

MEETING *of the* MINDS

By Kim Cook

RETAILERS AND MANUFACTURERS PARTNER
WITH DESIGNERS ON INSPIRED OUTDOOR COLLECTIONS

WHEN DESIGNERS, MAKERS AND SELLERS

cross paths, it's often the consumers who reap the benefits. Ideas, vision, know-how and resources merge, ultimately producing beautiful furniture and décor for our homes.

This collaborative chemistry is also percolating in exterior design, with some interesting partnerships giving us even more intriguing collections.

From specialty brands to mass retailers, the designer collaboration trend is white-hot and something that can't be ignored.

BRENDAN RAVENHILL/LOLL DESIGNS

Los Angeles-based designer Brendan Ravenhill spent his childhood in Cote d'Ivoire and summers in coastal Maine. The experiences inspire much of his wooden interior furniture, with a practical, functional and comfortably stylish aesthetic.

Now he's done a collection for Loll Designs of outdoor pieces that evoke the cottage-y vibe, but with a modern edge. "I was inspired to design a hybrid of the ubiquitous Adirondack chair with the enveloping feel of an Eames Shell chair," Raven-

hill says. So the sides are closed up, and the pitch is a little more upright.

"I cold-contacted Loll in the fall of 2010, after coming upon their ad in the back of a magazine," he says. "I'd already designed the deck chair and was hoping to find a partner to manufacture with. To my surprise Loll was game, and we introduced the chair in 2012. We've since designed a side table, ottoman, love seat and porch swing accompaniments."

After reviewing drawings and first articles, he and Loll made adjustments to the silhouette, such as widening the legs and adjusting the joinery. In the end, the design and function read as well in the recycled high-density polyethylene (HDPE) as it did in the original wooden prototypes.

Ravenhill's sculpture degree from Oberlin and his master's in industrial design from RISD have clearly influenced his furniture design skills. Besides the comfortable pitch, there's a handy bottle opener tucked under the chair's arm.

HDPE takes color well, so there's an extensive palette of hues ranging from apple, leaf and sunset to soothing charcoal, sand and navy.

"It's great to work with a like-minded company whose work is informed by their sense of place and who are open to conversation and collaboration," Ravenhill says.

JOHN DICKINSON/DAVID SUTHERLAND/JOHN HUTTON INTERNATIONAL

Sutherland Furniture has long collaborated with storied designers like Rose Tarlow, Philippe Starck, Terry Hunziker and John Dickinson.

In 1978, interior designer Angelo Donghia introduced co-owner David Sutherland to Dickinson. Sutherland represented the designer—known for his playful hoofed and footed concrete plaster pieces that now sell for thousands of dollars—until Dickinson passed in 1982.

"For many years, I've wanted to reintroduce John's collection in a material and manner that he would have admired," Sutherland has said. With the estate's approval, he has done just that, updating it in glass fiber reinforced concrete for durability.

"I hope that all who have appreciated his designs will look favorably on our efforts," Sutherland has said.

The John Dickenson Outdoor line is just one of



Pottery Barn and Lilly Pulitzer have joined forces.



Brendan Ravenhill's version of the Adirondack chair

many in the Sutherland fold. Founded in the late '90s by American design icon John Hutton and his partner Joe Doyle, design firm John Hutton International (JHI) has also produced their Louis Soleil collection.

With teak carved into a curvy frame and cushions clad in performance fabric, the classically French collection was one of outdoor's first fully upholstered line.

In addition, JHI has done the ultra-modern Mariner 316 line for Sutherland. Sleek, mirror-polished or powder-coated steel frames and tailored waterfall-edged Perennials upholstery assure the collection's ready for poolside or yacht deck.

Doyle's philosophy reflects Sutherland's elevated design ethos: "Make it interesting, make it smart, and never forget what it is for."

**MICHAEL WOLK/
PAVILION FURNITURE**

Miami-based interior designer Michael Wolk enjoys an ongoing partner-

ship with Pavilion Furniture. Wolk's collection of streamlined contemporary seating and dining pieces reflect his refined sensibility and the high-end reputation of the manufacturer.

"The reason I pursued

the company's reputation, thought I could contribute, and agreed."

Wolk's designs have found a home in several luxe Florida manses, as well as the St. Regis Bal Harbour Resort's Atlantikos restaurant.

We've worked with Michael Wolk for product design as well as large commercial projects. He's creative and dynamic, and we're delighted with the relationship.

—Perry Solomon



working with Pavilion was, besides being great people personally, as a company they had the technical expertise to execute my designs as a quality product," Wolk says. "The president of the company approached me and said, 'We should do something together.' I knew

"We've had the opportunity to work with Michael both for signature product design as well as large commercial projects," says Perry Solomon, Pavilion's marketing VP. "Michael is creative and dynamic, and we are delighted with the relationship."

LILLY PULTZER/JAMIE DURIE/POTTERY BARN

At Pottery Barn (PB), two collaborations debuted this year: Lilly Pulitzer and Jamie Durie. With resort wear brand Lilly Pulitzer, the PB home line gleaned capiz shell lanterns, white trellis-patterned clay planters, beach towels and lounge pillows with motifs like sea horses and coral, embroidered or hand-painted by the Lilly Pulitzer Print Studio.

With Australian-born Jamie Durie, PB gained a collection of oversized seating and dining inspired by the Arts and Craft era and contemporary resort design.

As British author Ken Robinson once said, "Collaboration is the stuff of growth." All these designers and their partners have reaped rich bounty in terms of product design and business success. With outdoor makers jockeying to find the perfect designer collaborations, the future of casual looks bright—and quite stylish. **ca**