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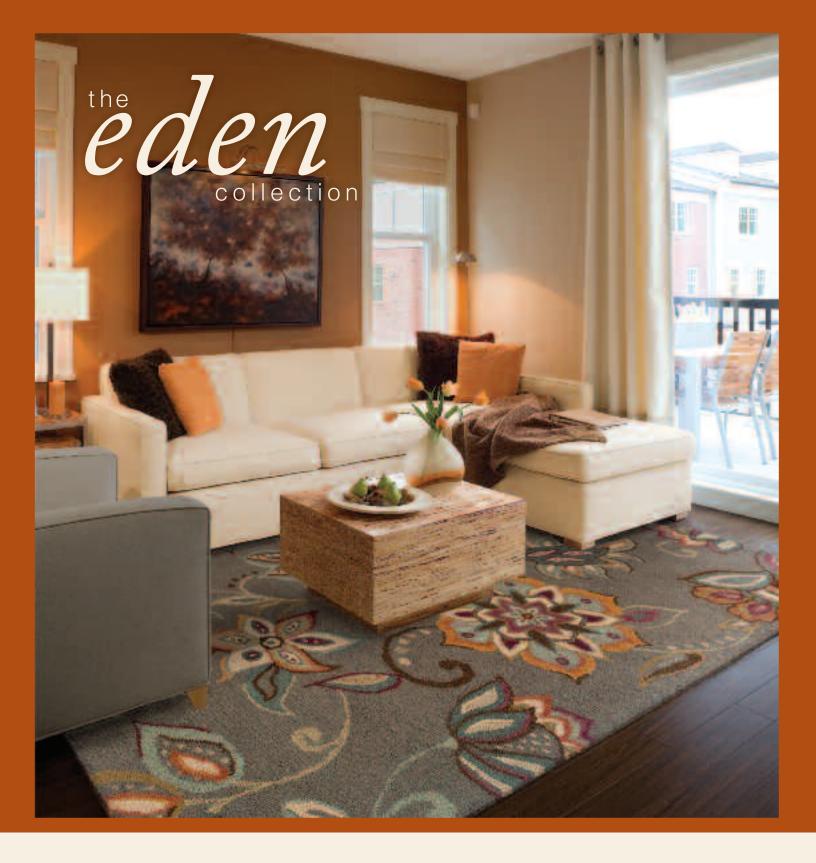
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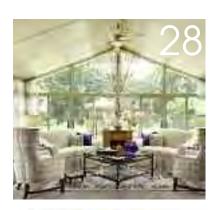
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On the cover: May 2012 — From floor to walls, from pillows to fashion accessories, Liora Manné's Lamontage process is versatile, practical and offers endless customizable possibilities. Her products are antimicrobial, easy to care for, and suitable for both indoor and outdoor use. Stock products are distributed by Trans-Ocean Imports.











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#### Trends

By Leslie Stroh

Markets are all about seeing new products and trends. For new product introductions, fibers and colors, go to Walking the Market on www.rugnewsanddesign.com. Our goal at any market is to have posted detail pictures of new introductions from 90% of the companies we have scheduled to visit. This last market we had 77 of 80 com-

panies covered by the end of the second day. By using the search buttons you can get current and retrospective pictures of design and color trends.

The most negative trend is the decline in availability of rugs larger than 9' x 12', and the lack of selection in machine mades over 9' x 12' The mass merchant/internet channel has done a good job of selling 5' x 8's and 8' x10/11' from thumbnails or scatters.

Everybody in the industry knows that a big rug is a spectacular sight. And every body knows that turnover determines the sizes that you carry.

When I walked into Orian Rugs new showroom I was blown away by the selection of 9' x 13' rugs that they had hanging on their 13 foot rack. Because of the Mass Merchant/Internet connotation, not everyone is enamored of machine woven rugs, but when you see one in that size, it is impressive. Forget price points, look at the value proposition. 9' x 13's for next day shipping in 170 designs and five price points, all more than affordable.

stock, they can upload the design in the course of the normal production run; weave, finish and ship the rug. One off production using multiple creels and constructions on a large number of looms is a substantial Made in America benefit.

