

wonderful weaves



Ottomano

Vendicari outdoor velvet

Outdoor areas shine with Tempotest's latest textiles, featuring calming neutrals, modern geometrics, and bold floral designs.

BY SHARON SANDERS

Specialty patio retailers set themselves apart by offering

something truly special, from products to service. When it comes to one of the main differentiators—performance fabrics—Italian brand Pará/Tempotest USA is fast becoming a favorite of specialty retailers looking to offer unique, quality fabric choices for their customers.

The Pará Group was founded in Italy in 1921. For over three generations, the family-owned company has been producing premium textiles in a variety of applications including sun protection, marine, and indoor/outdoor furnishings and accessories. It began making 100% solution-dyed performance fabrics under the Tempotest brand in 1964. Today, the company is a key player in the international market, and Tempotest is recognized as the No. 1 performance fabric brand in Europe.

"Italians are passionate people who take pride in everything they do, and weaving is no exception," says Jeff Jimison, national sales manager.



Long-Staple jacquards

The brand has transitioned the popularity of its performance fabrics in Europe to the United States over the past 20 years. Pará/Tempotest USA is steadily gaining a loyal following of manufacturers and consumers who have fallen in love with the brand and what it represents.

"Our Italian heritage makes us special. Italy has been known for hundreds of years as a textile center both in terms of style and quality of woven products," Jimison explains. "Consumers have a strong connotation to Italian textiles, as well as a strong connotation to things from Italy because of its reputation for being on the cutting edge of style and fashion. Retailers use us to differentiate their fabric selection—the panache of Italian style and sophistication sells—and customers have to go to a specialty retailer to get it."

Tempotest's premium solution-dyed fabrics translate beautifully inside, outside, and everywhere in between including sunrooms, living rooms, family rooms, and any place that is exposed to sun and the rigors of life.

As an added advantage, all of its fabrics are treated with a branded Teflon finish for superior water and stain resistance. "It's a great message for retailers to share with customers, because everyone is familiar with the Teflon brand and what it offers. By and large, consumers would prefer to buy fabrics treated with Teflon rather than an unknown generic finish." Tempotest proudly offers a 6-year warranty on all of its upholstery fabrics, which is the best in the industry today.

Tempotest fabrics have heart, as well as personality. "Our operation is vertical, which means we not only

weave our own fabrics, but we make our own yarns and finish our fabrics in-house." Pará operates five plants/mills across Italy with its headquarters located in Sovico, a town outside of Milan. "One of the spinning plants is located in the most picturesque town in Italy that I've ever had the pleasure to visit. The village is so remote; I think the entire town has worked there for generations," Jimison says, adding that he's been in the weaving business for a long time, and is continually impressed by the company's weaving ability. "To make those yarns do what they do is remarkable, and the effects they get with yarns on loom are amazing."

Pará invests heavily back into the business with state-of-the-art equipment including the best looms, spinning equipment, and carding equipment available. "While the company is technologically modern, it is still old-school at heart when it comes to the quality and detail in its fabrics." In 2014, the company opened a distribution facility in Carrollton, Texas, so it could start stocking goods in the United States, making it possible to provide both roll and cut fabric.

An inseparable part of the Pará Group's story is its commitment to respect and protect the environment both locally and globally. For example, to save energy, it has invested in a cogeneration plant that converts methane gas into electrical power. It also uses solar roof panels to create clean solar energy, and it has a cutting-edge water treatment plant that returns 94% of the water it uses back into streams. "People today, more than ever before, want to know that they are dealing with a company that is a good steward of the environment."

Heading into 2020, the Tempotest Italian design team sees a number of emerging trends. "The team is so talented and has such valuable insight. I'm always curious to hear their perspective on what's next, so I can share it with my customers," Jimison says. Velvet is one trend that will be emerging, but not the red velvet of the gilded age. The velvets of 2020 will have wider color possibilities with hues of teal, blue, mauve, and turquoise.

Other fabric trends to look out for include linen and linen effects. Weaves will also be very thick, dimensional, and textural. "The soft relaxed look that is

so popular inside the home is now moving outside. We are introducing a new yarn called Long Staple that is designed to mimic the look and feel of natural linen." Geometrics, particularly small-scale geometrics and contrasting colors, will also emerge stronger than ever this year, along with floral designs—not classic or conservative florals, but large motifs integrated with abstract design.

Tempotest will be introducing many new fabrics this year, with a strong showing of grays and blues, as well as traditional neutrals like oatmeal and wheats. "We anticipate that solids for body cloth be our best-sellers, as usual, driving most of our volume. Jacquards will primarily find their way onto pillows and as accents," Jimison says. Right now, a number of Tempotest's bold geometrics are doing well. The Tempo stripe, which is a new jacquard stripe with a slub effect, has been popular, as well as the Murano geometric. Classic styles like ikats and jacquards continue to be top choices.

