



What's new in outdoor furniture

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Many of this year's outdoor fashion trends debuted at the fall International Casual Furniture and Accessories Market at Chicago's Merchandise Mart, while others will surface in designer showrooms and at retailers all over the country. Here are some of the newest directions:

Firepits are heating up landscapes in a variety of table designs that feature logs, stones or crushed glass as a base from which the flames rise. Some new designs are bowl-shaped; others rectangular, with long insets. Another cast-stone fire table from Restoration Hardware strikes a minimal silhouette, down to the clear glass panels that "contain" the fire without obstructing the glow, while leaving ample room for drinks and food.

In addition to large firepit tables, there are smaller scale "tea light" fireplaces such as Cyl from Eco Smart Fire (www.ecosmartfire.com). It stands at just under 21 inches by about 15½ inches wide on a stainless steel base with a glass cylinder housing the flame. It's pricey — at just under \$2,000, but qualifies for an energy credit.

A tabletop firepit from Outdoor Great Room (www.outdoorrooms.com) runs off of gel fuel and features spinning flames inside its glass housing. For an even smaller flame, there are 12-inch ceramic or tumbled marble pots from Bird Brain that range from \$20 to a little over \$50 (www.amazon.com is one source).

- The daddy of all recliners, La-Z-Boy, teamed up with Brown Jordan to introduce a weatherproof model. It has company. One from Pride Family Brands International (www.pridefamilybrands.com) moves into three positions and is available in six different styles. Others swivel and rock. But the ultimate in function is the shiatsu-massaging lounge chair from Domus Ventures.
- From cradling and cocooning chairs for at least two, daybeds and full four-poster models are available if you have the space. Among the offerings is the Winward curved canopy bed, a dark brown weave in high-density polyethylene from Weather Master for Laneventure. Lounge flat or position for reading by simply raising the outer panels of the three-section pad. Pottery Barn's Palmetto daybed looks like wicker but is crafted from a synthetic, woven from variegated honey strands that suggest the natural materials's texture. The bed is 83 inches wide, 41 inches deep and stands 81½ inches tall.
- Weatherproof LCD TVs are available in sizes from 23 to 55 inches. And movie theater sets offer a 12-foot screen and Epson projector with LCD technology. Both are available from Frontgate.

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