

# Tents: From simple to splendid

BY FRANCES STEAD SELLERS

For years, my friend Sally and I shared a predicament when it came to eating outdoors during the summer. Too much sun. And whenever there was a whisper of light rain, we both wished we had, well, a roof over our heads.

This year we solved those problems — with tents. We have the shade we've wanted in two very different styles. What has surprised us as the late-summer days shorten toward autumn is how a fabric shelter, far cheaper and more flexible than a sunroom or gazebo, takes the chill off the evening and extends the days we sit out. As our selections show, tents and canopies come in a range of prices and designs these days, from the decorative to the down-to-earth, the pretty to the purely practical.

Sally spent \$1,400 (plus shipping) on a custom-designed canvas tent; I spent less than a tenth of that for a mass-produced urethane-coated polyester canopy. She put in a special order with a family-run business half a world away; I clicked through the L.L. Bean Web site. Her shelter was shipped by sea and arrived in jute sacking sewn up with blue twine; mine came by UPS in a rectangular cardboard box, with preprinted return instructions. It took two people to heave Sally's folded canvas out to her terrace and two more to lug the iron poles into place; at 30-something pounds, my canopy is light enough for one person to carry around or pop into the back of a car. (It even has a storage bag with wheels.)

My need to create shade came a couple of years ago, after an elm tree succumbed to disease. Its loss created more space to sit outside, but even with floppy hats and sunglasses, we felt exposed. Then I came across the 10-by-10-foot International E-Z Up Dome II shelter in the L.L. Bean catalog in a leafy green that blended with the house's shutters and cost \$115.

The magical thing about our E-Z Up, the reason my husband, Tim, and I love it, is that it really is easy to put up. It works like a collapsible umbrella but with four telescoping legs (one at each corner) that can be clicked into place at three heights. It may not amount to sitting under the outstretched limbs of a majestic tree, but our E-Z Up makes shade in a matter of minutes. And as the sun moves, so can our shade.

On weekends from spring through fall, we start the day with breakfast under our canopy, and if our numbers increase as the day goes by, up goes a second E-Z Up, and we can accommodate 10 for lunch.

The fabric is water- and fire-resistant, and I bought mosquito netting that attaches to the sides to create a kind of portable screened porch. The E-Z Up Web site shows models in different dimensions (and prices), some with solid sides to keep out wind and rain.

## Tent Resources

- Big Sky Tents:  
www.bigskytent.com (Includes a page on decorative options at www.bigskytent.com/products/decorative.html)
- E-Z Up Instant Shelters:  
www.ezup.com
- Maharaja Tent Co.:  
www.maharajatent.com
- Raj Tents: www.rajtents.com
- Sangeeta International:  
www.indiantents.com
- Taluka Tent Overseas:  
www.talukatent.com



The India-based Taluka Tent Overseas sells nearly 20 types of tents, including the Jaigarh. Tents help extend time spent outdoors into the fall.

Another thing Tim and I love about our E-Z Up is that it is easy to take down. If we're heading out for the afternoon or see a storm coming in, we can unclick and close the concertina canopy just as quickly as we clicked and opened it.

By contrast, "there's nothing the least bit easy up" about the tent Sally ordered, as she is the first to admit. It took three people nearly two hours to erect it. Nor, I suspect, is it particularly easy to take down. But it is so breathtakingly beautiful, who would WANT to take it down? It doesn't blend in; it isn't intended to. It's a modern folly in a comedy of colors. Since putting it up, Sally has noticed hummingbirds in her back yard, presumably lured by the marigold yellow canvas.

Sally, whose mother's family traces its roots in India back some 300 years, tells me she has been longing for years to have a traditional Indian tent, a descendant of the princely structures used to accommodate hunting parties in the days of the Raj. Friends in Baltimore recommended a supplier: the Taluka family in the state of Rajasthan, which has been making wedding tents, ceremonial marquees and canopies since 1962. The Talukas fit their tents with the kinds of extras I associate with such indoor upholstery as draperies, valances and piping (albeit in canvas or heavy cotton).

