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Rooms

Readers'
Choice
Winners

Family Travel
Ideas

Adventures by Boat
& Malaysia Hotspots



Evolution of a Store

BY KEL FLANDERS

Designer furniture store JANUS et Cie is named after the Roman god Janus, whose two faces look forward and back. We caught up with founder and CEO, JANICE FELDMAN, and VP of Sales, STUART DUDLEY, to see how the brand's progressive designs are influenced by its history.



Stuart: The extraordinary effort we put into our designs allows them to easily be mistaken for indoor furniture. The added durability of each piece coupled with the development of softer materials and fabrics blurs the edges between indoor and outdoor design.

How is the design process different for residential and commercial use?

Janice: A homeowner may be very involved in the furniture selection for their home, while hotels and corporate entities have teams that must consider the different uses and needs for the many people who'll be enjoying the furniture. The clients' values, how long they anticipate keeping their products, and what they hope to experience throughout the lifetime of their investment all factor into this process.

Stuart: The scale is quite different from a volume perspective between residential and commercial projects, which affects requirements for logistics solutions, lead time and the fit-out process. You're more likely to have elements of customisation in commercial designs, too, requiring different approvals from decision makers!



The store's roots are in outdoor furniture - who were your pieces for in those early days?

Janice: When I opened the first JANUS et Cie showroom at the Pacific Design Center in Los Angeles 42 years ago (wow, was it really that long ago?!) we catered for both residential and commercial clients. At that time, we hadn't branched into the hospitality sector. Still, whether a piece is for a living room or a corporate rooftop, it's equally important to me.

Was there a significant project that first took the business indoors?

Janice: There was a need for incredibly durable pieces that retained their quality in high-traffic hospitality environments, and we were a natural fit to fill the gap. Our furniture is engineered to withstand the elements while retaining the elegance and beauty that's so sought after in indoor furnishings.

As we expanded into Asia, we saw the need to have exclusive indoor options. This led to the launch of luxurious rattan versions of some of our most iconic collections that had been offered solely in our exterior JANUSfiber material.



Is working on outdoor furniture more restrictive due to the materials and durability they have to have?

Janice: Not at all! By emphasising creativity and ingenuity, we've put ourselves at the forefront of enduring, innovative materials. Our JANUSfiber has the aesthetic of traditional woven furniture with the ability to maintain its stunning design over time and in any weather – it's resistant to UV light and moisture, and won't tear or fade.

Stuart: There are very few restrictions. While outdoor conditions may be more demanding, requiring fabrics and materials that will endure the elements, the technological developments we've made enable us to meet the needs of clients for their outdoor furniture without sacrificing style.

Have you worked on any unusual projects recently?

Janice: We often work with other luxury brands to create custom pieces and finishes for large-scale projects; these have included the Amazon Spheres in Seattle, Washington, and The St. Regis Hong Kong. These collaborations are unique to each environment and circumstance, and we're proud to offer this kind of bespoke service. Our furniture is also outfitted on over half of all ocean-bound cruise lines, which speaks to the extreme conditions that those items can endure.

Stuart: We recently completed a project at the Halekulani Okinawa hotel in Japan that included a lot of custom pieces. The furniture height was adjusted and tabletops were chosen for added durability to withstand the direct summer sun. We've also introduced the Alta collection, which has been modified to meet the standards required for senior living environments. These designs are incredibly functional yet distinguished. *EL*

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