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chic teak

As the warm weather beckons us out-of-doors, families across the Central Coast pull out their patio furniture and get cozy in their outdoor kitchens and living rooms. In the past, this would mean lounging and dining upon pieces built purely for function and made from hard, cold, somewhat inhospitable materials like glass, wrought iron, and plastic—materials up to the task of weathering the harsh outdoor conditions. But, the age of unsightly and uncomfortable nomadic (or portable) furniture is no more. In its place, we find lasting quality, luxurious comfort, and timeless style—the key points of one of the world's leading teak patio furniture manufacturers: Summit, in Carmel. »

AT the pinnacle of the market, Summit's pieces are not just practical for the yard—their clean, understated elegance elevates them to foldable, stackable, functional art.

Begun by William Sieberts in the Bay Area in 1979, and soon after moved to headquarters in Carmel, the local company has set the standard for chic outdoor teak furniture for nearly 30 years. Sieberts founded the company with friend and architect Kip Stewart, the lauded mastermind behind Big Sur's Ventana Inn and now a key contributor to the Summit collection. Together, Sieberts, the visionary, and Stewart, the artist, put benches, chairs, and tables in the category of luxury and art—well before the market was asking for it. Sieberts' wife and the current president of Summit, Jane Sieberts, says that her husband is unquestionably a "pioneer in the industry" and adds that Stewart's designs are the ones people have been trying to knock off for years. "We are the standard by which other teak furniture is measured," she says.

Marketing Director Gay Reimann explains that when Summit began, yards were smaller and plush patios were not all the rage as they are now. But that did not stop the forward-thinking team. "They were the trendsetters," Reimann says, allowing that they contributed to jumpstarting the open-air-living revolution. Sieberts also foresaw an opportunity in the yachting culture then booming in Europe and now growing in the U.S., and he set out to create timeless, quality, nomadic furniture that could last through ocean breezes, rains, and poolside damage, while conveying the level of classic style worthy of discerning consumers.

The result: striking, sculptural chaise lounges, sectional outdoor sofas, footstools, and rockers that are at once simple and sophisticated. "It's not just your average wooden furniture," Jane Sieberts says, explaining that they use the highest-grade teak wood and that the clean lines and curves of each piece are hand-finished with care. The smooth, organic teak



welcomes the human touch, and the warm honey-hued wood, if left to the elements, gradually turns a soft ashen gray that she says gets more and more beautiful as it thrives in its wet, outdoor environment. With naturally long-lasting material and style and a lifetime guarantee, owning this furniture is a "green" investment in and of itself, but the icing on the cake is that the teak is also an ecologically sensitive material, grown sustainably in Indonesian plantations.

Summit's popularity continues to grow in both a world and local market, and now includes several other designers; among them is England's John Munford who specializes in classy, yet practical, furniture for super yacht societies and who designed Summit's popular

Sundeck Collection. They have showrooms in L.A., San Francisco, and London, and have done upscale installations for such resorts as The Inn at Spanish Bay in Pebble Beach and Casa Elar at The Ojai Valley Inn & Spa. And while they plan to continue adding new pieces, materials, and technology, Jane Sieberts says Summit will not be swayed by fickle trends or opportunities for short-term success. "We're a leader; we're not a follower," she says, maintaining that Summit is a "solid" company. Like the teak itself, it seems the company was destined to weather storms of changing fads and economies, to stand steadfast and grow increasingly beautiful with time.

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