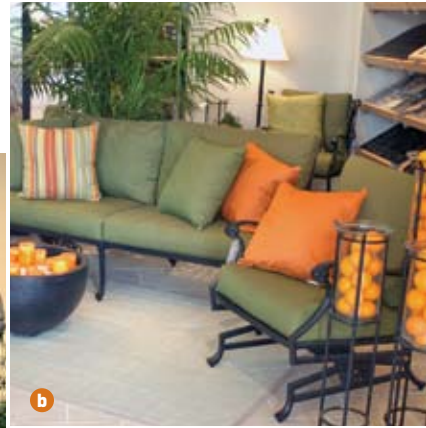


BY ANNE DINARDO ASSOCIATE EDITOR



a The store is lush with focal areas to inspire customers on how to transform their own outdoor spaces.
b Furniture and accessories are presented in outdoor living settings.

Garden Renaissance

Smith & Hawken brings the indoors out



A.J. Morton, Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.

Smith & Hawken cultivated its store format in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., growing it from 3500 to 10,000 square feet, more space to show off its signature lifestyle presentations.

ANYONE CAN HAVE A GREEN THUMB THESE DAYS. Just flip to HGTV. You'll find shows for urban gardeners, backyard gardeners, balcony gardeners.

Coupled with this rising interest is a desire to spend more time outdoors, enjoying nature when not chained to a desk or carting kids between dance lessons and soccer practice.

"When you're in the garden, it's all about serenity and beauty," says Chris Harris-Smith, director of visual merchandising for Smith & Hawken (Novato, Calif.), the multi-channel retailer that has been outfitting shoppers with garden tools, craftsmen furniture and decor items since 1979. "It's a nice place that people create to escape their hectic lives."

Smith & Hawken sought to capitalize on that trend by launching a new store format designed to "really show people how to build outdoor living areas," says Harris-Smith.

To build its own room to tell the story, Smith & Hawken nearly tripled its store size, going from an average 3500-square-foot format to a roomier 10,000 square feet.

At the Downtown at the Gardens store in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., designers from Smith & Hawken show consumers how they can bring all the comforts of the indoors – tables, chaises, lounge chairs, benches and lighting – outside to create areas for entertaining, dining or just hanging out.

Taking inspiration from Italian gardens of old, designers created a store evocative of a cloistered garden. At the center of the store, a skylight illuminates a lush plant room below. Mosaic flooring and antique-inspired fixtures finish the look.



a



b

a A natural materials and color palette, including stone flooring and a travertine fireplace, helps break down the walls between the indoors and out. **b** Each room showcases a specific style category, while furniture and wall displays highlight the variety of merchandise.

Surrounding this area is a series of rooms dedicated to Smith & Hawken's product assortment, including casual and elegant furniture and porch living. Lifestyle groupings within each of the rooms show the diversity of product in each style category, including gazebos, rugs, umbrellas, containers, cushions and pillows.

While Smith & Hawken has always used lifestyle presentations to tell its story, Harris-Smith says. "It makes a much bigger bang for the buck with 10,000 square feet."

To give aspiring gardeners and outdoor aficionados the inspiration they need to create their own outdoor enclaves, designers chose natural materials and a warm color palette to create a light and bright space. Stone flooring is used through-

out the store, which is lush with places to sit and relax. A travertine fireplace takes center stage near the front.

Lime oak and metal fixturing allow the wood furniture to stand out, while stainless-steel Parsons tables at the checkout area recall the familiar furniture used in garden and flower shops. Focal areas on the walls are used to romance the product, such as a display of running fountains or a focus on water and garden tools.

While there's no end in sight to how much consumers will cram into their busy schedules, they can find relief in knowing that Smith & Hawken is eager to help them create their own outdoor retreats in which to escape it all, at least temporarily.

Thumbs across the country are up – and green. ➔

PROJECT SUPPLIERS

Client
Smith & Hawken, Novato, Calif.

Architect
McCall Design Group, San Francisco

General Contractor
Fisher Development Inc., San Francisco

Outside Design Consultants
Line Brand Architecture, San Francisco (programming)

Piper Hertneck Associates, Rancho Mirage, Calif. (finishes and detailing)

Auerbach + Glasow, San Francisco (lighting design)

Fixtures
Environments Inc., Minnetonka, Minn.

Flooring
ASN Natural Stone, San Francisco
Walker Zanger, Hayward, Calif.

Lighting/Custom Light Fixtures
Morrison Lighting, Novato, Calif.

Signage/Graphics
Neon Images, Elk Ridge, Utah

Gate
Sand Studios, San Francisco

Concrete Fixtures
Concrete Concepts and Design, Richmond, Calif.

For a full list of suppliers, go to www.visualstore.com.