

MADE IN THE SHADE

From umbrellas to pergolas, shade products turn outdoor rooms into casual retreats

By Geoff Thompson

For years, the design trend was to bring the outdoors in—through big windows, natural light and greenery.

But as more and more people are adopting an outdoor lifestyle—anything from the classic backyard patio set and lounge chairs to exterior kitchens to full-on al fresco living rooms—it's all about bringing the indoors out.

Of course, a prime concern outside is keeping cool and comfortable. And that

involves the ability to avoid the sun. When most people think of shade and an outdoor space, oftentimes the first thing they think of is umbrellas.

"In the umbrella industry, the major trend is in color," says Candy Chase, national sales manager for Treasure Garden. "Greys and blues are continuing to trend, and fabric usage in these colorations has soared."

Brian Sanches, VP of sales and marketing for California Umbrella, agrees that dif-



Treasure Garden's Starlux transitions from day to night with built-in lights.

ferent colors are gaining traction. "Where fabric is going, we follow," he says.

Trivantage, maker of fabrics used in canopies and awnings, is another company that sees colors and textiles as leading design. "We align closely with Sunbrella because its designers consistently anticipate both trends and design needs," says Bret Kelley, VP of sales for Trivantage. "Sunbrella creates timeless colors and patterns that enable homeowners to personalize outdoor spaces with each new shade collection."

New for 2019 for Trivantage is an expanded Sunbrella line with 10 patterns in the simplistic Pure collection, as well as two fresh patterns with Sunbrella's decorative shade fabrics.

Shade size is another trend, according to Debbie Maytidu, retail sales manager for Fiberbuilt Umbrellas. "We are noticing a number of multi-year trend(s), such as

the popularity of large-scale umbrellas," she says.

Every manufacturer seems to be offering bigger and bigger shades—both in center-pole and cantilevered design. But the issue with larger shades is that if it becomes too big, then it becomes an installation instead of a traditional umbrella that can be moved.

Another trend is the increasing collaboration between designers, manufacturers and retailers. "Designers are pushing trends with cuts and styles with embellishments like scallops, pom-poms or fringe," Sanches says. And then that designer/retailer/manufacturer triumvirate might offer exclusives through certain channels—either online or in brick-and-mortar stores.

As an example, Sanches points out that California Umbrella's Pagoda umbrella, that once might have sold several hundred

units a year, is now selling in the tens of thousands due to the cuts and embellishment trends they're seeing.

For Ryan Hughes, founder/creative director of Ryan Hughes Design Build in Tampa, Florida, shade is always a factor in his designs. "With entertaining in the outdoor as a primary experience of our projects, accommodation for shade or protection are always addressed within our consult phase," he says. "Opportunities for shade may come in the form of one grand umbrella creating a focal point for the project, or a custom pergola that covers an intimate seating area, creating a personalized outdoor room."

One recent Hughes project was designed around a Tuuci cantilever umbrella over a fire pit, within an infinity-edge pool looking out over Tampa Bay. The fire pit is exactly the same dimensions as the umbrella.

Speaking of cantilevers—while these

umbrellas had been considered a trend in years past, they've become such a part of the mainstream that it's an expected item in a company's line, almost like fettuccine alfredo in an Italian restaurant.

Following that "going big" trend, Treasure Garden has introduced a new, large cantilevered design. The Starlux AKZ Plus is 13 feet wide and has built-in LED strip lighting. "It's everything you need to take entertaining from daytime to nighttime," says Chase. "This new umbrella is a huge hit with the dealers."

While umbrellas are certainly the most prevalent, highest volume item in shade, there are plenty of other options as well—albeit less portable.

If you're in the market for something a little more permanent or to make more of a statement, companies like Kanna and Tuuci offer ready-made cabanas in a vari-



A massive Tuuci cantilever provides ample shade.