outdoor living room and included a large outdoor fireplace. "We wanted plenty of seating around the fireplace," Meyer said. "We needed comfortable fabrics with more than a patio look, but a furniture look." For this, Meyer selected a main fabric with prominent texture.

A second area within the plan was referred to as the family room area. For this, the designer utilized a more casual look with an outdoor sectional and a casual fabric. "We mixed solids and patterns on pillows with a solid on the sectional and stripes and patterns again on chairs and ottomans," Meyer said. "We used outdoor area rugs as well so that we would have that cozy and finished feeling that you get indoors."

Throughout the project Meyer used a combination of vendor supplied fabrics as well as COM. "Our main goal was to find what the client was really happy with," Meyer said. "We started with the fabrics available through each respective patio furniture vendor. If we did not find what we wanted, we went onto other fabric companies. Our plan in pulling it together was not to repeat fabrics in the different areas,

but to give each area its own look as we would in different rooms indoors and to keep the color scheme intact.

SHELLEY RODNER C.I.D. DECORATING DEN INTERIORS

Bethany Beach, Del.

decdens.com/srodner

As an International Decorator of the Year, Shelley Rodner is an accomplished designer and knows the benefits of textile selection. For her exterior project, clients looked to Rodner to create a functional outdoor space that was a warm and welcoming extension of their home.

"The outdoor fabrics selected played a key role in developing this project for my clients," Rodner said. "They requested easy care, stylish textiles that could be left outdoors in a 'protected' area." In achieving this, Rodner tapped the resources of the furnishing manufacturer. "The fabrics used were all part of the collection offered by the manufacturer, Summer Classics," Rodner said. "The company has an amazing selection of textiles that may easily be paired together to create a fabulous look. No COM fabrics were necessary for this project."

Rodner also utilized performance trims and an outdoor rug for the project. The depth of outdoor durable fabrics available was recognized by the designer as a definite plus in pulling the space together. Throughout her design work, she utilizes the brands offered by the furnishing companies as part of individual furniture collections.

BAKER DESIGN GROUP

Carrollton, Texas

baker-designgroup.com

The Baker Design team realized from the start that this lake house project was not going to be a typical outdoor

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space. "Its sole purpose was to create a retreat, a getaway from the hustle of our everyday lives and an escape into a not-so-Texan land," Mattox said. "While it was important to create this for our client's family, it was also critical that she could share these spaces with her visiting family and friends." To this end, Mattox made a priority of enjoyment of the site's surrounding beauty and natural setting. The overall project encompassed a new construction gazebo living area with sectional, dining area and kitchen, as well as two fire pit seating areas, several lounge chaises, back patio furnishings, two side patios, two waterfalls with rivers and bridges and a front entrance patio.

The Baker Design Group attacked the project with attention to detail, especially in the



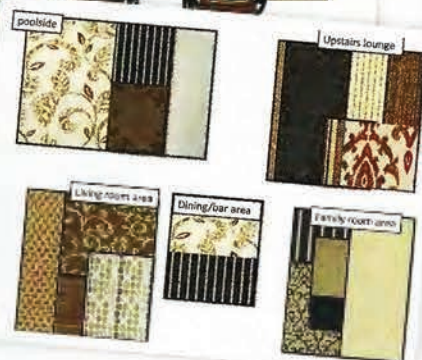
The depth of performance fabrics available enables Renee Meyer Interiors, Irvine, Calif. to coordinate interior and exterior décors.

area of textiles. "When it comes to outdoor design, the fabrics bring life to the design," Mattox said. "From color to pattern, style to comfort, these textiles finish the spaces like jewelry on a cocktail dress."

The fabric selection was critical in completing the desired outdoor décor as the team designed a color story to suit the project's environment. "The jumping (off) point for the design was the vibrant color

of the house: a papaya red," Mattox said. "This warm and spicy hue was what had first snagged our client's attention so we wanted to carry this color from the house itself out into the various outdoor living areas."

One factor professional exterior designers often address, which is not a concern for interior décor, is the seasonal color changes that occur within outdoor spaces. For the Baker team, seasonal changes of the home's natural setting as well as the neighboring body of water



were a part of the plan when mixing solids and patterns. The mix allowed Mattox to tie in subtle hints of the aqua blue of the lake and a new pool, as well as natural browns and ivories as a basis for the design plan. "From the fabrics, we built up the rest of the design elements, employing rugs, lamps, art and lighting and custom florals," Mattox said.

EXTERIOR PROFESSIONAL DESIGN GROWS

Professional designers everywhere are embracing the growing performance fabric category.

"One can achieve a look outdoors that can rival the indoors because there is so much available," Meyer said. "You really get any look you desire in outdoor fabrics these days."

This explosion in outdoor textiles is creating opportunities for yet another industry to share its expertise and skills within the growing platform of outdoor rooms. 

Easy care was an important consideration in fabric selection for the clients of Shelley Rodner C.I.D. Decorating Den Interiors, Bethany Beach, Del.

