



DURABLE DÉCOR

Designers for Decorating Den Interiors applaud performance fabrics

By Laurie Rudd

For any in the outdoor segment, performance textiles are tried-and-true friends. The fact that everyone does not understand the qualities of this durable choice seems unimaginable, but for consumers of one major design franchise, education continues to be an ongoing effort.

“Most of my clients are not aware at all of performance fabric, but once the benefits and features are explained to them, they love the idea of using them,” says Joyce Means, Decorating Den, Charleston, S.C.

With designers across the U.S. and Canada, Decorating Den Interiors (DDI) offers a front-line resource for

experiences and tales of performance fabrics and the growth in interior use. Each designer can relate a story

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illustrating the “why” for durable fabric qualities, many beginning with, “I am working with a client who has four

Dobermans . . .” or, “The chaise I designed was to be placed in a sunny Southeast-facing window . . .” or, “This client has four active boys . . .”

And the stories go on. For insight into their interior experiences, we asked a group of franchisees about how they’re finding success creating durable indoor décor.

Casual Living: Are your customers familiar with performance fabrics when discussing projects?

A. Not usually. They are very pleased and surprised when we talk about how stain-resistant and durable performance fabrics are. They then

DESIGNER Q&A

feel like they will be investing in something they will have for the long term.

—Sandy Kozar, Decorating Den Interiors, Kozar Design Team, Knoxville, Tenn.

A. They are always surprised when we review the qualities and the fact that you can remove stains with a solution that includes bleach. This really gets their attention!

—Cindy Batten, Lakehouse Outfitters & Decorating Den Interiors, Log Cabin, Texas

CL: Is performance an element in your design presentation?

A. One client, parents of a toddler, gave me a disbelieving eye when I told them that the white kitchen chairs would not stain. I responded with, 'Do you have any grape juice in the refrigerator?' They did. We poured the grape juice on the fabric, cleaned it and they became true believers!—Marni Sugerman, Decorating Den Interiors, Mamaroneck, N.Y.

A. We usually bring up performance fabrics when a customer mentions having pets or small children. They always respond positively to it. They don't usually know the qualities beforehand, but we educate them.

—Kristen Pawlak, KP Designs/Decorating Den Interiors, Louisville, Ky.

CL: How do your customers perceive the color/design/textural diversity available



in performance fabrics?

A. I make a point to share that there is an amazing variety developed for interior décor and show them examples of those that harmonize with their scheme.—Deborah Bettcher, Decorating Den Interiors, West Chester, Pa.

CL: Do you see performance fabrics growing in availability on interior furniture brands you offer?

A. Yes, most custom furniture manufacturers are offering performance fabrics for upholstery collections. This is so long overdue, and it makes sense especially for dining chair collections shown in white or off-white fabrics. Why not provide carefree design in the dining room, too?—Carolyn Beyersdorf, IIDA, Decorating Den, Holland, Ohio

A. Absolutely, why wouldn't anyone want a gorgeous fabric that is durable and easy to clean? It will be the new standard.—Marni Sugerman, Decorating Den Interiors, Mamaroneck, N.Y.

The education continues in the interiors segment, but for one group, performance fabrics are receiving tremendous applause.

Editor's Note: For more information on performance fabrics, turn to our special fabric feature, Textile Trends, on p. 20, and to our report, Stars of the Show, on the IFA Showtime Market on p. 38.