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YARD

Soft, colorful and extremely durable, today's outdoor fabrics bring the comfort of indoors to your patio.

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Sunbrella's Balance collection showcases hand-stitched effects and geometric patterns, with colors inspired by earthy clays, lush greens and hazy blues.



Villa del Sol is Perennials' latest collection of outdoor fabrics that defy stains, fading and mildew.

**THE PAST YEAR HAS CHANGED THE WAY** we look at our backyards. Travel restrictions, work-from-home policies and social distancing have brought about a renewed interest in turning our dwellings into personal retreats, and we want our outdoor spaces to be just as beautiful and serviceable as our indoor areas.

From sleek, modern grays to country florals to playful patterns, fabrics have become an important element in exterior settings. We take a look at the new technologies and designs that are bringing the quality and style of the indoors outside.

# FRESH



**LEFT** Designed as a companion to Brochier's line of indoor fabrics, the eye-catching Cubica collection features a colorful selection of geometric patterns, stripes and tropical designs in three different weights. **RIGHT** With a multicolor wide stripe and linenlike texture, the Lansdowne Collection by InsideOut Performance Fabrics complements traditional and farmhouse patio decor. Shown in Evergreen.



Perfect for use indoors and out, the solution-dyed Ovation 4 collection by Outdura is easy to clean with soap and water or a bleach solution for stubborn stains. Shown here in Tawny Sunset.

## KEY ADVANCES

Not so long ago, outdoor textiles offered little in the way of luxury. "Performance fabrics, as they're called, have definitely transitioned away from the plasticky materials of the past," notes Haynes King, product and customer service manager for Outdura.

Prior to this invention of solution dyeing in the 1950s, yarn was dyed after it was woven. The core of the fiber remained white, and the color would eventually fade. Solution-dyed textiles are colored before the yarn is created. A liquid acrylic solution is mixed with the dye and then formed into a fiber, so the pigment is an integral part of each thread, making the resulting fabric soft, color-fast and water-resistant.

Washability is an important characteristic for performance fabrics, as homeowners seek materials that can withstand being bleached without losing color or degrading. Water resistance is another big selling point, but achieving that requirement often results in the use of perfluorinated chemicals, or PFCs. These chemicals are used to make the coatings that resist liquids and stains, and while posing no risks when touched, they can be released into the environment during manufacturing and disposal of products containing them. InsideOut Performance Fabrics uses a plant-based liquid repellent, while Sunbrella released a fluorine-free line, Assure, in 2020.



**LEFT** The latest addition to Holly Hunt's Great Outdoors line of textiles, the Nippon Collection was inspired by the natural landscapes of Japan. **RIGHT** The contemporary Rock Collection by Kirkby Design offers a mix of textural boucles, semiplain weaves and striking geometrics. Here, the retro, two-color crosshatch design of Weave is presented in the soothing shade of Fern.



Vista is the first-ever indoor/outdoor collection by Kravet Couture. Made with special yarns that provide easy cleanability and a supple hand, these fabrics, in a palette of sandy neutrals, tans and grays, bring high-end luxury to poolside and garden settings.

## LUXE LOOKS

"We're seeing preferences toward neutrals with pops of color," says Greg Voorhis, executive design director for Sunbrella. "Texture-wise, patterns that reflect dimension through intricate weaving processes will continue to gain popularity as people look to add depth and visual interest to their outdoor spaces."

Sunbrella's newest collection, Balance, fuses modern and classic elements with functionality and comfort. Fresh stripes and classic toiles in saturated citrus hues are accompanied by soft chenilles and boucles in a palette of earthy neutrals, including rich taupes and clays, lush greens and hazy blues. "These fabrics look beautiful when layered and also work well on their own," says Greg Voorhis, executive design director for Sunbrella. "They would even complement the natural desert hues that surround so many Arizona homes."

Holly Hunt's line of Great Outdoors performance fabrics and trims is crafted with 100% solution-dyed custom yarns that are bleach-cleanable and mildew- and fade-resistant. The Nippon Collection offers a range of soft neutrals, pale grays and deep blues inspired by the landscapes of Japan. Nubby tweeds, linenlike weaves and jacquards add visual interest to the muted color palette.

Neutrals remain a strong seller for Outdura, although the company has seen a shift in focus from soft ivories and off-whites to crisp bright whites and from cooler to warmer grays. "Because neutrals are dominating, consumers are looking to texture for added interest," notes King. "Our most popular introductions are incorporating a unique weave or proprietary yarn, such as our boucle or marl, which allows for greater depth and feel than a plain weave solid."

Once nothing more than workhorse cloth, outdoor textiles not only meet the demands of weather tolerance but also chicness. With luxe naps, elegant weaves and sophisticated color and pattern choices, it's now hard to differentiate high-performance from conventional fabrics.