



"Outdoor entertaining is a cultural art form."

PERFECT PITCH

FOR AN EXOTIC PARTY SPACE OR A BACKYARD RETREAT, RAJ TENTS DELIVERS FANCIFUL OUTDOOR ROOMS. BY CHILOÉ HARRIS

Outdoor entertaining is a cultural art form," says Raj Tents designer Dominic Mitchell, whose billowing canopies have been sheltering stylish alfresco occasions since the Los Angeles company launched in 2004. Mitchell and his business partner, Maurice Walsh, recently began offering their full collection of tents—previously available only for event rentals—for purchase. Now, a luxurious getaway is as close as your own backyard.

Exquisite craftsmanship sets Raj apart from other tent manufacturers, says Mitchell, who is British and lived in India as a young child. Located in the city of Ahmedabad in Gujarat, India, the Raj factory handcrafts about 50 tents annually using traditional methods. Each tent has a bamboo or stainless steel frame, and is constructed from hand-dyed textiles. The fabric is woodblock-printed with traditional motifs by Muslim artisans. Tiny mirrors are embroidered onto the interior and exterior, and each tent is finished with shimmering tassels and scalloped trim.

With a growing line of custom accessories and furnishings—including chandeliers, hand-woven dhurries and the new Mughal fountain—Raj tents come ready to frame any outdoor fete. But, in the spirit of India's traveling caravans, the tents are also designed to be practical: All are weather-resistant and easy to pack up.

The company is currently working on a new collection of children's and pet tents. Mitchell smiles as he describes one of his latest creations, a little blue tent with roll-up windows that serves as a magical hiding place for his eight-year-old son, Christopher. ■



TOP LEFT: Old friends Dominic Mitchell (pictured on the left) and Maurice Walsh started Raj Tents in the Bay Area before relocating to Los Angeles in 2006. ABOVE AND LEFT: Their tents range from a rooftop pavilion (above) furnished with carved-wood furniture, to the expansive Maharaja tent (at left) set for a banquet in a San Francisco garden.