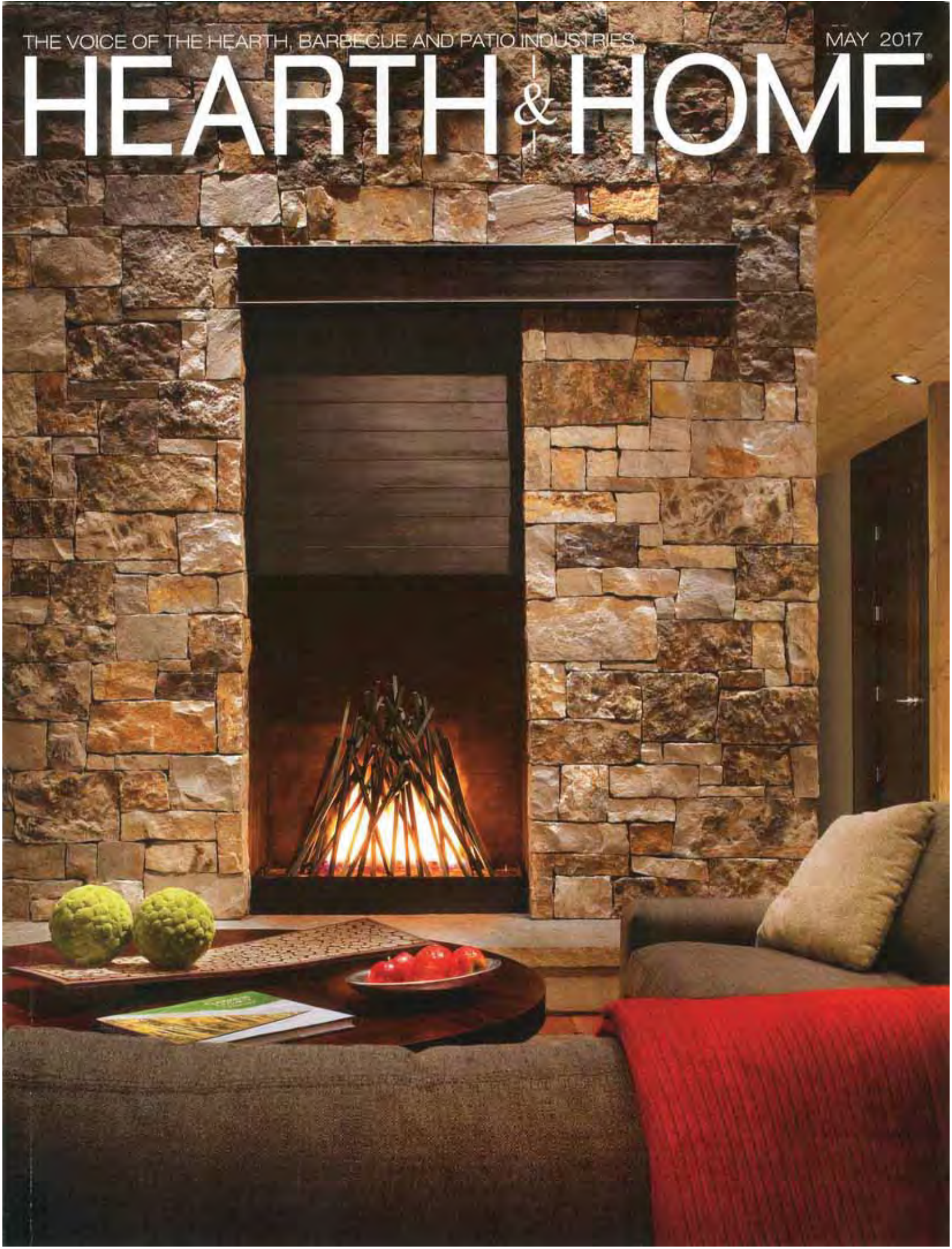


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Italian Flare, American Focus

Parà has found the New World a welcoming place for its Tempotest brand of solution-dyed acrylic fabrics.

