

# Padma's Plantation

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## **Padma's Plantation Designs Reflect Latinos' Ever-Evolving Furniture Preferences**

*President/Director of Design creates furniture and accessories that echo the blended cultural influences of Hispanics from the United States, Central America and the Caribbean*

**Batavia, IL** – At Padma's Plantation, one of America's leading designers, manufacturers and wholesalers of Latin-inspired, plantation, tropical and contemporary furniture and accessories, success in the fast-growing Hispanic market segment has come naturally. "After all, I'm Latin!" says Renee Maria Fanjon, the firm's President and Director of Design, who is a native of Tampico, Mexico. "While other furniture vendors are just beginning to design and manufacture for the Latino population, Padma's Plantation has always tapped into that market without even consciously realizing it. Plus, we also have many, many non-Latino customers who love our designs for the same reasons that Hispanics embrace them – because they are unique, bold, fun, comfortable and attractively priced."

In the United States alone, Hispanic purchasing power is growing exponentially, making it a hot market segment for manufacturers. According to New York-based business strategy and consulting firm Santiago Solutions Group, Hispanic buying power is expected to reach \$928 billion by 2007 and \$1.2 trillion by 2010. In 2000, U.S. Census Bureau results showed that the 7.5 percent annual growth rate in Hispanic purchasing power was notably higher than that in the rest of the U.S. population (4.9 percent annual growth rate).

Many Padma's Plantation customers hail from Spanish-speaking countries—like the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Mexico and Panama, as well as Hispanics and Caucasians living in the United States. These customers feel the cultural connection as soon as they step into Padma's Plantation showrooms – Latin music is playing, margaritas are served, and Fanjon is there to welcome them, easily conversing with the customers in Spanish or English. "Our customers immediately identify with the atmosphere in our showrooms, and I know they feel comfortable because I relate well to people from both cultures," says Fanjon.

Perhaps Fanjon is so attuned to these dual cultural markets because she is a U.S. Hispanic living in the Chicago suburbs, with lifelong ties to the culture and customs with which she was raised in her native Mexico. As a youngster, Fanjon dreamed of working in the world of fashion and decorating. After studying fashion design for one year, she moved to Chicago in the 1980s and earned a bachelor's degree in International Business. After graduation, she began a nine-year modeling career, traveling to far-flung destinations and appearing in ads for companies such as Target, Jockey, Sears and LensCrafters. This variety of life experiences further expanded her ability to understand the likes and desires of those from other cultures.

As a designer, Fanjon intuitively realizes what Hispanics want when it comes to furniture buying. "When I design furniture and accessories for Padma's Plantation, I don't consciously have a Hispanic or Latino style mentality. I like bold designs, ones that take all our customers past the conventional style boundaries set by other furniture manufacturers. We know that our customers want furniture that's different, that speaks to an individual's bold and distinctive personality. Items in our collections tend to be whimsical, adventuresome and fun."

Fanjon also understands the emphasis Latinos place on furniture that is comfortable, casual and welcoming – ideal for hours spent dining outdoors on a sunny veranda or conversing with family and friends on a spacious porch.

The furniture and accessories that play a role in many of today's Latino homes, Fanjon says, are a mix of old and new. "We Latinos like fine furniture and we definitely want a touch of our culture in our home décor. But we don't necessarily want the chunky, heavy look of our grandparents' furniture to be the primary focus in a room. We might put a valued family heirloom in a living room as an accent piece, incorporating it in an eclectic way that mixes with our more casual, contemporary furniture.

"No matter their culture, those who live in coastal areas are more likely to decorate their entire home in a tropical look that incorporates natural fibers," says Fanjon. "Those living in non-coastal or metropolitan and suburban areas tend to juxtapose a select number of these pieces with their overall home décor, giving their homes a hint of Latin flavor."

**About Padma's Plantation:**

Padma's Plantation has permanent showrooms in Atlanta, High Point, and Las Vegas. The firm's collections are also sold in rep showrooms in Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Seattle, New York and San Francisco. For more information on Padma's Plantation, contact the firm at 1375 Kingsland Drive, Batavia, IL 60510; phone, 800.753.9190; fax, 630.761.3130; or e-mail, [info@padmasplantation.com](mailto:info@padmasplantation.com).