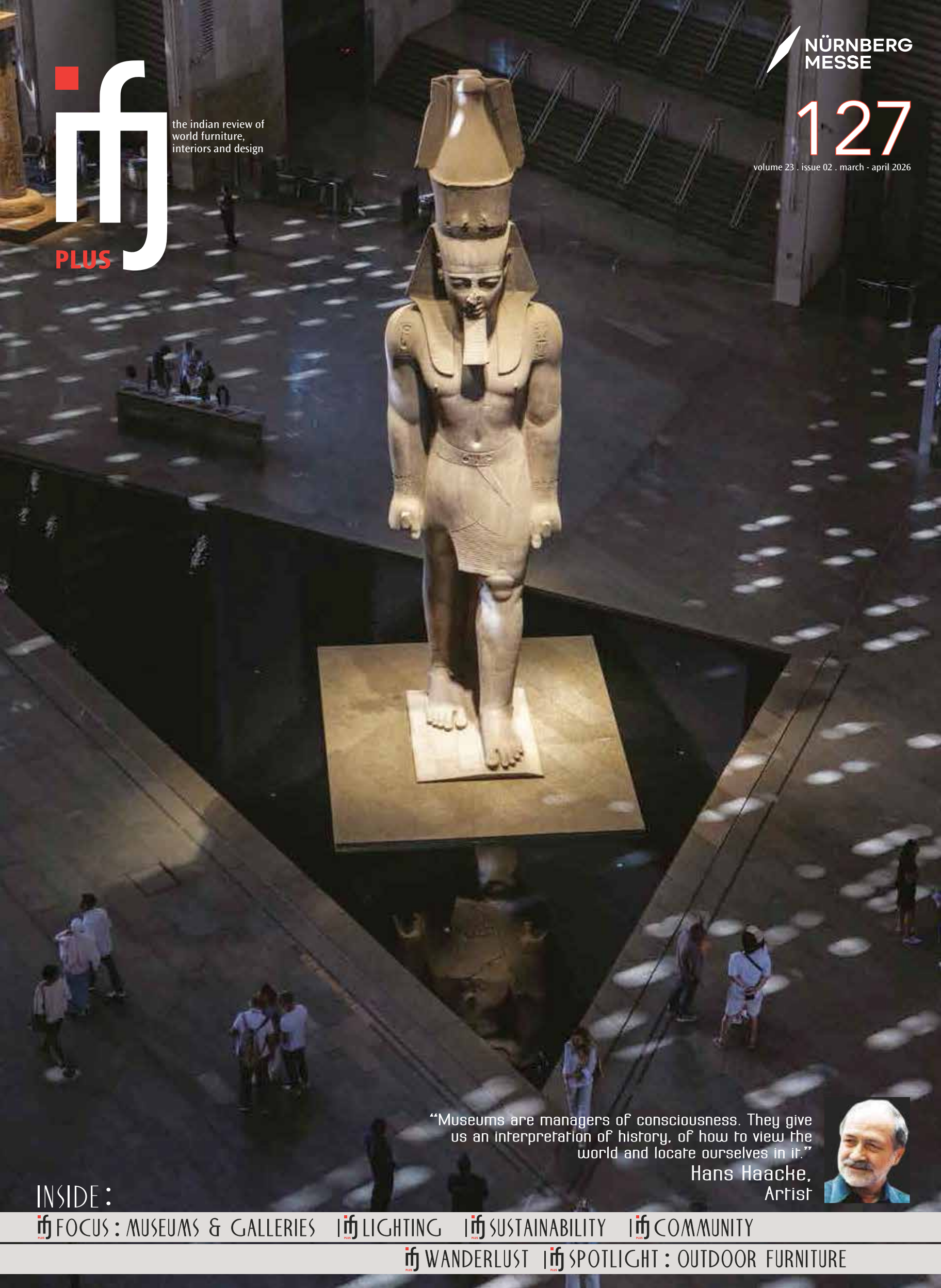




"Museums are managers of consciousness. They give us an interpretation of history, of how to view the world and locate ourselves in it."