They then walked me over to another product introduction called

> Anthropology. That loom runs 70 different colors from one creel, so that the rug is woven with 70 different colors. They declined to tell me how it was done. but it was clear that they were competing against in line space dyed nylon.

> The basic trend is innovation in construction. Vendors want to be different in ways that are difficult to copy. Color and design is easy to copy. Construction is much more difficult to copy. There is a new flatweave coming from India this summer, but by July market, there will be multiple variations already in

the market.

Another trend is rugs are an accessory. While the major vendors

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and Design

Orian's position is that they are running the looms daily in the USA, so if an order comes in today for one of the 170 different designs, and it happens to be out of

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#### collections



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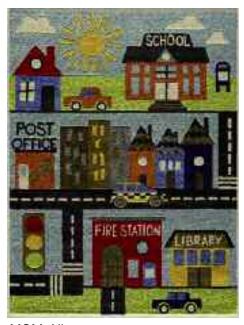
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#### Trends

continued from page 8

command a dominant share of the market, there are more and more niche resources who have found a niche and are filling it. By definition, a niche is too small for a major vendor, but in this era of individuality, a real or imagined niche is a powerful marketing tool. We see the number of small rug companies growing. While the Oriental rug companies may remain in business, few are increasing market share.

Alex Peykar, Nourison, said he didn't care if rugs were the underpad to the accessory, as long as people bought rugs.

From a trade show/markets perspective, for some rugs are an accessory, and for others, rugs are a destination. The size of the vendor doesn't matter if the rug is pretty. And the niche vendors tend not to be mass merchant oriented, but brick and mortar oriented. For brick and mortar, it means seeing more vendors not fewer, and clearly identifying and marketing the identity of your retail establishment.—clearly!!!



#### collections



KashaNiaN



Ch Rist OPheR gu Y



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#### and Design: Custom

By Sarah Stroh

It should come as no surprise that when you ask about something as individualistic as a custom rug, the responses would also be very individualistic. The main thread from each source I talked to was the importance of knowing from whom and from where your custom rug comes.

## Fabrics are picked before the rug...Roz Rustigian

The choice of what type of custom rug depends on how the designer interprets the consumers' preference for the surface effect of the rug itself. If you want a cus-

tom rug from Nepal, then pick a company that specifically works with Nepal on a regular basis. Each of the companies I spoke with works with different manufacturers, in different countries, and each has a different opinion of which country does the best work. As long as there is a good relationship between the manufacturer and the company that does custom work, you will be in good hands.

From a vender's viewpoint, Ronnie Jaffar of Dalyn Rugs gave me insight as to why their retailers like their custom rug program. There are several reasons:

#### 1. THE RETURN ON INVESTMENT.

"With customs, the initial amount of inventory necessary for



a sufficient display is minimized. Stock collections require that partners carry inventory in the various designs or colors which are offered in those collections."

#### 2. FASTER RETAILER TURN-AROUND.

"Based on a Rug News (now Rug News and Design) article some time ago, the average turn on a rug inventory is less than three times per year. We have experienced some of our partners getting as many as fifteen or more turns per year from our custom collections."

continued on page 16

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#### and<sub>Design</sub>: Custom

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3. VARIETY OF COMBINATIONS

"The variety of combinations available for our partners makes their offering more appealing for the consumer. Not to mention the fact that consumers have such varied tastes when it comes to color combinations that it can be next to impossible to find that perfect rug for their décor. In these cases, the custom option is perfect."

Ronnie's three reasons to go custom ring true for many whole-salers working with retailers.

Sheila Rahmanan of Lotfy Rugs sells to very high end New York City retailers who need assistance from start to finish from designing to installing the custom rug. Sheila's custom rug services include customizing, backing, refinishing, and installing the rug in the space if need be. Ms. Rahmanan has been in the rug industry for a long time and has built up strong relationships with manufacturers out of India and Pakistan. The main reason she sees her clients going custom is because of size. In her opinion, a custom tufted rug is the best venue because of the short production time. Sheila gives her clients impeccable high end customer service by having hand selected the manufacturers that make her custom rugs. This allows her to have control over



#### collections



aNtique Rug CONNeCtiON



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RizzY h OMe



Color Inspiration for the custom rug made by Rustigian Rugs of Providence, RI came from the Dale Chihuli glass fish.

the quality and keep everything in the acceptable range of variation and have a timely delivery.