Several US companies (such as Big Sky Tents, based in Martha's Vineyard, and Raj Tents, based in the Bay Area) import tents from India. But in these days of digital photos and Internet ordering, Sally saw little reason not to go directly to the source. The Talukas maintain a Web site that boasts nearly 20 types of tents with such evocative names as the Jaigarh (a circular marquee hung with cur-

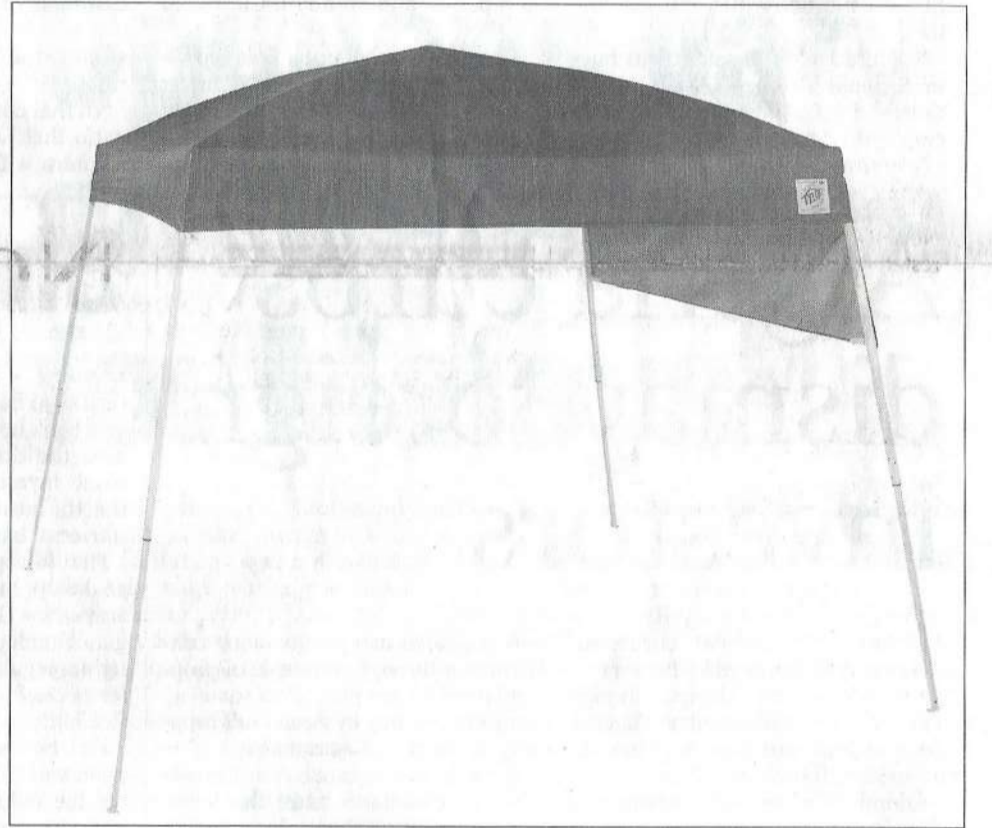
tains and named after "the secret treasure house of the royal family"), the Royal Pergola (in bold red and blue) and the more prosaic BBQ tent (with skyward vents designed to accommodate Indian butchers and their smoky mobile grills).

The Talukas say it usually takes about three weeks to make a tent to order. Delivery time and costs depend on whether it is shipped by sea or air. Sally's tent had an unexpected delay after the roads in Rajasthan were closed by rioters demanding improved economic rights. "All the highways have been blocked," the Talukas wrote in an e-mail. "And our canvas got stuck." Sally's tent finally arrived in the United States three months after her initial inquiries.

Her terrace is now shaded by a 14-by-9-foot "Maharani Canopy" in rich yellow with yellow-and-white barber-pole stripes up each supporting leg and cotton lining with a traditional Jaipur block print in dark pink on white. The tent can have three (rather than four) solid sides because it is intended, as Sally put it, for the maharani (that's the maharajah's wife) "to lounge around in and receive visitors."

So far, Sally's visitors seem to be the ones doing most of the lounging, though, while she bustles around bringing them food and drinks.

Her son wants to leave the tent up all year as a sort of semi-permanent addition to the house — an exotic hangout for today's incense-burning teens. But she's planning to take it down later this month. Next year, it will stay up throughout the summer, whatever the weather. The canvas may fade, and Sally's a little worried about it shrinking, but any tent designed to survive a swampy Indian summer, she reckons, can probably cope with Washington area weather. She's



The International E-Z Up Dome II Shelter.

drilling holes in her terrace to make sure the tent is firmly anchored, and when a recent forecast predicted high winds, she invited over a friend who sails and is "good at knots" to help attach guy ropes.

I have to admit that, for all the breezy versatility of my E-Z Up, I find myself looking with a little envy at the Taluka tent's exu-

berant tassels and valances. And then I wonder about the practicality of such a structure, whether — despite the holes in the terrace and the expert knots — some successor to Hurricane Ike may just turn Sally's grand maharani canopy into an E-Z Down. ...

LAT-WP

# Study finds pay gap for some men

BY SHANKAR VEDANTAM

Men with egalitarian attitudes about the role of women in society earn significantly less on average than men who hold more traditional views about women's place in the world, according to a study being reported Monday.

