



this page (left): Woodline – Picanini umbrella

this page (below left): Woodline – Pendulum umbrella



Gregoire Ferent of Soleil – a pioneer of such concepts – feels that indoor / outdoor architectural styling is very much a reality in South Africa, although strictly focused on the high-end of the market. He explains: 'It's still considered a relatively new concept and it therefore remains exclusive.' He lists great weather for some eight months of the year and larger properties that allow more space as vital elements in the outdoor equation. 'Large covered patios are the norm. This area is not considered as garden space, therefore a furniture style that is not entirely garden-orientated is very important.

'The patio is perceived as an extension of the living room, so the furniture design has to be adapted accordingly. In my opinion most influences originate in Europe, particularly northern Europe. Here, manufacturers spend more time on R&D, for indoor designs to be re-modelled and manufactured so as to be suitable to outdoor conditions.'

Hylton Arelisky of Cane Time, importers of Dedon furniture, maintains that indoor / outdoor architectural styling is a fact of life in SA and sees al fresco living as very much a part of our lifestyle. He notes that a much wider range of materials is being used in modern homes, where flow from indoors to outdoors is a pre-requisite. He adds: 'Leading creative and material influences are German and French and outdoor furniture is now subject to state-of-the-art design and technology.'

Indoor / outdoor usage means that weather resistance is vital, yet is total weather resistance possible and / or necessary. Is there such a thing as maintenance-free patio and outdoor furniture? Arelisky says absolutely so. He adds: 'Latest trends on a global scale are for very modern, sleek lines with sling and synthetic fibres. The look is modular and white fibre is being used a good deal for fully weatherproof upholstery.'

Timber furniture is a different matter and a measure of maintenance is necessary; although greyish, unsealed, weathered hardwoods like solid teak have a certain appeal. Woodline's **Oscar de Weijer** maintains: 'Total weather resistance is definitely something to strive for. We've moved from the traditional solid timber range into timber and metal blends, followed by aluminium and aluminium / stainless steel combinations. This migration has resulted in product combinations allowing for far less maintenance.'

'Timber decking and modern shade systems can quite easily be added to existing homes and they help a good deal in protection against adverse climatic effects. They link interior space to the outside and in so doing, can add square metres of additional living space. Insofar as total weather resistance, it's possible but some maintenance will always be required.'

Design-wise, on a global scale, what are the latest trends and the most recent developments for frames and upholstery? Says **Susan Perry** of Modern Garden: 'Outdoor furniture that looks as good indoors as outdoors, including carpets / rugs, soft furnishings, art and lighting. Shapes have become softer and more organic, there's a big East meets West feel with innovative outdoor upholstery used on premium brands. Less rigid frames are evident.'





above: Woodline – Picollo umbrella

below (right): Out the Box – Kenkoon Collection

Barry Garner adds: 'There's a mixing of technologically advanced materials e.g. synthetic rattan in varying hues on aluminium or wood frames, stainless steel with diverse colours of textile material, hand-forged wrought iron, aluminium and wood. Eclectic combinations that reflect the South African end users demand for outdoor furniture that is stylish, comfortable and of a high quality.'

Indeed, colour is very much available and paramount in products that brighten personalised settings, blues, bright greens and vibrant oranges being options. Carefully crafted aluminium and canvas pieces are structurally sound and light of weight. Funky designs are the answer to enlivening a featureless terrace, deck or courtyard and splashes of colour are uplifting a furniture segment traditionally dominated by earthy ochres and natural tones. Lastly, but importantly, new materials for both frames and upholstery / cladding really are becoming virtually weatherproof. ▷

