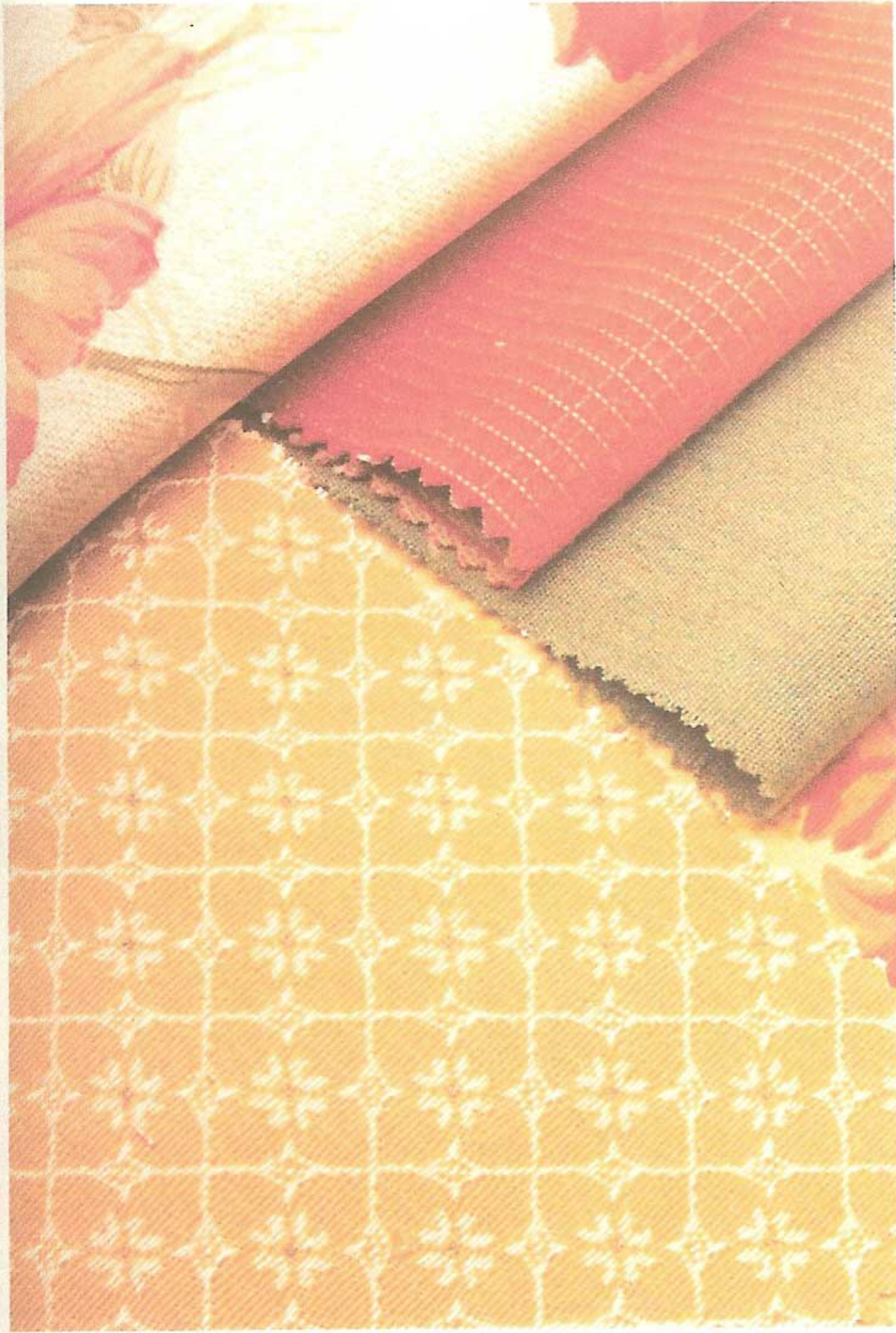




Designer FYI

By Kris Linder

Indoors | out



These sturdy fabrics were considered less fashionable than the upscale designer fabrics — but not any longer.

You've noticed it, right? All outdoor furniture cushions are covered with a fabric that withstands rain, sleet, snow, spills, chlorine and suntan lotion. What a miracle fabric "Sunbrella" was when it was invented. For some 20 years it was the only one of its kind on the market.

How things have changed.

Almost all major fabric manufacturers now make their own version of "indoor-outdoor" material, but this time most of it looks like indoor-style fabric, largely because acrylics are rising in popularity. Fabric manufacturers have been able to provide carefree, "sturdy-under-fire" fabrics that pretty much withstand the punishment of dogs, cats, children and the occasional party-goer.

Until recently, the selection was limited to faux leathers, solids and tweeds, which were often relegated to the family or kids' rooms. These sturdy fabrics were considered less fashionable than the upscale designer fabrics — but not any longer. Manufacturers have come forward with a multitude of designs and colors that fit almost every style, and have the added feature of being stain resistant, spill resistant, and animal and kid friendly. These fabrics may seem slightly pricier in the beginning, but they're worth it in terms of longevity.

These solution-dyed acrylic fabrics are created through a unique process that adds pigment during fiber production, which means that the color lasts as long as the fabric does. The fabric resists fading, and because it is made of woven, breathable acrylic yarn, it resists mildew as well.

Indoor-outdoor fabrics are perfect for porches, patios, sunrooms, living areas, kitchens and dining rooms. As with most materials, they should be cleaned regularly, before dirt and other substances are allowed to accumulate and become embedded in the fibers. The difference with these fabrics is that you simply brush off any loose dirt or food, and then clean with water and a mild, natural soap.

Fabric manufacturers that carry this remarkable product include Sunbrella, Robert Allen Fabrics, Silver State Fabrics, Fabricut and Duralee Fabrics.

Whether your rooms are traditional, contemporary or eclectic, you'll find a wide variety of luxurious, beautiful and easy-to-maintain fabrics that are perfect for today's family lifestyle. ↑

Interior Design Source owner Kris Linder consults, designs, remodels and provides interior furnishings for a large segment of Silicon Valley. Call her at 408.395.4028 or visit her Web site, www.interior-design-source.com.