It is the first time social scientists have produced evidence that large numbers of men may be victims of gender-related income disparities. The study raises the provocative possibility that a substantial part of the widely discussed gap in income between men and women who do the same work is really a gap between men with a traditional outlook and everyone else — rather than a gap between men and women per se.

The differences found in the study were substantial. Men with traditional attitudes about gender roles earned \$11,930 more a year than men with egalitarian views, and \$14,404 more than women with traditional attitudes. The comparisons were based on men and women working in the same kinds of jobs with the same levels of education and putting in the same number of hours per week.

While men with a traditional out-

look earned the most, women with a traditional outlook earned the least. The wage gap between working men and women with a traditional attitude was more than 10 times larger than the wage gap between men and women with egalitarian views.

If you divide workers into four groups — men with traditional attitudes, men with egalitarian attitudes, women with traditional attitudes and women with egalitarian attitudes — men with traditional attitudes earn far more for the same work than those in any of the other groups. There are small disparities among the three disadvantaged groups, but the bulk of the income disparity is between the first group and the rest.

"When we think of the gender wage gap, most of our focus goes to the women side of things," said Beth Livingston, a co-author of the new study. "This article says a lot of the difference may be in men's salaries."

Livingston said she was taken aback by the result.

"We actually thought maybe men with traditional attitudes work in more complex jobs that pay more or select into higher paying occupations," she said. "Regardless of the jobs people chose, or how long they

worked at them, there was still a significant effect of gender role attitudes on income."

The study, published in the September issue of the Journal of Applied Psychology, is based on longitudinal information collected by a federal government survey administered every two years to more than 12,000 people over a quarter century. The U.S. Department of Labor's National Longitudinal Survey of Youth began tracking people in 1979 when they were between 14 and 22 years old. The group is now between 43 and 51 years old.

Since many participants in the survey were children when it started, incomes for both men and women changed dramatically over the 25 years that Livingston and co-author Timothy Judge studied. Averaged over the quarter century, salaries ranged from \$34,725 for working men with traditional attitudes to \$20,321 for working women with traditional attitudes. Working men with egalitarian attitudes made \$22,795 on average, while working women with egalitarian attitudes made \$21,373.

Livingston and Judge, who are both organizational psychologists at the University of Florida at Gainesville,

compared people's incomes over time to their evolving views on whether a woman's place is in the home and whether it is better for men to be the only breadwinners. People who endorsed distinct roles in society for men and women were considered to have traditional views, while those who advocated equal roles for men and women at home and in the workplace were classified as having egalitarian views.

The study offers an unusual window into the persistent gender disparities in income that have been observed for decades. Critics of the gender-gap theory regularly suggest that the gap between men and women is an artifact of the career choices that men and women make, or the different hours that men and women work — arguing that more men choose higher paying professions such as law and business and more women choose lower-paying professions such as education and social work, and that men tend to work longer hours than women. Researchers said all the conclusions in the new study were based on comparisons between people in similar jobs, working similar hours, with similar qualifications.

"Some would say, 'Of course tradi-

tional men earn more than traditional women — they are both fulfilling their desires to play different roles in the home and workplace,'" said Judge, emphasizing that the researchers compared working men with working women, not working men with women who stay home. "Our results do not support that view. If you were a traditional-minded woman, would you say, 'I am fine working the same hours as a traditional-minded man in the same industry with the same education, but earning substantially less?' I don't think traditional-minded women would say that."

The empirical evidence in the study showed that there is a connection between people's attitudes about gender roles and their salaries. It was not designed to explain why those disparities come about, or how people's attitudes — supposedly a private matter — affect how much money they make.

Livingston and Judge said there are two possible explanations: Traditional-minded men may negotiate much harder for better salaries, especially when compared to traditional-minded women. Alternatively, it could also be that employers discriminate against both women

and men who do not subscribe to traditional gender roles.

"It could be that traditional men are hyper-competitive salary negotiators — the Donald Trump prototype perhaps," said Judge. "It could be on the employer side that, subconsciously, the men who are egalitarian are seen as effete."

Livingston, a Ph.D. candidate in management, added, "People make others uncomfortable when they disconfirm stereotypes — we don't know how to interpret them."

Increasing numbers of Americans hold egalitarian views about the role of women in the workplace, and the researchers suggested that if gender role attitudes are indeed at the core of the longstanding wage gap, disparities in income may recede as egalitarian views become more prevalent.

Parents looking at the study might be tempted to inculcate their sons with traditional gender views with an eye to greater financial success, but the researchers warned that this would come at their daughters' cost — traditional-minded women suffer the greatest income disadvantage for doing the same work. "Traditional values," Judge concluded, "do not have to be traditional gender-role values."

LAT-WP