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The 10 Most Remarkable Market Umbrellas

Designers Schuyler Samperton and Jeff Lincoln take shelter beneath the season's shadiest characters

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Summer's here, and the routine couldn't be more pleasant: The curtains have been flung open, the lemonade poured, the chaise longues placed just so. Now it's time to unfurl the finishing touch to an afternoon of outdoor living—a market umbrella.

While their historical roots are utilitarian (protecting shoppers and cafégoers from the sun's strong rays), today these oversize parasols are both a practical requirement for sun worshippers and a fanciful flourish for aesthetes en plein air.

A traditional market umbrella has a generous canopy that lets in the breeze while rebuffing a wide swath of sun and rain. Beyond that, the decorative details vary widely, from polite piping to flamenco ruffles. Modern adjustments to the apparatus can include a wheeled base, a tilting or pivoting canopy, and hand cranks for easy operation, but a sturdy base is the only real necessity.

Our expert judges this month—interior designers Jeff Lincoln and Schuyler Samperton—agree that a great market umbrella completes the look of an alfresco setting. "It's standard issue today," says Samperton. Lincoln, too, praises these lofty accent pieces, adding that their height offers a proportional counterpoint to other terrace and poolside furnishings. An umbrella shouldn't just cast an inviting shadow, he advises, "it should contribute to the total effect of the landscape." ▷





1 SIAM UMBRELLA BY JANUS ET CIE

The designers swooned over this parasol-inspired version. "This is both graceful and incredibly well made," reports Samperton, adding that a white or neutral fabric complements its serene vibe. "It has a daintier look than most," says Lincoln. "A surprising color such as yellow, pink, or red would animate it nicely." Height: 8'; diameter: 8'; material: ash pole with acrylic canopy (available in other colors); delivery: 6-8 weeks; price: \$1,120 (base included)



2 SANTA BARBARA UMBRELLA BY SANTA BARBARA DESIGNS

"A classic," raves Lincoln. "The quality and the details are terrific," he adds, pointing to the teak pole with brass fittings. Samperton thinks the hue shown here is spot-on. "Sitting under pink is very flattering," she explains, "and the scalloped edge adds a lot of whimsy. It's festive and fun."

Height: 9'; diameter: 9'; material: teak frame and pole with acrylic canopy (available in other sizes, colors, and wood finishes); delivery: 4-6 weeks; price: \$3,085, base \$375



3 TEAK OCTAGONAL UMBRELLA BY RESTORATION HARDWARE

"The construction is fantastic," exclaims Samperton. "It's sturdy, and the top tilts so you don't have to move it around to block the sun." Lincoln finds the traditional shape exceptionally versatile for pairing with a range of furniture styles, and is smitten with its "fresh color." Height: 9'; diameter: 9'; material: teak frame and pole with brass-wrapped joints, leather pulley system, and tilting Sunbrella fabric canopy (available in other sizes and colors); delivery: 1-2 weeks; price: \$635, base \$90



4 SQUARE MARKET UMBRELLA BY POTTERY BARN

"For its size, this umbrella is extremely easy to open," notes Lincoln. "The fabric choices are nifty, and it's very well priced—a good buy for a summer rental." For Samperton, it conjures New England beaches. "Cape Cod, Nantucket, the Vineyard!" she cheers. "Use it with glossy white Adirondack chairs." Height: 9'; diameter: 8.5'; material: eucalyptus frame and pole with two-position, pivoting canopy of weather-resistant polyester canvas (available in other sizes, colors, and solids); delivery: 1-2 weeks; price: \$159-\$179, base \$99



5 SQUARE FOUR-PANEL UMBRELLA BY WEST ELM

"The small scale of this canopy makes it a great option for a city terrace," advises Samperton. "Or for multiples," Lincoln chimes in. "These umbrellas have a resort feel to them. A row of them would turn your pool area into a St. Barts beach." Both designers commend its crisp profile and easy-open mechanism. Height: 8'; diameter: 8'; material: steel frame and pole in white powder-coated finish (also available in chocolate), with hand-crank, two-position, pivoting polyester-canvas canopy in indigo (other colors available); delivery: 1-2 weeks; price: \$129, base \$99



6 PAGODA UMBRELLA BY PIER I IMPORTS

Lincoln envisions this patterned umbrella on a shady backyard terrace. "near ornate, carved Balinese furniture." With its Asian overtones, he continues, "it has a specific point of view." "The King and I!" quips Samperton, who recommends pairing the umbrella with lanterns and low, cushioned furniture to create an exotic outdoor room. "It packs a lot of style for the money." Height: 9'; diameter: 8.5'; material: nyatoh-wood frame and pole with polyester-canvas canopy; delivery: immediate; price: \$199, base \$29



7 TUUCI SHADE PLATFORM BY DOUGAN CLARK FOR DESIGN WITHIN REACH

"This is the Dior of market umbrellas: gray and white and ultratailed," proclaims Samperton of the silvery canopy. The designer praises an added value: The fabric blocks UV rays. Lincoln concurs: "It's a high-tech version—ideal for a modern environment." Height: 8'; diameter: 11'; material: stainless-steel frame and pole, UV-reflective canopy in silver or vinyl-coated polyester with pulley system (also available in white, or in green canvas); delivery: 1-2 weeks; price: \$1,500 (base included)



8 CALABRIA RECTANGULAR UMBRELLA BY HAMPTON BAY FROM THE HOME DEPOT

"The exaggerated square of the shade distinguishes this umbrella from its peers," declares Lincoln, who recommends using one or more in a garden. "It would look great as a pair, and at that price you can do it." Samperton lauds its neutral hue: "It would almost disappear into the landscape." Height: 8'; diameter: 9'; material: aluminum frame and pole in powder-coated Brownstone finish with hand-crank polyester canopy; delivery: 1-2 weeks; price: \$159, base \$40



9 SHADE ARCHITECTURE UMBRELLA BY BROWN JORDAN

Samperton envisions this one in a city setting, pointing out the sleek chrome finish of the base. "Plus, it's ridiculously easy to open and close," she says. Lincoln warns that the deeply scalloped edge reduces sun coverage. "But it's a great look," he adds, "for urban rooftops and terraces." Height: 8'; diameter: 9'; material: aluminum frame and pole, Sunbrella fabric canopy with pulley system (available in other fabrics); delivery: 6-8 weeks; price: \$3,120, base \$410



10 SHADY LACE PARASOL BY DROOG DESIGN FROM THE CONRAN SHOP

"An innovative material," declares Lincoln of the lacy plastic top. "People who aren't drawn to traditional market umbrellas might choose this as a festive piece." "More art than function," says Samperton, who suggests using it with "minimalist furniture." Height: 7.5'; diameter: 7'; material: wood frame and pole (also available in white aluminum), green polyester canopy (also available in white); delivery: 1-2 weeks; price: \$350, base \$85