

Mixing sleek with cozy

Celebrity designer Martyn Lawrence Bullard combines luxury and comfort.

BY ARIELLE PAUL

Whether he's designing a colorful and bold family-friendly home for Kylie Jenner or a collection of sleek and cozy indoor-outdoor furniture with Harbour Outdoor, to Martyn Lawrence Bullard, modern luxury is all about comfort.

"I really believe a good interior is a comfortable space you walk into, and you automatically feel like you can sit down and relax, like it's got arms around you," said Bullard, 52.

He brought that ethos to his initial pairing with Harbour Outdoor, the Australian design and manufacturing house, marrying "deep, wonderful upholstery" to raw and unique textures, such as Harbour's signature Indonesian teak and its natural, charcoal finishes.

The MLB Easy Chair was inspired by the lines of Swiss Mid-century architect Willy Guhl, "who made these amazing chairs out of concrete, which looked incredible, but are unbelievably uncomfortable," Bullard said.

In Bullard and Harbour's reimagining, the MLB Easy Chair features Olefin fabric that is resistant to water, mold and ultraviolet light, sitting over "the wonderful, curvaceous shape" of the wood frame.

Its sibling, the MLB Sun Lounge, is a chaise covered in Ferrari Batyline outdoor mesh fabric, for breathability, "because



Photographs by MEL MELCON Los Angeles Times

PAIRING WITH an Australian design and manufacturing house, Martyn Lawrence Bullard marries upholstery to teak textures.



SUN LOUNGES in natural teak and black Batyline mesh fabric.

there's nothing worse than lying on a sun-lounger getting all hot, sweaty and sticky," Bullard said.

You had an interesting early introduction to design at the Greenwich Antiques Market in London. How did that experience shape you as a designer?

Around the age of 12, I convinced my dad to rent me a stall there on Saturdays where I could

use my allowance to run around and buy things that I thought were pretty. Then I'd make them look cool and sell them to unsuspecting American tourists. At the time I thought it was just a thing to make extra money that I enjoyed doing, but in reality, it's where I got to understand and learn my trade. It's where I figured out where things were from, how to put things together, what the period of

something was — all the knowledge to become an interior designer.

Your interior design work incorporates a wide range of styles.

I love to be eclectic in my interiors. I never want something to be totally Mid-century or 18th Century French or 1970s disco — all great themes — but you need to mix it up a little bit to bring it into today.

Tell me about your creative process when working with a homeowner. How do you turn their vision into a reality?

When you first meet your client, it's important to feel a connection. If you don't have a connection, I don't think you can create a great interior. I get my clients to do a little homework for me — I want to know where their favorite restaurants are, their favorite hotel and shops, what they like and don't like about their current house and who has their dream house. There are elements in each answer that you pull to create your own jigsaw puzzle of the look that they really want at the end of the day. Then it's down to me and my team making that happen.

Tell me about your experience on

"Million Dollar Decorator."

It was the first time that Bravo had done a reality show where it really followed real designers, rather than things that are crafted to happen for TV. They followed me all over the world — France, India, Italy, New York and L.A. — you don't just see me moving a table or some pillows together. You saw the start of the project, the process with the clients, the dramas and disasters that could happen, the joy and elation when the project comes together and the clients get to see the reveal. All done in a real way with real budgets.

How do you create comfort?

I really believe that deep seating or overscale seating is key. Rather than sitting the prim and proper way, you can lounge or put your feet up and feel like it's your cozy spot. Upholstery is really important to me, and in my collections, everything we've made has been overscaled and super cozy, because that's the comfort level that all of my clients over the years have ended up wanting. They want extra-deep sofas and big chairs that create a very sink-in to experience within the upholstery.