



Design + Decor chatted with Stuart Sheppard of GWT Outdoors about his collaboration with Hardie Boys to design a line of state-of-the-art, custom-built pergolas that will provide you with the perfect outdoor living space.

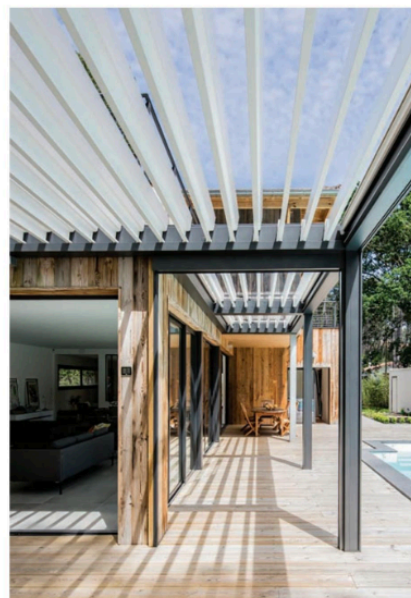
D+D: Tell us a bit about GWT Outdoors and its products and services.

SS: GWT Outdoors is a luxury boutique shop that provides top-quality, innovative, custom outdoor living solutions with superior craftsmanship, the latest technology and a timeless design. As brand partners with the world's leading outdoor manufacturers, we offer a broad suite of leading-edge, highly functional European and American outdoor products, including operable pergolas and awnings, screen shading, heating, cooling, exterior walling and luxury outdoor furnishings. With our finger on the pulse of industry market trends and technologies, we pride ourselves on introducing emerging, cutting-edge prod-

ucts and innovations. We showcase our portfolio of products in an unparalleled, state-of-the-art experiential showroom in Naples, FL, which is designed for homeowners and the trade. Our fully certified teams of design experts in outdoor luxury solutions are based in Naples and Greenwich, CT, and we service Florida, the New York tri-state region and the entire country. Our committed and highly experienced team members have a passion for enhancing luxury outdoor living, and they devote acute attention to detail. We provide seamless service: from the initial consultation and outdoor design recommendations, to the international shipping logistics and white-glove delivery and installation.

D+D: Pergolas date back to ancient times. Why do you think they are still relevant in today's market?

SS: The louvered-roof system is a complete game changer for both the high-end residential and the hospitality community. At the residential level, we are helping customers live an outdoor life similar to the setups they have indoors. At the restaurant



and hospitality levels, we are selling the client straight revenue. They can take and hold outdoor space reservations regardless of what Mother Nature throws at them, and can usually recoup their investment in as few as two years.

D+D: What are some benefits of having a pergola?

SS: Louvered-roof pergolas allow you to fully control your outdoor environment. You can position the louvers in an open position against the sun to keep the space in the shade, and allow fresh air to ventilate through. Open the louvers more to allow for direct sunlight when desired, and close them all the way to stop rain from entering your covered space. We have motorized side screens to stop sideways rain and wind, and we can add outdoor rated fans and heaters to further control the environment.

D+D: You recently partnered with a company called Hardie Boys to create a line of custom pergolas. Please tell us more about this collaboration.

SS: Hardie Boys creates components used in exterior building systems. Our collaboration with Hardie Boys came out of the need to offer more traditional-looking pergolas for Gulf Coast-area homes that have West Indies-type designs with more Colonial-style architecture. We can offer pergolas with rafters and decorative columns, and then incorporate the motorized louvered roofs, motorized side screens and drainage into a single package. It gives us much more flexibility in addressing our customers' needs. Hardie Boys is Florida-based, and Renson Outdoor, our partner for motorized terrace coverings, will soon be manufacturing its roof-only systems in Dallas—instead of Belgium—so we cut down dramatically on delivery timelines, shipping costs, etc. We are very excited about this partnership potential!

D+D: What features can homeowners add to the pergolas to create a more comfortable experience?

SS: We tell our clients, "We want to help you take your indoor living outdoors." We can create outdoor kitchens with dining space, and we can create outdoor living spaces with fire pits and built-in TV-sound systems. We are partnering with Kettal, a company based in Barcelona, Spain, to include custom, high-end outdoor furniture, carpeting and lighting in our packages. We can add heaters and fans for temperature control. We recently built an outdoor yoga studio with louvered roofs, stackable glass doors, windows and a sporting equipment closet. The potential for use is unlimited.

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