Elizabeth Vehko of Shaver-Ramsey Rugs, a retailer out of Denver, sources Tibetan rugs because she believes the Nepalese synthetic dyes and easier patterns are well made. Elizabeth was in agreement with Sheila, that the number one reason to go custom was because of size. Color is the second reason for custom rugs. At their retail store, they see on average at least one custom rug purchased a month. They have seen custom rugs increasing in sales over the last seven years. When adjusting the color within a pattern, Elizabeth will work many times with a designer to achieve the end consumer's ideal rug.

Roz Rustigian of Rustigian Rugs, a retailer out of Providence, RI gave me a great three picture visual of how a customer chose/designed a custom rug. The first picture is that of a Dale Chihuly glass of a fish. The second is that of a peacock. Notice in the third picture, the rug in the room follows the lines of the peacock and the Dale Chihuly glass fish complements the room colors. It is clear from the two main pieces of artwork on the walls that the client wanted to accentuate the colors

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#### Observations

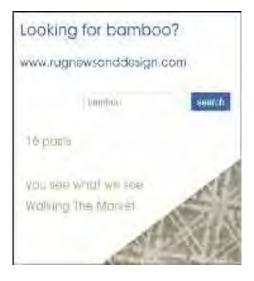
Leslie Stroh, 40 plus

Can Brick and Mortar Compete with Mass Merchants and the Internet PART TWO

In the April issue, online at www.rugnewsanddesign.com, we discussed the Yes and No of this competition. In the New York Times (http://rugne.ws/nytbonbos) there is a story about how an Internet men's clothing retailer called Bonobos is partnering with Nordstrom's in order to extend the Bonobos brand to brick and mortar, and the Nordstrom retail experience to the Internet and mobile devices. Note that IRUGZ, an advertiser in this publication, is making the same outreach possible for home furnishings retailers, starting with rugs.

In this part of the article we focus on 10 ways the brick and mortar can compete with the Internet. The basic rule comes from baseball: "Hit them where they ain't." In other words do the things the Internet can't do. Service, knowledge and a personal relationship are big components of where they ain't.

In the previous article we talked about price points. In this issue in "By the Numbers" we talk about Restoration Hardware's use



of their catalog to drive traffic to their website, for rugs at what I would call Brick and Mortar prices, but the rugs are available only on the web or in the catalog, not Restoration Hardware's stores.

Two things are clear from these two stories. One, I don't understand the rug business, and Two, Restoration Hardware is making a big bet that they do.

Nine things Brick and Mortar can do to compete with the Mass Merchants, Internet and Catalog retailers follows:

Nine Things the Brick and Mortar Retailer Can Do to Compete Successfully

It is like getting hits in base-

ball. You hit them where they ain't.

Offer sizes other than 5x7 and 8x11:  $10 \times 13$ ,  $12 \times 15$ , runners, stair rods, under pad etc.

1. Find rug lines that have a wide variety of designs/colors in one quality: The oldest example of this is Loloi's Stanley Collection, some five years old and still running. Started traditional, and contains transitional and modern, all in one quality off one loom. Import.

Another version is Shaw Living's Mirabella Collection line, made with space dyed nylon (exclusive to them) in line with the weaving process. Basically eight colors with six shades of each color, and currently 66 designs. Buy America.

A third version is Orian's polypropylene line where they are building a running line on looms that produce for the mass merchants with designs for the brick and mortar. Buy America.

2. Merchandise the competitive products, margin the others: When you are carrying products that are easily cross shopped to a continued on page 20



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#### By the Numbers: Restoration Hardware

By Leslie Stroh

About two pounds of coated paper appeared at our front door recently. It was the new three-part Restoration Hardware catalog. Impressive. Part one was the Spring catalog, part two was the outdoor furniture catalog, and part three was a flyer for people in small spaces.

The outdoor furniture catalog had no rugs, but the Spring Catalog had a section on natural rugs, and 74 rugs by Ben Soleimani. Ben Soleimani, the founder of the West Coast rug firm Mansour Modern, is from a four-generation rug family. The antique rug business is run as Mansour.

