

CASTELLE

LIVING IN SOUTH FLORIDA
heritage

DANIA BEACH

MADE BY HAND

A closer look at Castelle's elegant outdoor furniture reveals much more than meets the eye.

By Laura Eckstein Jones

When furniture looks perfectly streamlined, one has to assume the pieces were constructed at a factory by computers and automated machines. But when it comes to the outdoor sofas, tables and more by Fort Lauderdale-based **Castelle**, that could not be further from the truth. The 40-year-old company creates handcrafted, weather-resistant furniture and accessories out of a production facility in Carrago, Costa Rica, that's surrounded by rainforests, rolling green hills and volcanos. "Nothing can compare to the quality created

by a skilled pair of hands... or 45 of them," says Castelle President and CEO Derek Ritzel. "On average, that's how many pairs touch a single piece of furniture as it moves through our facility. The best goods in any market are always known to be handmade—whether a luxury handbag, a pair of shoes, a scarf, an automobile or a yacht. Folks know that machine-made lacks the details, and love, of a handmade product."

A walk through the lively organized factory reveals the incredible skill and craftsmanship—and numerous steps—involved in creating each item. Every step, from start to finish, is executed with the precise attention to detail—from the first stages of carefully pouring aluminum into molds to weaving chair backs to handpainting intricate wood-grain motifs on cast-aluminum live-edge tables. And being situated in paradise certainly affects the *pura vida* (or good life) attitude that goes into the craftsmanship. "The beauty of our surroundings and the *pura vida* attitude are an added bonus that finds its way into the furnishings we make," Ritzel explains. Although Castelle focuses primarily



on traditional designs, the brand recently included more transitional looks to its lineup, namely the nautical-chic collection made in collaboration with designer Barclay Butera, which has been highly successful. "The Barclay Butera Outdoor Collection for Castelle will expand with not only additional pieces," Ritzel says, "but also with one exciting new collection that presents his unique vision for outdoor. We see collaborations in general as an area for continued growth."

Looking ahead, Castelle will continue to create the highest quality—and incredibly comfortable—luxury pieces for consumers and designers alike. "From customer's own material to fully customizable furniture, so much of what we do is design-centric," says Ritzel. Whether that be items in trending navy and gray shades; chic, weather-resistant mud-cloth-inspired fabrics; or statement-making daybeds, the award-winning furniture brand will continue to hone its artisan roots and integrity for decades to come. *Inside Out, DCOTA, insideoutfla.com; castelleluxury.com*



Clockwise from left: Decorative finishing pioneered by Castelle is done by hand to create customized looks; a cushioned lounge chair from the Barclay Butera Outdoor Collection, \$2,466; an aluminum detail coating for a Barclay Butera chair receives fine grinding prior to welding; Venura cushioned dining set, \$12,901.



FURNITURE IMAGES BY LORETTA ROSS/ROSS; FINISHING: MICHAEL; INTERIOR: CASTELLE/DANIA BEACH



ASK THE EXPERT

Is the tropical modernism we're seeing everywhere in new home builds a passing fad, or is it here to stay?

"For me, it's here to stay. I think it integrates beautifully with our climate and geography, and aside from emphasizing aesthetics and rigorous geometry, tropical modernism here is also about materials that find a rich and local expression. My go-to material for the style is ipe wood. It gives you tons of textures and colors so you can play with it. You can reflect the owner's character with it, and then use the same material for a different client for a completely different look. I'm just finishing a residence on Cocoplum Road in Coral Gables, and I used ipe for the barbecue and the flooring, and for a statement entrance. To make a connection to the exterior wood, I love using Dedon's cocoon-like Nestrest hanging lounger, which is wrapped in a woven fiber that evokes bamboo. It's a contemplative piece."

-Sandra Diaz-Velasco, principal, EOLO A+I Designs, eolodesigns.com



POOL PERFECT

This isn't your standard patio set—the **Castelle Hermosa collection** brings together both the linear and the curved for a playful, slender set including both lounge and dining options. Twenty items are available in five finishes—including a brilliant Luxe Gold—and are yours for the creating, thanks to Castelle's custom design program, but there's also a quick-ship option should you need it for urgent projects. Need a little inspiration? Head to their website to read design Q&As with such design authorities as Lori Parsajape. From \$1,200, *Bae's Furniture, 1025 S. Federal Highway, Dania Beach, castelleluxury.com*