

by Cinde W. Ingram

# MERCHANDISING AWARDS

WINNERS USE THEMES, GROUPINGS TO ENHANCE OUTDOOR LIVING

## BELL TOWER OUTDOOR LIVING Richland, Mich.

### BEST OVERALL MERCHANDISING, SINGLE STORE AND BEST FIRST-TIME ENTRY

Bell Tower Outdoor Living won awards for Best Overall Merchandising and Best First-Time Entry in Casual Living's 11th annual Merchandising Awards contest.

The Southwest Michigan outdoor living store "covered it all through its in-store themes enhanced with matching accessories, a variety of product categories and outdoor displays," according to the judges panel made up of art directors and editors from Casual Living, Furniture/Today and Home

Accents Today. One judge described the store's atmosphere as cheerful and sunny with a good use of accessories and a nice lineup of chairs and outdoor play equipment.

Founded in 2008 by Jack and Ashleigh Kosin, Bell Tower Outdoor Living uses accessories to enhance all outdoor furniture displays, from toss pillows on each chair to placemats and outdoor dishes on all tables. "I like customers to be able to come into the store and, whether they are

looking for a set of furniture or just an accessory, be able to envision the displays at their home," Ashleigh Kosin said of her merchandising schemes in the Richland, Mich., store. "I aspire to create the feeling of summer dreaming even in the cold spring."

Emigh's Casual Living, founded in 2000 in Sacramento, Calif., was a close runner-up. "Emigh's makes good use of signage and themes, carrying them through the total display," one judge said.

Another judge described the store as clean and neat with a good variety of product.

Kolo Collection's minimal, contemporary displays were the undisputed favorite of one judge. Another judge found the Atlanta store's entry to be the best in demonstrating a niche.

Judges also noted outstanding merchandising at Season's Four, The Bruce Company, Fruehauf's Patio & Garden Center, Sunnyland and Sunshine Furniture, which won Best Use of Accessories.



Photo credit: Jim Powell

Telescope Casual marine-grade polymer Adirondacks are complemented by colorful Magnolia Casual toss cushions and accents of drink ware, coasters, lanterns and pottery.



With fun themed signs, art and wind chimes high at the back and colorful toss pillows and a swing chair low at the front, all the merchandise is visible to shoppers.

**VILLAGE GREEN**  
Rockford, Ill.

**BEST OVERALL MERCHANDISING, MULTISTORE**

Judges were drawn to the Rockford, Ill.-based store's light, open structure and bright colored accents. "It looks easy and fun to navigate," one judge commented. Another judge said she liked the way the retailer utilized its spaces, which are covered but appear

open air.

The more traditional looks and good uses of accessories inside Today's Patio, Patios Plus, Porch and Patio and Summer Classics' stores also drew notice from the judging panel.



Color pops in Village Green Nurseries' bistro display as the eye travels upward from planters and topiaries to lanterns and opened umbrellas toward the Weber Alliance grill area.

**TODAY'S PATIO**  
Scottsdale, Ariz.

**BEST USE OF ACCESSORIES, MULTISTORE**

Scottsdale, Ariz.-based Today's Patio drew all the elements of outdoor living together in its in-store displays. A chair gallery in one wall, shelved replacement cushion display in another joined with a fabric kiosk to help consumers' selection process. All of the accessory options were displayed in orderly fashion, ranging from

toss pillows to open umbrellas, wall art, outdoor rugs, lighting and firepots.

Narrowing the selection was difficult for judges. Warwick, R.I.-based Porch and Patio was noted for its nice integration of accessories. Village Green and Patios Plus also drew attention as did Summer Classics.



Today's Patio provides consumers easy-to-understand options. Displays integrate an open umbrella, lamp, artwork and a conversation group surrounding a firepit table focal point.

**SUNSHINE FURNITURE**  
Vero Beach, Fla.

**BEST USE OF ACCESSORIES, SINGLE STORE**

Judges liked the Floridian themes and good placement of accessories inside Vero Beach, Fla.-based Sunshine Furniture. "They found a wide variety of accessories that perfectly enhance their in-store themes," one judge commented. Another said the 35,000-sq.-ft. store was inviting, colorful and well-designed. A fourth judge said Sunshine Furniture was accessorized "like a serious outdoor living space, and each piece played a role in the setting."

use of accessories "made me want to keep exploring."

Swimm Pool & Patio drew the judges' attention with a large selection of products that is well-balanced between shelves and vignettes.

The Bruce Company and Seasons Four gained nods for their visual rhythms, created by placement of products and use of colors to. Laura's Home & Patio drew attention for its tight displays with layers of accents including permanent botanicals and barware.



Sunny yellow striped upholstery pairs with shell motifs for a nautical theme, carried through with end tables, lamps, coasters, a beach pail, shutters, signage and artwork.

Winners

**BOWMAN'S STOVE AND PATIO**  
Ephrata, Pa.

**BEST STORE FRONT, SINGLE STORE**

Bowman's Stove & Patio wowed the judges with its warm, welcoming entrance. "I really like the blend of the wooden window shutters and stone masonry," one judge commented. The outdoor furniture placement and landscaping add to the appeal for customers of the Ephrata,

Pa. store, another judge said; he described the overall look as inviting, intriguing and classy.

The store fronts of Bell Tower Outdoor Living, Seasons Four, Swimm Pool & Patio and United House Wrecking also drew positive remarks from judges.



Recent renovations and expansions have helped Bowman's Stove and Patio provide an inviting entrance for customers who visit.

**LEADER'S CASUAL FURNITURE**  
Largo, Fla.

**BEST STORE FRONT, MULTISTORE**

Clear signage combined with multiple outdoor displays to boost Leader's Casual Furniture to the top. The 19-store chain's Florida location was an advantage over other

stores operating in colder climates. One judge noted placing furniture outside helps show off Leader's store and draw customers in.



Full outdoor product displays provide a glimpse of the grills and home furnishings found inside Leader's Casual Furniture.

**HOUSEWARMINGS**  
Lexington, Ky.

**BEST OUTDOOR DISPLAY**

Housewarmings features an over-the-top selection of grills, outdoor kitchens, fountains, gazebos, firepits and fireplaces that overshadowed strong competition. The Lexington, Ky.-based hearth and casual furniture specialist shows off its furnishings and accessories in a natural setting that invites customers to relax.

Fun and interactive displays at Fruehauf's Patio & Garden's Dream Backyard wowed the panel of judges with its one-stop shop approach. Two judges used the word "stunning" to describe the outdoor fireplaces, lighting, fountains and furnishings displays at Danielle Fence Manufacturing.



A range of products are displayed in cozy outdoor areas outside Housewarmings' store.