In the Restoration Hardware catalog there were 74 rugs in 18 different collections in four full sizes. None were tufted.

As I recall, the big news a while back was that J. C. Penney had discontinued their main catalog to concentrate on Internet marketing.

The rugs in the Restoration Hardware Spring Catalog, which included all categories of home furnishings, are available only by Internet and catalog.

By every measure, Restoration Hardware has made a major commitment to marketing hand woven, hand knotted, hand loomed and flatwoven rugs at price points above those written about in the article in our April issue on Brick and Mortar competing with Mass Merchants and the Internet.

A lot of 8x10's in the Restoration Hardware catalog were in the \$2,000 to \$3,000 category. The range was from a \$539 retail 8x10 plain flatwoven to a mohair (angora goat) Moroccan look 8x10 at \$8,840.

Although there was a 15% off preseason sale offer, the general run of rugs that Restoration Hardware was offering online and by catalog only was priced at a price point that I would have expected in a Brick and Mortar retailer or in a "to the trade showroom."

All the rugs (except three that lacked a 10x14) were offered in 6x9, 8x10, 9x12, and 10x14 full sizes, no notes on cut sizes. If the back up stock included one of each size, times 74 rugs, that means the minimum back up for drop shipping was about 28,000 square feet. Somebody's commitment to this promotion is very likely to be over 100,000 square feet of rugs.

From an overall perspective the colors tended toward cream, sand, grey and chocolate. All designs were simplified. Strong color saturation and contrast were absent. Patterns were Oushak, Persian, Moroccan, Stripes, Plains. The rugs were mostly wool with viscose, cactus, linen, and jute.

Online at www.restorationhardware.com, there is also a story about Ben Soleimani. Whole effect of the catalog is that of a combination of J. Peterman and Lands' End before the takeover of Lands' End removed the editorial that validated the products being offered. It is a good story told well at prices that most brick and mortar would be happy with. But remember, the rugs are available by catalog and online only, and do not appear in Restoration Hardware stores.

I did not know you could sell these goods at these price points online, but somebody made a big bet that you can. I wonder what the return rate will be.



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#### 10 Points About Rugs: 6 of 10

By David Lew

POINT 6: SHEARING

In all knotted pile carpets, after coming off the loom, the pile requires a shearing or cutting of the pile. Most of the countries are still using a hand shearing process, where people use large cutting shears, to cut the pile. One must examine if the pile is sheared evenly or not. If certain

areas are sheared too low, there is no remedy. Normally the pile is cut in one direction. The natural phenomenon of a light and dark version of the carpet from one end to the other will appear. By running your hand across the pile from the light side, one can fell the valleys from the shearing process. As a rule, the pile is always sheared after every rug wash.

The other process is when a hand held shearing machine is utilized. One can find a combed finish on the pile as a result. One must pay attention to the consistency of the pile cut.

David Lew started in the rug business with ABC Oriental Carpets in 1982, worked for a series of well known and well respected retailers and wholesalers, and since 2000 has worked for the Bokara Rug Co. To be continued.

#### Observations

continued from page 18

mass merchant, live with the reality that the mass merchant/ Internet sets the price on the sizes you both carry. Those prices will inform the consumer of your pricing policy.

- 3. Re-branding products can protect your margins, but the reality is mass merchants dominate price points, and quality or lack of quality, below \$199 retail for a 5x7.
- 4. Go online yourself so consumers can find you (under 40's live on the Internet): Online presence is a reality. Advertise online with any and all local/community websites. Have your own website. Caution: as we are learning, you need to keep a website active, oth-

erwise it goes stale, so you need to find some way to have daily updates. We call it feeding the beast.

5. Buy America and ship, from the vendor's inventory: Internet retailers ship from vendors' warehouses. You can as well. You have to organize for it.

Shaw Living's line for Sears provides hundreds of in store 2 x 3 samples for quality, color, feel and price of rugs that are ordered at Sears, and drop shipped by Shaw. A Buy America strategy.

Orian is building their running line on the principal that, with 29 looms, if they are out of stock today they will be in stock tomorrow. A Buy America strategy.

