

The stripes fantastic

Design | South of France awning chic is being embraced by global urbanites keen to bring the holiday vibe home, writes *Keith Flanagan*

Behind Romanos Brihi's Victorian terrace in Kensington, presiding over climbing vines and bronze statues of herons, a red-and-white striped awning stretches 4 metres into the garden. Brihi, an interior designer and co-founder of London's Studio Vero, chose the canopy for a dose of the Mediterranean — and a hint of nostalgia.

"They take me back to my parents' home in the south of France, which has always been a huge design influence for me," says Brihi of striped awnings. "There's a sense of holiday to them — a bit of frivolity — which I love bringing into a London setting."

Striped canvas has long been used on shopfronts and cafés. It's a staple of historic seaside resorts around the world, where cabanas and parasols dot the shorelines, shorthand for laid-back downtime. But designers are increasingly bringing this favourite of boutique hotels and alfresco dining spots into homes and more urban settings.

Hillarys, a window furnishings specialist, says domestic orders for awnings were up 46 per cent in 2025 against 2024, and as of March 2026 had risen 76 per cent compared with last year. Patterned awnings and stripes are leading the way, says John Foster, Hillarys' exterior installation and service manager. He points to products such as Manosque Yellow with buttery black stripes, and more classic colours such as Boston Red (from £1,999). "Stripes are expressive but not overwhelming."

They "introduce rhythm and movement", says Greg Vorrhis, executive director of global design at outdoor



fabric manufacturer Sunbrella, and can influence perception of scale, "elongating or widening a space depending on their orientation".

In a Dallas house renovation, studio Redd Kaihoi updated a set of retractable awnings with Sunbrella's black-and-white Cabana Classic upholstery. "A pergola filters. An overhang blocks. This awning animates," says co-founder David Kaihoi. "The combination of black, white, lush green and sunlight dancing between a fabric valance conjures a very specific set of associations: the grand hotel terrace, the European café, the house in the south of France where someone is always about to open a bottle of something cold." (Dickson, part of the same parent company as



Sunbrella, offers the Orchestra striped awning fabric range in the UK and Europe, from €28.87 per metre.)

Kaihoi says the wide stripes (about 10cm) add drama to the 12-metre terrace, large enough for two seating areas. "A bold stripe at that scale earns the space a kind of confidence that a neutral never could," he says. A narrow stripe might have created noise instead of visual rhythm; Redd Kaihoi wanted the stripes to read as a defined two-colour pattern. "These stripes are broad enough that the eye settles into them rather than counting them."

The same logic underpins Brihi's garden in Kensington. He worked with London's RJS Interiors to customise an awning with claret stripes. It spans the



Clockwise from main: in Melbourne, studio Robson Rak turned to Shaderner; the co-founder of Studio Vero's Mediterranean terrace in London; Sunbrella's broad stripes; the OG in Valentina De Santis's Lake Como home

Paulo Piretti

5-metre distance between garden walls, giving structure and privacy. Brihi furnished the covered area much like a living room, adding an outdoor Christopher Farr rug while also incorporating heating and lighting.

There is a shift away from "off-the-shelf" solutions, according to RJS Interiors. Everything from site to frame colour can be customised, starting from £4,695. Garden retailer Holloways, in Worcestershire, offers bespoke awnings from German manufacturer Haus (from £4,000), which it describes as the "Rolls-Royce" of garden shading. They come in a range of colours and stripe widths, with the option of LED lighting and infrared heating. Ready-made products, such as green- or blue-and-white striped manual shades from Primrose Awnings (£260 for a 4-metre unit), sit at the more affordable end.

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In Melbourne, studio Robson Rak took an architectural approach with local product The Shaderner, which retracts and expands horizontally like a Roman blind. It acts almost like a ceiling. The bold navy-and-cream stripes allowed the studio to keep the rest of the space pared back. You might get a similar effect with a striped umbrella but it's the scale of an awning that shows off a summery stripe to best effect, giving a sense of structure and permanence. And new performance fabrics designed for outdoors, notes Vorrhis, can maintain structure and style over time even with exposure to the elements. As Kaihoi puts it: "It's not a parasol, it's a room."