By Mark Brook

Italy's heritage in textiles can be traced to the Middle Ages when artists created stunningly beautiful designs and craftsmen brought those designs to life through elegant fabrics that were in demand around the world. Global leadership in textiles remains a hallmark of the Italian economy today, driven not only by centuries-old traditions in art and fashion, but also by manufacturing technology that's among the most advanced in the world. Italy consistently ranks among the world's top three textiles exporters.

Casual furniture manufacturers and specialty retailers in the U.S. are benefitting from Italy's leadership in textiles through the Tempotest Home brand of casual furniture fabrics from Parà Group, a global textiles leader for nearly 100 years. During recent years, Parà, long recognized for interior fabrics, has consistently increased its investments in the U.S. with a goal of making its Tempotest brand of performance fabrics more readily available and more competitive in America.

"Parà has always had a strong international calling, and has been working in the U.S. for 30 years," said Marco Parravicini, CEO of Parà. "During recent years, we have benefited from the growing demand for European products in the U.S. where the textile market for outdoor products is growing. We are very optimistic about our future in America with the investments we're making."

Fabric from Tempotest Club Collection.

Moving Closer to Customers

Parà Group's commitment to the Tempotest brand and the U.S. casual furniture market is occurring on two continents. In Europe, Parà continues to invest in its technically-advanced, vertically-integrated manufacturing centers. From fiber through finishing, Parà is a technical leader in the production of Tempotest Home solution-dyed acrylic fabrics that is backed by a six-year warranty.

That leadership is further reflected in its partnership with DuPont and its iconic Teflon brand. Tempotest fabrics feature Teflon Extreme by Parà, a coating technology that enhances the fabric's water and oil repellency, and resistance to mold, mildew, stains, salt and UV fading, while maintaining a soft hand. According to Parà, the application of Teflon Extreme technology makes Tempotest fabrics self-cleaning and offers protection within each fiber.

In North America, Parà's single largest commitment to the U.S. market is its Dallas distribution center, which opened in 2013. This center includes an inventory of 400 Tempotest Home fabrics, assuring timely availability, including cut yardage, to casual furniture manufacturers and specialty retailers throughout the U.S. Parà is continuing to invest in its Dallas center, recently incorporating a new automated inventory tracking system.

"The opening of our Dallas office and distribution center is without a doubt the single most important emblem of our commitment to get closer to our American customers, improve the availability of our fabrics and make our company easier to work with," Parravicini said. "At the same time, our network of representatives is establishing relationships with our customers so that we can better meet their needs and serve in a consulting role on how best to use our fabrics."



Tempotest Headquarters in Sovico, Italy.



Marco Parravicini.



Jeff Jimison.



Solution-dyed acrylic yarn being spun at the Lenna, Italy, plant.



A newly configured fabric warehouse with automated, robotic fabric-picking capability.

Reaching Out to U.S. Customers

Leading the Sales and Marketing program for Tempotest USA is Jeff Jimison, a veteran of the U.S. textiles marketplace who has served as National Sales director for Tempotest Home for the past three years. Jimison is leading a team of 13 marketing representatives who give the brand nationwide coverage.

"The casual furniture market is looking for something different in solution-dyed acrylic fabrics, and we're meeting that need," Jimison said. "We've increased our placements with casual furniture manufacturers each year as our customers are drawn to the quality of our fabrics and the Italian influences in our designs. Tempotest Home offers a full range of options with a deep palette of solid colors, jacquards and novelty yarns. In many ways the fabrics sell themselves."

Also assuring that the Tempotest brand is more widely available in the U.S. marketplace is The Miami Corporation of Cincinnati, Ohio, which in July of 2016 signed on as the exclusive distributor for Tempotest awning and marine fabrics in

the U.S. With locations in Cincinnati, Albany, Dallas and Jacksonville, The Miami Corporation assures ready availability of Tempotest awning and marine fabrics nationwide.

"The Tempotest brand has been well received by our customers because of the quality of the fabric construction and because of the range of solid colors and stripes," said Tim Niehaus, president of The Miami Corporation. "People are drawn to the European influences in the colors, and they find that the fabric is easy to work with and has great dimensional stability."

Niehaus says his company is also benefitting from the sharing of ideas among his teams in the U.S. and Parà teams in Europe.

