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Bringing Luxury Home:

SOLANA OUTDOOR LIVING

BY JOE TRUSTY | PHOTO CREDITS: RYAN HUGHES DESIGN

At the heart of the high-end outdoor living design industry lies Ryan Hughes Design Build, a name synonymous with innovation, luxury, and meticulous craftsmanship. At the 2024 International Pool Spa Patio Expo in Dallas, Ryan Hughes and Sozan Hughes discussed a new venture poised to redefine the outdoor living experience: Solana Outdoor Living. This new division brings the Ryan Hughes aesthetic to a broader audience, providing curated products and design expertise in a boutique-style environment.

Ryan Hughes Design has long been celebrated for its grand, luxury outdoor living projects, often tailored to the super high-net-worth clientele. However, with success came challenges.

Hughes explains, “A lot of the calls that come into our office, we have to turn them down because they have a quarter-million-dollar budget, even a \$500,000 budget, and we were not able to service them with the business model that we’ve created.” Solana emerged as the solution, offering a pathway to extend the Ryan Hughes touch to more homeowners.

“Solana is a product business,” Hughes states, “a showroom model where people can come in and see vignettes of all the outdoor spaces that we create.” This 12,000-square-foot live showroom in Central Florida showcases a variety of elements—from live walls to outdoor kitchens, planters, and furniture—allowing customers to visualize and select pieces that

align with their preferences and budgets.

Solana’s design philosophy centers around the concept of curation. Ryan and Sozan Hughes have meticulously selected products and materials from across the globe. As Hughes describes, “We travel the world looking for the coolest products, and then we curate them. Not just finding what looks good, but also ensuring it works for specific climates, like Florida’s rain, hurricanes, and humidity.” This attention to detail ensures durability and functionality while maintaining aesthetic appeal.

For clients entering the showroom, the experience is as personal as it is inspiring. Sozan Hughes explains, “When a client comes in, I walk them through

the showroom and see what they're moving towards. Whether it's colors, textures, or specific styles, I guide them to pieces that resonate with their tastes." Once preferences are identified, the process moves into design consultations and, if needed, home visits to ensure harmony with the existing architecture and outdoor spaces.

One of the standout aspects of Solana is its ability to cater to a demographic previously underserved by Ryan Hughes Design Build. By offering individual components of the Hughes aesthetic, clients with modest budgets can still achieve a taste of luxury. Hughes emphasizes, "What they can do is use any pool contractor and then come to Solana to accessorize and outfit the space with all those colors, textures, and features that Ryan Hughes has become synonymous with."

This accessibility extends beyond residential projects. Solana is also targeting the hospitality industry and even collaborating with other pool builders. "If you're a pool builder anywhere," Hughes notes, "we can help you furnish your project. It's one of the most lucrative parts of the project and

the easiest to execute."

While Ryan Hughes Design Build remains a boutique brand focused on custom luxury projects, Solana is designed for scalability. Hughes envisions the brand going national and even international. "With Solana, we're taking the Ryan Hughes look and feel and expanding it," he says. "It can go nationally, internationally, very easily." By focusing on products rather than construction, Solana avoids the challenges of differing building codes and permits across regions, making it an adaptable and far-reaching business model.

Solana's launch aligns with Ryan Hughes' mission to elevate the outdoor living industry. Drawing inspiration from luminaries like Brian Van Bower and Skip Phillips, Hughes aims to integrate landscape architecture and curated outdoor furniture into a holistic experience. "We've always had a goal to innovate the industry," Hughes remarks, "and to elevate that with outdoor furniture, lighting, and features that set a new standard."

For Sozan Hughes, this approach is deeply client-centric. "It's about knowing your client and not pushing them," she explains.

"Understanding their preferences and needs allows us to create spaces that truly reflect their vision."

Solana also reflects the broader trend of increased investment in outdoor living spaces. As Hughes notes, "When we first got into this industry, less than 10% of a home's value was spent on outdoor living. Now, we see projects where it's 50/50. The outdoor space has a greater lifestyle impact than the inside of the home."

This shift has prompted innovations in lighting, water features, and furniture design. Solana is at the forefront of this evolution, providing clients with a one-stop shop for creating cohesive and luxurious outdoor environments. As Hughes puts it, "Solana is revolutionizing how people purchase their outdoor furniture and accessorize their spaces. It's about creating an accessory model that's holistic, where everything works together under one professional design team."



Read the entire article.

