

GROWERTALKS

Features

12/1/2021

Perfect for the Patio

Chris Beytes

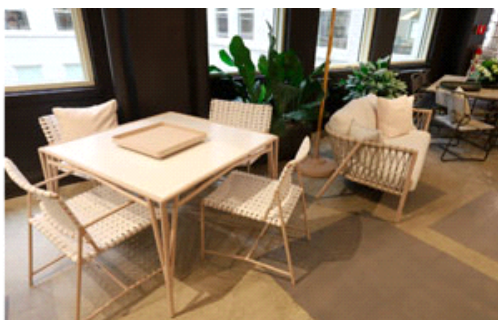
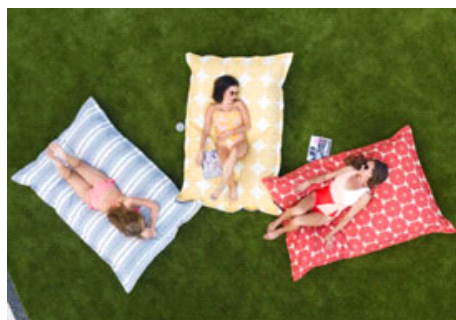
Finally, another in-person show! We've attended Casual Market for some 20 years, and it's always fascinating to see the range of products available for outdoor living, from recycled plastic rockers to \$20,000 resort-style umbrellas.

As for that hot topic of inventory, we talked to probably a dozen manufacturers, some of whom source from Southeast Asia and others who produce domestically, and they were all 1) confident they had at least some product in stock to meet your needs, and 2) confident production and logistics would be better by spring of '22. Factories are opening up and letting workers back in to manufacture the goods. As for the \$20,000 shipping containers (which are normally \$3,000), well, it's anybody's guess when supply will increase and demand will moderate. Expect to have to add freight surcharges.

Based on our discussions, the added cost of freight has hurt the discount sellers and big box customers more than boutique retailers and affluent consumers. "The pandemic has not been fair to the industry," is how Telescope Casual Furniture Executive Vice President Bill Vanderminden puts it. Telescope, which manufactures its product line in upstate New York, has been on the positive end of the situation, although Bill admits sourcing raw materials and finding labor has been "a challenge."

On a positive note, "Consumers are being amazingly patient," Bill added. He thinks it's because there are shortages and delays everywhere, and folks have simply gotten used to not getting what they want immediately. And they've learned that they can't go down the street and find it.

Much of what you see at the Casual Market is what you'd expect to see in patio furniture, with just subtle differences. Read on for new takes in 2022.

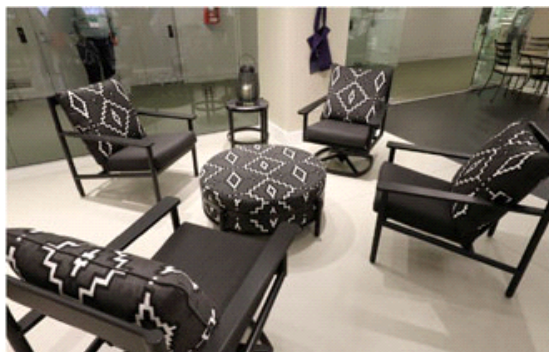
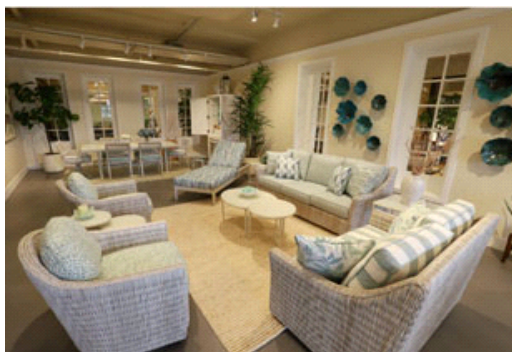


The Laze Pillow. From Texas-based Ledge Lounger comes what can only be described as a beanbag chair for the

pool and/or garden. The Laze Pillow is made of waterproof, fast-drying, machine-washable fabric filled with waterproof beads that float, for a pool experience much different than your typical lounger. Or use it on dry land! Cost ranges from \$375 to \$500, depending on fabric, they say. ledgeloungers.com/products/laze-pillow

Brown Jordan. "Oscar" is the happy name of this new design, said to be inspired by the brand's beginnings in 1945, shown here in a retro-inspired "Blush" finish. It was nice to find something other than black and gray. www.brownjordan.com/products/collection/rope/oscar

Telescope Casual Furniture. Telescope now offers a line of patio heaters designed to go with their patio furniture, featuring a polymer base with table that hides the propane bottle. They can also fit through the umbrella hole in a patio table. www.telescopecasual.com/collection/PHT



Tommy Bahama. The iconic brand showed two new collections: Abaco features clean lines, low seat backs, dark walnut with aluminum frames and flat-woven plastic; while Seabrook (pictured) has a lighter driftwood finish. The cocktail tabletops are fused glass. Both collections come in seating and dining (rectangle, round, bistro) styles. tommybahamafurniture.com

O.W. Lee. This Made in the USA company recently moved from California to Comfort, Texas (that could NOT have been an accident), where they hand-craft metal furniture in a 450,000 sq. ft. factory. New this year is Kensington, a full-line (dining, seating) collection in aluminum, described as "English Garden Traditional," available in 13 colors, with 18 tile tops and a million fabric choices (thanks to Sunbrella). The Cibolo ("Buffalo") collection is Modern Americana inspired by Stickley. The fabric they showed on it is a partnership between Sunbrella and Pendleton. www.owlee.com

Hanamint. Known for very nice cast aluminum furniture, Hanamint also happens to have a bronze foundry (for art pieces) that they put to work to cast what has to be a very limited-edition bronze café set. The three pieces are all they plan to offer, and at a suggested \$6,999 retail (but just \$2,300 wholesale, so the margin is nice), you won't sell it to just anybody, but hey, it's art, not furniture! And at 44 lbs. per chair, it won't blow away in a high wind! We think it's super cool ... even if we can't afford it. hanamint.com



Tuuci. Are these the best umbrellas in the world? At up to \$20,000, they must be. Made in Miami. Designed like a polished component of a super yacht. But they have the entry level Bay Master line, which is just \$1,000 or so, so most anyone can have a Tuuci. www.tuuci.com GP