

CASTELLE

APRIL

Castelle partners with Biltmore for new collection



Castelle launched its latest collaboration, Biltmore by Castelle, at the April High Point Market. The company partnered with the historic Biltmore Estate to create an outdoor collection drawn from the classic architectural elements of George Vanderbilt's legendary mansion.

"Creating comfortable and beautiful spaces to enjoy the fresh air of the Blue Ridge Mountains was key in Mr. Vanderbilt's vision of providing an oasis for his family and friends," said Tim Rosebrock, vice president and general manager, Biltmore Licensed Consumer Products. "He selected products of highest quality and classic design, and the artistic details and craftsmanship of the Biltmore Collection by Castelle reflect this appreciation for luxury."

Estate, the first collection to debut in the Biltmore by Castelle line, is hand-crafted of cast and extruded aluminum and features classic lattice work details found on the grand loggia and library terrace of Biltmore.

Despite all the potential unknowns, there is still a tremendous amount of positivity and opportunity in the outdoor category. Our customers are coming to us with a desire for more traditional looks, along with a softening of contemporary via new materials and less linear design. We will also see an influx of new brands and product licenses/endorsements, which is something Castelle is keeping an eye on.

**BEN RADOLL, VICE PRESIDENT,
MERCHANDISING AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT, CASTELLE**

MERRITT



◀ Merritt

The Imperial Gold pressed acrylic serving set boasts a pebbled texture that looks like real glass finished with an oversized gold rim. merrittusa.com

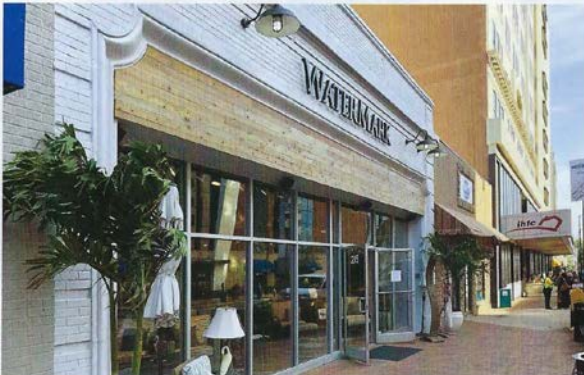
Watermark Living



◀ Watermark Living
Made of recycled glass with a multi-toned aluminum stand, this sand dollar piece brings coastal style to rooms indoors or out. watermark-living.com

MARCH

Palm Springs Rattan rebrands, changes name to Watermark Living



In March, casual furniture and accessories manufacturer Palm Springs Rattan rebranded to Watermark Living. The company debuted a new catalog, website and showroom at the April High Point Market, along with an unprecedented number of new collections.

"We were ready for a change and wanted a brand name that represented the breadth of what we have to offer today," said Tim Newton, Watermark Living president. "We offer so much more than rattan, and since our outdoor and accessory offerings have increased significantly, we needed a brand name that was more encompassing."

Treasure Garden

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY
Unleashed

SKY HIGH TECH

MANUFACTURERS AND RETAILERS ALIKE ARE starting to embrace technology like never before. More casual companies are beginning to understand the importance of having an e-commerce strategy that works with their physical store. Meanwhile, outdoor products are coalitionally being developed with technology in mind—think musical fire pits and remote-controlled umbrellas.

In 2017, e-commerce sales accounted for 9% of all retail sales in the U.S., a figure expected to reach 12.4% by 2021. Last year, tighter and more consistent integration of in-store and online branded channels was the dominant trend, according to Caitlin Jasowsky, marketing communications coordinator at Storik.

"This translates to adopting shareable shopping carts, generating single customer profiles, and promoting consistent information," says Jasowsky. "We also saw trends toward functionality that caters to customer experience, including more transparency in delivery logistics, control over consumer profiles, and the ability to manage financing online."



Treasure Garden
Starlux AKZ Plus
Cantilever

In 2018, the amount of stores using e-commerce is expected to increase, and Jasowsky says retailers will focus on enhancing their e-commerce strategy and refining the customer journey. "We see more retailers in our industry transitioning from non-integrated websites to integrated ones with the option for e-commerce," she says. "The conversation has shifted from 'do we have to have e-commerce' to 'how can our brand adopt the best e-commerce strategy for our consumers. I think the challenge will naturally become increased competition. That's

why it's so important for casual retailers to be ahead of the curve."

Compared to this time last year, the amount of technology being used in outdoor has increased dramatically with the addition of elements like eclectic motion seating, portable and rechargeable LED lights, and built-in charging ports. And while part of this is because there's now technology available for the outdoor industry to use, it's also because that's what consumers are looking for.

"We're consumers first, and what technology does is offer conveniences, which everyone wants," says Steve Paladino, president and founder of Music City Fire. "What I find with the casual industry is, part of the industry is stuck in old-school thinking, and some still think that it's very complicated to bring technology outside."

Paladino points out that high-tech companies like Neogear are already designing technology like wireless

routers for the outdoors, which shows that people want outdoor technology and are ready for it. It's just a matter of who in the casual industry will adopt it.

"We believe technology is important to the casual industry in different ways," says Candy Chase, national sales manager, Treasure Garden. "We design all our products to be easy to use and function in their needed environment—from our Bluetooth-enabled Luma light to our Starlux AKZ Plus cantilever umbrella."

Chase agrees that consumers today are much more tech-savvy, and they want products that incorporate all the latest advances. "Technology does not stop, and the industry must continue to incorporate any and all advances that make product easy to use, comfortable, and address the insurmountable need to enjoy their outdoor environments for extended periods of time. The outdoor room is here to stay!" ■



Music City Fire
Resonate Fire PR

The dealers, who are concerned about the tariff situation, are being cautious with container buys or pushing up deliveries to be in stock before the end of 2018. Treasure Garden, however, is, to date, minimally affected by tariffs, and our bookings are steady going into 2019. However, due to this climate of uncertainty, we feel there will be increased pressure on domestic production necessitating the need for quick turnaround, just in time production capabilities. Despite the uncertainty in the marketplace, our dealers are quite positive about the 2019 season. The economy is still strong, and if the weather cooperates, we will have a good year.

MARGARET CHANG, PRESIDENT, TREASURE GARDEN