Hans Haacke,
Artist



INSIDE:

if FOCUS: MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

if LIGHTING

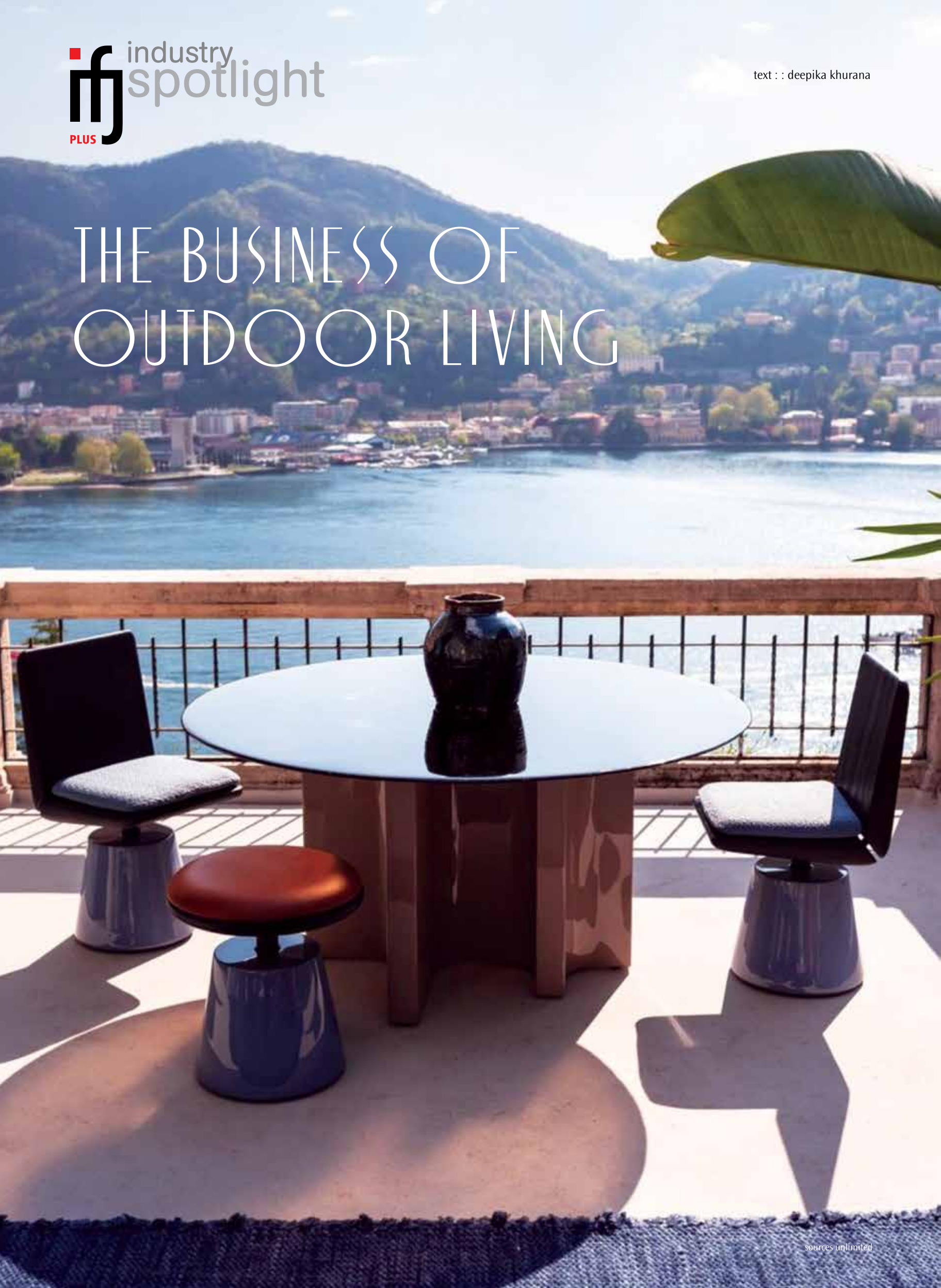
if SUSTAINABILITY

if COMMUNITY

if WANDERLUST

if SPOTLIGHT: OUTDOOR FURNITURE

THE BUSINESS OF OUTDOOR LIVING



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▲▶ sarita handa



Outdoor spaces have undergone a quiet yet powerful transformation over the past decade. What was once considered a peripheral area, used occasionally and furnished sparingly has now become an integral part of the home. This evolution reflects broader lifestyle changes, where wellness, leisure, and social interaction increasingly extend beyond interior walls.

According to the Modor Intelligence Report, the outdoor furniture market in India is expected to reach a projected revenue of US\$ 4,518.7 million by 2030. A compound annual growth rate of 9.1% is expected of India outdoor furniture market from 2023 to 2030.



Suparna Handa

As Suparna Handa, Managing Director of Sarita Handa, New Delhi, says, "People aren't just looking for a few functional chairs outside anymore, they're turning patios and balconies into true living rooms." This shift captures the essence of modern outdoor living – spaces that are not only functional but deeply experiential.