"It's a true partnership, a two-way street with Parà," he said. "They want our input and suggestions on how to make the collections even stronger. Parà is completely committed to the U.S. market and is continuing to bring on additional resources for our shared success."



Tempotest Regimental Stripe awning fabric.



Montecito furniture collection by Woodard featuring Home Operato fabric.



Bew White, Summer Classics



Terri Lee Rogers, OW Lee



Bill Herren, Woodard

“Our designers contribute stylistic points of view that can serve as inspirations, even if only as a starting point. The result is exclusive collections ranging from solids to stripes and from jacquards to prints.”

— Paolo Patrino,
Marketing manager of Parà.

It's All About the Italian Influence

While many factors are contributing to the growth of Tempotest fabrics in the U.S., it's the Italian design influence with an American flare that resonates the loudest. Casual furniture manufacturers and specialty retailers are continually in search of ways to gain the attention of consumers, and Tempotest Home fabrics are part of that equation.

“Our style is fresh, simple and elegant,” said Paolo Patrino, Marketing manager of Parà. “Parà operates in more than 125 countries all over the world, and ‘think global and act local’ is our philosophy. While our designs show a strong component of ‘Italian Style,’ our collections distributed in the U.S. are designed to meet the needs of this market.”

Tempotest Home encompasses five collections in the U.S. – Club, Molto Bene, Structure, Etamine and Solids. Within these collections are a vast array of solids, stripes and patterns, many with rich textural effects. Sheer and fire-resistant collections are also available under the Tempotest Home brand. New collections are planned for the 2018 market.

“We also develop exclusive Tempotest Home fabric collections for our U.S. customers with very low minimums,” Patrino said. “Our designers contribute stylistic points of view that can serve as inspirations, even if only as a starting point. The result is exclusive collections ranging from solids to stripes and from jacquards to prints.”

Parà's ability to create exclusive fabric collections and its broad array of open collections are attracting the attention of U.S. casual furniture makers. By way of example, Summer Classics Home turned to the Italian brand while designing an exclusive new line of casual furniture.

“When we did the White Label line, which is a high-end line only available to certain dealers, designers, and high-end clients and not available on the Internet, we were looking for something unique and European,” said Bew White, CEO of Summer Classics Home. “There are many fabrics (from Tempotest) with unique patterning in them not typically available on the market. There are also (Tempotest) colors in European tones from a brighter, sophisticated palette that serves the taste of the discriminating buyer. Tempotest

also allowed us to use cut yardage from their distribution center in Dallas, which helped increase the volume and reduce the risk of inventory.”

Another leading U.S. casual furniture manufacturer drawn to the look of Tempotest Home fabrics is OW Lee.

“We’ve been working with Parà - Tempotest for about two years now and our customers have responded well to their European take on solution-dyed acrylic outdoor fabrics,” said Terri Lee Rogers, president of OW Lee. “We’ve noticed that the more masculine stripes sell particularly well on our large pieces, but we have also had a lot of interest in the bold colors in their Club cut-yardage program.”

As everyone in the casual furniture industry knows, consistency and visibility are essential to success, and Tempotest Home is following this playbook.



Watercolor Floral.

“When I was ready to start looking at new fabrics, they were right there,” said Bill Herren, creative director for Woodard. “The colors, style and design of their fabrics were refreshing, and I was immediately impressed.”

The clincher was a fabric we’re carrying called Watercolor Floral.”

What's in a Name?

One of the most common questions that Jimison and his team in the U.S. receive concerns the origin of the brand’s name – “Tempotest.” Just as with the fabrics themselves, the name reflects Italian influences with an American flare. Here’s the definition from Parà.

The word “Tempotest” is the combination of two words – Tempo and Test. Tempo in Italian means “Time” and also “Weather.” The word “Test” is commonly used in Italian with the same meaning as in English. Tempotest, therefore, means “tested under weather conditions to last in time.”

For the U.S. casual furniture industry, those are words that furniture makers and specialty retailers certainly can appreciate. 🏠



Aris Collection by OW Lee. The swivel chair and pillows feature Tempotest's Club Collection; the loveseat features Tempotest's Raffaello solid colored fabric.