"I feel blessed that we have introduced a lot of new product this year, and the product that we've had in the

market continues to do well," Jimison says, adding that he is thrilled that more and more doors are being opened that allow Tempotest to get in and show off its fabric.

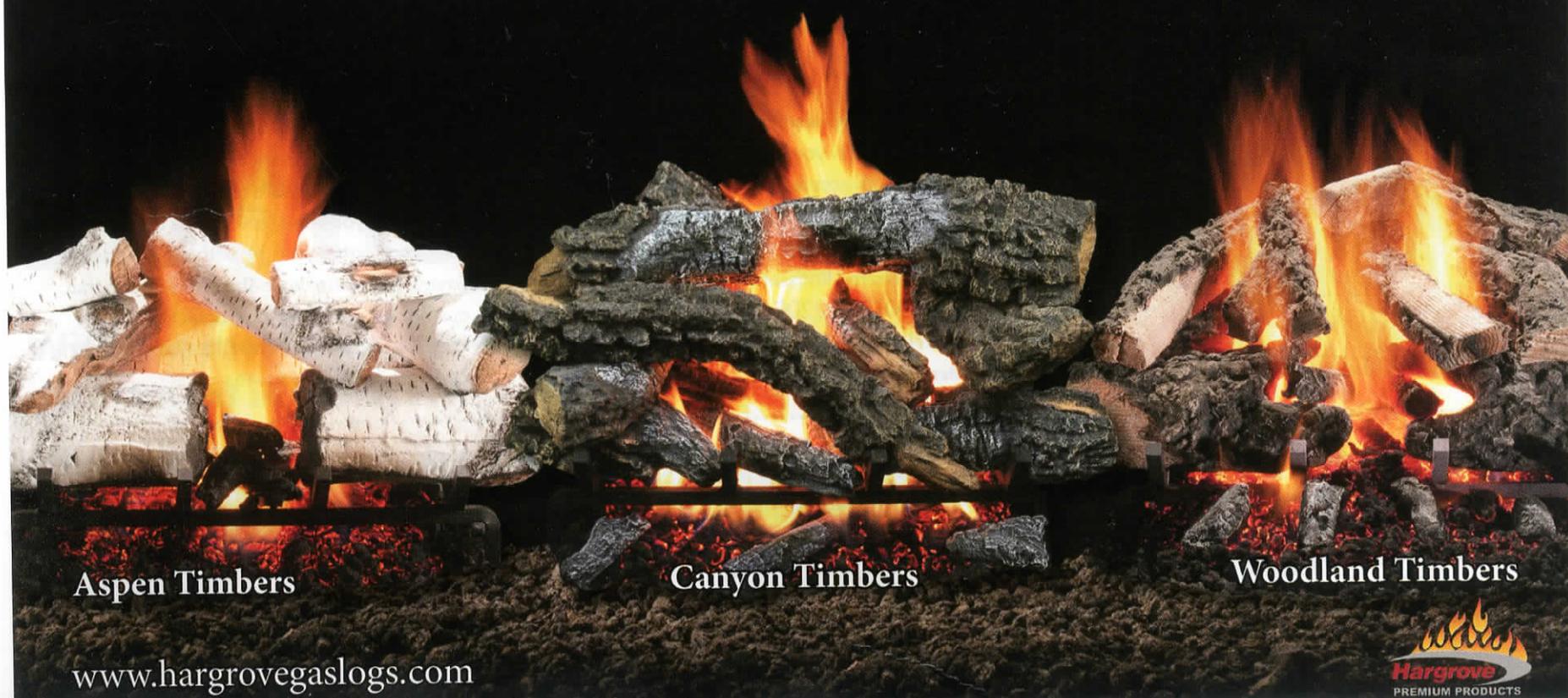
"Our name recognition is at a point now that manufacturers are calling us to ask if they can take a look at what we have to offer. We are able to give the specialty retailer a fabric that truly is special because of our Italian heritage and performance," Jimison says. "Whether they realize it or not, specialty retailers desperately need to differentiate themselves from their competitors, and we are here to help them. I'm proud to say that Tempotest is a part of the elite group of fabric manufacturers who are the top of the heap when it comes to performance, and we want to continue to maintain that reputation."

He adds that the next big challenge is to get the Tempotest brand out at the consumer level. "I think we've done a good job at the manufacturing level and reaching out to specialty retailers. The next step in our evolution is to get our name on the lips of consumers, as they are the ones who will enjoy our products for years to come." ■

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