Natasha Jain

Echoing this sentiment, Natasha Jain, CEO and Co-founder of Bent Collective, observes, "Outdoor spaces are no longer an afterthought, instead, they're becoming extensions of lifestyle." The emphasis today is on creating environments that feel intentional, curated, and personal. These are not just places to sit, but places to unwind, entertain, and connect.

bent collective



Kapil Bharti

Kapil Bharti, Co-founder and Director at Wriver, offers a more architectural perspective, "The shift is toward treating the outdoors not as a residual space, but as an extension of the built environment itself." This approach signals a deeper integration of outdoor design into the overall narrative of a home.



wriver

Design trends that reflect comfort and expression

The current wave of outdoor furniture design is defined by a blend of comfort, flexibility, and visual sophistication. One of the most prominent trends is modularity – furniture that can be rearranged, expanded, or adapted depending on the occasion. This adaptability allows homeowners to transition seamlessly between intimate settings and larger social gatherings.

Handa highlights this clearly, noting a move toward “modular pieces” and “versatile outdoor spaces.” This flexibility is particularly relevant in urban homes, where space must often serve multiple purposes.

At the same time, comfort has taken center stage. Lounge-style seating, plush cushions, and deep-set sofas are redefining what it means to relax outdoors. Jain emphasizes that “comfort is non-negotiable – think plush seating, cozy corners, and all-day usability.” The outdoor experience is no longer about compromise; it is about indulgence.

Visually, the design language has also evolved. Earthy palettes, layered textures, and soft minimalism dominate contemporary outdoor aesthetics. Interior designer Punam Kalra, Creative Director of I'm the Centre for Applied Arts describes this beautifully as “a softer side of minimalism with earthy palettes, plinth legs, low-set silhouettes.” Yet, this restraint is often punctuated by playful elements that include bold colors, sculptural forms, and curated accessories that add personality and vibrancy.



Punam Kalra



Falgun Shroff

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▲▼I'm the centre for applied arts



The evolution of consumer expectations

Consumer expectations have evolved in tandem with these design shifts. Today’s homeowners no longer see outdoor spaces as optional; they are essential to the living experience.

Sukriti Sharma of Plüsch adds, “Consumers now expect outdoor areas to function as usable living spaces rather than occasional seating zones.” This means designing for a variety of activities, from dining and working to entertaining and relaxing. Outdoor furniture must therefore be versatile, durable, and visually cohesive.



Sukriti Sharma



plüsch

Ankur Modi



Ankur Modi of Vetra Luxury Outdoor Furniture adds a cultural dimension to this evolution, observing how outdoor spaces are becoming social hubs. “It is becoming a place to have afternoon tea, and host BBQ nights,” he says, highlighting the growing role of these spaces in everyday life and celebrations.

Najma Nabi Lone, Managing Director and Co-founder Richards Garden, emphasizes the demand for ease and convenience, noting that “consumers now expect outdoor spaces to feel like an extension of their homes – stylish, comfortable, and low-maintenance.” This expectation is driving innovation in both design and materials, ensuring that outdoor furniture is as practical as it is beautiful.



Najma Nabi Lone

Materials that marry performance with aesthetics

Material selection plays a crucial role in the success of outdoor furniture, particularly in a country like India, where climatic conditions can be extreme and varied. Today’s materials must strike a delicate balance between durability and design.

Aluminium, powder-coated metals, teak, rattan, and high-performance fabrics have emerged as popular choices, each offering unique benefits. Handa explains, “We choose these materials because they’re tough, beautiful, and low-maintenance. Besides, they hold up to the weather while keeping both comfort and aesthetics at the forefront.”

Shroff notes that materials are now chosen not just for their resilience but also for how they evolve over time. “Materials today are selected not just for durability, but for how they age and interact with their surroundings,” he says, pointing to a growing appreciation for patina and character.



▲►richards garden



vetra luxury outdoor furniture

The emergence of newer materials like FRP (Fiber Reinforced Plastic) is also reshaping the landscape. Nabi Lone, while highlighting its advantages, adds, “FRP is waterproof, corrosion-resistant, and low-maintenance, making it particularly suitable for diverse climatic conditions.”

At the same time, traditional materials like wood continue to hold their appeal, especially for those seeking a more timeless aesthetic. Teak and eucalyptus, with their natural oils and weather-resistant properties, offer both durability and unmatched beauty.