Oriental Weavers makes 15 collections of rugs in their US plant. That means they can service domestically 15 lines. A Buy America Strategy.





#### Observations

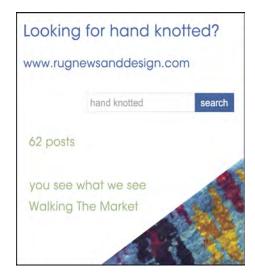
6. Sell custom at every price point, particularly in Buy America products: Custom is important because of shrinking vendor inventories, particularly among certain low turnover sizes. Custom size rugs are 80% of the custom business. In terms of competing with mass merchants and the Internet, we are talking machine woven rather than hand knotted, or hand made products.

Hand tufted is a significant exception in that it can and does compete with machine woven products depending on the price of labor and raw materials.

Dalyn has, to our knowledge, the most extensive range of custom machine-woven products in the market. At High Point, Dalyn introduced two new shags at step up prices. And three-week delivery is about as instant gratification as you can get. This is a product category that mass merchants and Internet retailers don't sell. They can't sell this kind of customer satisfaction. The lady with a custom shag showing off to her neighbors is about the best word of mouth that a retailer can get. A Buy America strategy.

Delos' line of custom rugs includes a line of baby rugs for new parents. This article hasn't even touched on lifestyle products. A Buy America strategy.

Kalaty makes custom hand knotted and hand made products. By definition these are imported so there are lead time issues, and



process management issues. This makes selecting custom resources a partly product and partly management analysis. There are a number of importers who make custom color, custom size, and

continued on page 22





#### Observations

continued from page 21 custom design, e.g. Noreen Seabrook, Kooches, Tamarian.

- 7. Expand your horizon from products to services. Retailers that wash rugs, sell rugs: Consumers who come into your store want to buy something. You can sell them services. It is probably too late to get into the rug washing business, but that kept a lot of retailers in business through the recession. Sell runners and stair rods. Sell rug pads and offer to install it (move furniture) for free. Install anything. It isn't just price, it is service. That may mean educating the consumer, so do it. Mass merchants and Internet retailers sell it and ship it, they don't install it.
- 8. Support designers and interior design events: Designers talk to consumers. Get to know them. Support them. Go to their events. Designers and decorators are multipliers. For every consumer you talk to, they talk to ten. Mass merchants tend not to service designers.
- 9. Sell lifestyle: Consumers have aspirations. Consumers want to be seen a certain way. Help them. Sell a lifestyle, not just a product. Their price point for a lifestyle may be greater than their price point for a product. Mass merchants and the Internet are not selling a lifestyle, they are selling price attached to a pretty picture. You know the problem, all rugs are pretty pictures until the retailer adds value.

The Bottom Line: Mass Merchants and the Internet are not going away. It is up to the Brick and Mortar to make the same statement. They can.

#### EYEBALLS AND FOOTFALLS

One of the problems that trade shows and markets have is that they focus on the buyers who come into the building, much like retailers who count only their store traffic. As the Internet retailers have taught us, there are a large number of buyers who shop with their eyeballs, not their footfalls.

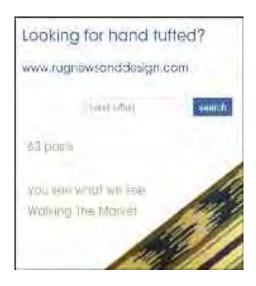
Earlier in this article, we talked about the differences between what is sold on the Internet, and what can be sold in Bricks and Mortar. And in "By the Numbers" we noted that Restoration Hardware may be breaking new ground in price points on the Internet.

As a publication, our approach is "Walking the Market," where people who don't go to markets or trade shows can at least "see what we see." And we already know that more people read "Walking the Market" than go into a showroom at any market.

But when you bring the focus down to your Brick and Mortar store in your marketing area or areas, then your question is how to cost-effectively attract first eyeballs, and then footfalls, then closing sales. GOB's are back, so we know consumers are buying.

However the Internet/Mass Merchant/Catalogs are the real competition to Brick and Mortar stores.

It has been a long-held belief of this publication that there are two, and now three, types of sales: rugs that are bought, rugs



that are sold, and rugs that are placed (by designers).

