

by Jennifer Bringle

TOP SHOPS

RETAILERS SHINE IN THE CASUAL LIVING MERCHANDISING AWARDS

SOPHISTICATED STYLE. INSPIRED VIGNETTES.

Eye-popping accessories. This year's *Casual Living* Merchandising Award winners had all that and more.

For 2017, Authentek scored the top prize, Best Overall Merchandising, in the single-store category. The judges loved the Atlanta store's contemporary, stylish

look with a clear, cohesive viewpoint.

"It's a modern, attractive space with interesting vignettes that appeal to designers," says *Casual Living* Senior Graphic Designer Linsey Frost. "From the store front to the merchandising strategy to the products themselves, it all reflects the Authentek brand."

In the multi-store category, Arizona's Paddy O' Furniture (with locations in Scottsdale and Phoenix) earned Best Overall Merchandising. The panel loved the home-like feel of the store and its attention to detail with accessories.

"Paddy O' has inviting displays and uses accessories and products beautifully, which lends a feeling of overall

elegance to tell the outdoor story," says Laurie Rudd, owner, Laurie Rudd Public Relations and Marketing.

The store also earned the Best Use of Accessories award in the multi-store category for its tasteful displays that include everything from colorful throw pillows to potted succulents, a nod to the store's desert locale.



AUTHENTEK
BEST OVERALL MERCHANDISING: SINGLE-STORE

This Atlanta store exudes a cool, contemporary vibe with its sleek furnishings and stylish vignettes.

continued

PADDY O' FURNITURE
BEST OVERALL MERCHANDISING:
MULTI-STORE

Not one inch of this Arizona store is overlooked when it comes to its warm, inviting look, from the rustic beams overhead to multiple wall coverings and even a massive stone fireplace.

In the single-store category, recent HFA Retailer of the Year winner Sunnyland scored for Best Use of Accessories. The panel loved the way the Dallas retailer incorporated accessories to create full-room looks with everything from rugs and pillows to lighting and even outdoor curtains.

For best store front in the single-store category, Laura's Home and Patio in East Northport, New York, took the prize by dressing up its exterior with sunny pops of color via plants and yellow umbrellas.

"Laura's Home and Patio has a welcoming store front

that gives a glimpse of the color and fun of outdoor," Rudd says.

On the multi-store side, Amini's—with locations in Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas—earned best store front for its St. Louis location. The building commands a presence with the retailer's signature copper domed roof and colorful plants dotting the exterior.

Penn Stone in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, earned the single-store honor for Best Outdoor Display. The shop blends multiple seating and dining vignettes with outdoor kitchen setups and fire-pit lounging to show clients

a wide range of al fresco entertaining options.

Continuing its reign in the multi-store category, Nags Head Hammocks won the Best Outdoor Display award for the fourth consecutive year. The retailer makes excellent use of its tranquil waterside location in Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina, to create outdoor vignettes that capture the beauty and relaxation of living outside.

"I love the back-deck and back-porch vignettes," Frost says. "They make me want to pack up and go there."

Rounding out the winners, Merchandising Awards newcomer Surroundings

in Fort Collins, Colorado, earned the Best First-Time Entry nod. The judges liked their clean, thoughtful layout that included eye-catching details such as a wall display of umbrellas.

"I love their strategy of opening the umbrellas and mounting them on the wall behind the fire-pit chat set," says Waynette Goodson, editor-in-chief, *Casual Living*. "That's a creative display of umbrellas I hadn't seen."

While the exceptional group of entrants this year made the judges' decisions tough, they served as a reminder of the boundless creativity of casual retailers.

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SUNNYLAND

BEST USE OF ACCESSORIES: SINGLE-STORE

From rugs to wall art, Sunnyland uses accessories skillfully to create a full-room outdoor experience.



PADDY O' FURNITURE

BEST USE OF ACCESSORIES: MULTI-STORE

Paddy O' Furniture takes great care to use accessories in a tasteful way that inspires, rather than overwhelms.



LAURA'S HOME AND PATIO

BEST STORE FRONT: SINGLE-STORE

"How can you not stop at a store with bright yellow umbrellas out front?" asked *Casual Living* Editor-in-Chief Waynette Goodson on picking this New York retailer.



AMINI'S

BEST STORE FRONT: MULTI-STORE

The St. Louis location of Amini's stands out with its signature copper domed roof and archways.

Continued

PENN STONE

BEST OUTDOOR DISPLAY: SINGLE-STORE

Displaying both its hardscape business and its al fresco living products, this Pennsylvania retailer makes the most of the outdoor space.



NAGS HEAD HAMMOCKS

BEST OUTDOOR DISPLAY: MULTI-STORE

Sure, being located on the picturesque Outer Banks of North Carolina certainly gives this store a leg up, but it's the retailer's colorful, inviting displays that seal the victory.



SURROUNDINGS

BEST FIRST-TIME ENTRY: SINGLE-STORE

With a clean layout and thoughtfully arranged vignettes, this Colorado store made an impression on the judges.

JUDGES

- Waynette Goodson, editor-in-chief, *Casual Living*
- Jennifer Bringle, features editor, *Casual Living*
- Laurie Rudd, owner, Laurie Rudd Public Relations and Marketing
- Elena Strickler, senior graphic designer, *Casual Living*
- Linsey Frost, senior graphic designer, *Casual Living*

