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***Southern beauty:
the other home of (and
side to) Nick Tobias.
De-coding *The Smart
Home*. Buhrich House,
a personal memoir.***



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Setting the *scene*



JANUSET CIE is a furniture brand new to Australia and relatively new to Asia, but it's a name that will soon be familiar. Founder, Janice Feldman, shares the story of the company, her favourite products and what is behind the unusual name.



As the Milan Furniture Fair came to a close in April and an army of frenzied bloggers rushed to disseminate the latest crazes and fads, JANUS et Cie just kept sailing on, like an elegant ocean liner. Immune to the vagaries of temporary trend, the 37 year-old North American furniture company established in Los Angeles by Janice Feldman is a case study in entrepreneurial spirit. "I started working when I was thirteen," Janice, recounts, "so I could buy my own Princess phone!" A trained artist and interior designer, Feldman also studied graphic arts and industrial design. "With those passions, I guess it's not surprising that JANUS became my path, but I am proud, humbled, inspired and amazed to see my vision come to life. What began as a small showroom rep firm carrying lines for established furniture and textile companies has evolved into a global lifestyle furnishings brand with hundreds of employees, that I fondly refer to as my 'et Cie' [French for 'and company'] plus 15 flagship showrooms and dozens of field offices in nine countries."

The name of the company defines its philosophy. A homonym for Janice's name, Janus is also the Roman god with two heads, one looking forward and the other backward. This symbolically "embodies my own

approach to design and to life," Janice says: "Zest for innovations of the future, respect for traditions of the past. The 'et Cie' was to honour that a company, like a life, is a collective as well as an individual effort. Looking back almost 40 years later, this philosophy is still the essence of our company."

With a mission to be "the definitive source for site, garden and casual furnishings", over the past decade the JANUS empire has expanded beyond North America to straddle London, Dubai, Singapore, Macau, Shanghai, Hong Kong and, most recently Australia – with its Antipodean headquarters soon to be opened in Sydney. Interestingly, regional teams constantly feed back to the nerve centre in LA allowing JANUS to provide the most appropriate of their 120,000 inventory – as well as develop particular ranges – to suit local taste and aspirations.

Pieces like the Fibonacci dining chairs or armchairs, their elegant proportions a direct reference to the perfection of the Fibonacci sequence, the mathematical touchstone of all pure Modernist design, and the basis of the Golden Mean. Or the Tiempo series, a rigorous modular teak and upholstery system with in-built storage modules for bar or linen services – as perfect in harbourside in Sydney as at poolside in Palm Springs. Available in



a wide range of indoor/outdoor plain weave solution-dyed fabrics, the Tiempo is as easy to customise as it is to reconfigure, providing a range of options to suit individual – and ever-evolving – tastes. Add a Flutter umbrella, its flirtatious ruffles evocative of a passing breeze, and this is lifestyle furniture with a capital ‘L’.

Aesthetics aside, what’s perhaps most remarkable about JANUS et Cie is the company’s absolute commitment to customer service. “Our clients are our partners,” Janice iterates. “Our best clients are our local brand ambassadors. We are inspired by their input, a local perspective, so we come to market with exactly the right product offering for their needs.”

Asked to name her favourite series for now, Janice doesn’t hesitate. “The Suki-O chair!” The Suki-O won a Red Dot Design Award and is now housed at the Red Dot Museum in Singapore. “We are very proud and excited to have received one of the highest accolades in product design,” Feldman demures. “And I am also particularly proud of The Masters Aluminum Series we just launched in February.” Working in close collaboration with designer Orlando Diaz-Azcuy, Feldman intended the Masters series to something that the industry had never seen before. “Our mutual aim has always been to inspire industry and craft at its finest, and to bring true heirlooms into being”.

In effect, the Masters Aluminium Series of metal furnishings is impeccably extruded and die-cast in solid aluminium. Sculptural, its intricate metalwork defies traditional methodologies and elegantly conveys the historical reference of the designs. Substantial frames, world-class engineering and precision welds ensure that each piece is as meticulously detailed beneath the finish as it appears on the surface. Furnished with signature JANUS et Cie cushions, the result is a glamorous ensemble of masterpieces reflecting relaxed, luxurious refinement.

An industrial behemoth with a fine eye for designer sensibilities and market desire, JANUS et Cie is forging the path forward. While the other brands flounder about, trying to capture fleeting mood, this is one company that knows where it’s going. Straight into real peoples’ homes.