Designing for climate and context

Climate is perhaps the most defining factor in outdoor furniture design. In India, where temperatures can soar and monsoons can be intense, furniture must be built to endure. Sharma underscores this reality, stating that “climate plays a decisive role. “UV-resistant finishes, fade-resistant fabrics, and rust-proof hardware have become essential,” she says. Every detail, from material selection to structural design, must account for environmental exposure.

Bharti offers a more nuanced perspective, suggesting that climate should not be seen as a limitation but as a starting point. “The aim is not to resist climate entirely, but to design with an understanding of exposure,” he explains. This philosophy encourages a more responsive and context-driven approach to design.

Jain also highlights practical considerations such as breathable fabrics and lighter tones which enhance comfort in warmer climates while maintaining visual appeal.





vetra luxury outdoor furniture



bent collective



richards garden

Sustainability as a core design principle

Sustainability has become a defining force in the outdoor furniture industry, influencing everything from material sourcing to production processes. What was once a trend is now an essential aspect of responsible design.

Handa emphasizes this shift, stating, "Sustainability is at the heart of everything we do now. The use of certified woods, recyclable metals, and eco-friendly fabrics reflects our broader commitment to reducing environmental impact."

Shroff frames sustainability in terms of longevity and intention. "It's less about excess and more about investing in objects that carry longevity, purpose, and integrity," he adds. This approach encourages consumers to choose quality over quantity, reducing the need for frequent replacements.

Sharma highlights practical measures such as efficient manufacturing processes and the use of recycled materials, while Bharti points to innovation in material science,

including "reclaimed inputs and engineered blends." Together, these efforts are reshaping the industry's approach to sustainability.

Innovation and the future of outdoor design

Innovation in outdoor furniture is becoming increasingly sophisticated, blending technology with design to enhance usability and longevity. From weather-resistant coatings to advanced fabrics, the focus is on creating furniture that performs effortlessly in outdoor conditions.

Handa speaks of "UV- and weather-resistant coatings" and "smart, easy-clean fabrics," while Jain points to the rise of "multi-functional pieces" and "tech-friendly setups." These innovations are making outdoor spaces more adaptable and user-friendly.

Sharma highlights developments such as modular locking systems and integrated lighting, which add both convenience and functionality. These features reflect a growing demand for outdoor spaces that can support extended use, day and night.



plüsch



▲►wriver

Bharti takes a broader view, noting that innovation is no longer separate from design, rather, it is embedded within it. "This integration is enabling designers to push boundaries and explore new possibilities in form, material, and construction," he adds.

Blurring the lines between indoors and outdoors

Perhaps the most defining trend of all is the dissolution of boundaries between indoor and outdoor living. This shift is influencing every aspect of furniture design, from materials and finishes to form and function.

Handa explains, "We design with plush upholstery, elegant details, and palettes that make outdoor areas feel luxurious. The goal is to create spaces that feel as comfortable and refined as interiors."

Kalra highlights the adaptability of modern furniture, noting how pieces can move seamlessly between indoor and outdoor settings. This flexibility allows homeowners to reimagine their spaces and create a cohesive design narrative.

Meanwhile, Modi describes this as a unified design language, where textures, tones, and forms flow seamlessly across spaces. "The result is a sense of continuity that enhances both visual appeal and user experience," he says.



sarita handa



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The road ahead for india's outdoor furniture market

Driven by changing lifestyles, increasing design awareness, and a growing appreciation for outdoor living, the future of outdoor furniture in India looks promising. Handa predicts "innovation in weatherproof materials, artisanal detailing, and custom solutions," while Jain sees outdoor spaces becoming "a key highlight, not just an add-on."

Kalra connects this growth to cultural shifts, noting how outdoor spaces are increasingly used for gatherings and celebrations. Bharti, on the other hand, adds that the market is moving toward more thoughtful, design-led solutions, shaped by regional diversity and evolving consumer needs.

Looking ahead, the next phase of outdoor furniture design will be defined by a balance of sustainability, innovation, and personalization. As Modi succinctly puts it, "The future will focus on sustainability, durable materials, modular designs, and timeless aesthetics."

A new definition of living

Outdoor furniture today is no longer just about utility; it is about creating meaningful experiences. It reflects a broader shift in how we perceive space, comfort, and lifestyle. As boundaries blur and expectations rise, the outdoor environment is becoming an essential canvas for design innovation.

In this evolving landscape, furniture is not merely an addition to space; it is a defining element of how that space is lived, enjoyed, and remembered.