



TOP TIPS FOR CHOOSING

How do you see yourself using your outdoor space? Coffee in the morning with the papers. Apéritifs in the evenings. Lounging on weekends. This will help you decide on dining or lounging or a mix and seating requirements. What are the colour schemes in your outdoor space? Plan to spend time to 'touch and feel' products and avoid buying online where you can't examine the quality.

CHOICES & MAINTENANCE

Next up, what are the key material choices out there? There are several categories to consider, each one with their pros and cons. And each one fits particular spaces, decors and tastes. Some are low maintenance, others not. Let's go through the material options.

MESH & ALUMINIUM

Mesh and powder coated aluminium give a light and airy feel. Designs are usually clean, modern and very rectilinear. The mesh is not so robust and difficult to replace outside a factory environment. Over time, mesh attracts mould in our humid climate and tends to sag. Fairly low maintenance.

STAINLESS STEEL

Stainless steel is not stainless and will 'tea stain' in tropical climates with the humidity. The frame will get extremely hot in direct sunlight. Works well in a very modern environment and gives that industrial polished look. High maintenance.

SYNTHETIC RATTAN

There is a lot of bad woven out there, but if you invest in well built woven, you will have a product that will give you many years of service. A simple quality test is to turn the item over and look underneath at the finishing and frame. Clean or messy? Check the brand of synthetic rattan and also look how tight and well finished the weave is. The German brand Rehau is the world leader. The best woven is made by the Cebuano weavers in the Philippines. A little known secret.

CUSHIONS FABRICS & FOAMS

Acrylic fabrics perform the best for outdoors. They are not waterproof but highly water-resistant and exceptionally stain-resistant. Sunbrella is the world leader. Avoid polyester, it will fade and stain quickly. You want a high density foam (nothing to do with softness or firmness - it's the amount of actual 'foam' in the foam). Low density foam (less foam) will sag in a short period of time. There is also 'quick dry foam' available. But it's not quick dry and in our climate will develop black mould within a short period of time.

QUESTION THE WARRANTY

Check out the warranty period and what exactly it covers. A 1 year warranty is worthless. 2 years is not much better. Beware of the warranty trick of 'x' years on the rattan or mesh and 'y' years on the frame. If the rattan or mesh fails, the whole product fails and you have wasted your money. 3 years and you are getting into good territory. 5 years and you know the company stands behind their brand and their build quality - giving you peace of mind.

TIMELESS DESIGNS & MOTHER EARTH

Buying trendy designs that go out of fashion quickly or cheap products that we end up throwing away after a short period doesn't make sense and can cost money for disposal. Consider timeless designs and quality for many years of enjoyment. Good for Mother Earth too. Important.