David Khazai of Innovations International (disclosure: an advertiser) has re-branded his company from Rug Manager Pro to Innovations International. Rug Manager Pro is a retail inventory and point of sale management system that is now one product among several, and it is also re-branded as RMPro (Retail Manager Pro).

At the High Point Market we saw a video of a new product that incorporates inventory management, rug visuals, visual display technology with a virtual room setting, and an interactive handson intuitive graphic feature, all in one display.

This product is the result of a strategic alliance between three companies: Microsoft, Snibbe Interactive and Innovations International. Scott Snibbe of Snibbe International is an innovator in creating immersive experiences using the Microsoft AVATAR Touch technology. Microsoft has lent four engineers to Snibbe who work the Innovations on International Application, to be delivered as a production product at the July summer market in Atlanta. Only a video prototype was shown at High Point.

The objective is to allow the customer/designer to interact with the 100,000 rugs available through the Innovations International eCatalog in an intuitive way, working their way down to those they want to see as quality and color samples. Not everybody wants to go through hundreds of rugs hanging on a rack, but they probably do like playing in a new electronic sand box.

As important as the Internet/Catalog space is, 73% of consumers, according to the research firm Qmetrix, like to be able to walk into a retailer to interact with and get the feel of a

room. Having an intuitive interactive relationship with the room design and product placement is only possible through new technology which younger buyers are living with, gaming with, and using every day of their lives. Demographics are on the side of technology.

Mark McWane, the new CTO/CIO of Innovations International, said that their four-year plan focuses on extending their retailer management solutions into the following verticals: flooring, broadloom carpet, home furnishings, furniture, and other verticals with similar inventory management characteristics.

McWane brings Innovations International his twelve years' experience managing complex infor-



mation technology projects (development and operational), leading systems selection processes, developing integration plans, and providing oversight on system implementations, for several health

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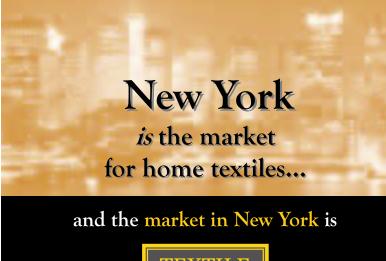
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#### Observations

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care and financial organizations, and technology providers.

E-commerce and the associated support requirements are generally big store budget items. Paul Shoup, new COO of Innovations International, laid out a strategy based on his experience working for UPS, Target and Amazon. It comes down to the granularity of data in the Innovations International database. With very granular data, grains of sand on a beach, you can build any application you need without re-inventing the whole system. When asked if Target or Amazon could compete with eCatalog's inventory management system, Shoup said "Hell No" and "No Way," although I am not sure in what order.

One of the big boys' nightmares is same day delivery. In store delivery is same day, or at worst drop shipped the way online stores drop ship. The objective of eCatalog, and the new visual interactive display, is to get the consumer into the store where they can interact with technology, with the products, and with people. As we all know, when you add people, you add cost.

The online shopping experience is a static presentation of thumbnails of rugs. The challenge that the majors have is to present a lifestyle intuitive visual searching technology. The Snippe Interactive/Microsoft strategic partnership is intended to address that issue

Paul Shoup started as a UPS manager, and then was recruited by Target in 2000 to work within their distribution network, imple-

menting a new supply chain strategy that allowed Target to buy imported products at negotiated lower-than-market prices, house them in the United States in a single consolidated warehouse called an Import Warehouse, and quickly feed these products into their supply chain with JIT (just in time) accuracy, cutting down lead times considerably and better control in-stock items at Target stores. This was a start-up opportunity, and at the time Target had strong growth, which allowed Shoup to move to Kansas and be part of another start-up as an executive for a Regional Distribution Center.

In 2005 Shoup was recruited by Amazon.com, where for the next six years he worked within Amazon's fulfillment center network introducing Lean/Six Sigma manufacturing techniques and tailoring them to distribution. He also helmed leadership development initiatives preparing Amazon for future growth. Having had experience with large organizations, in 2011 he refocused his experience on helping smaller organizations, began working for an emerging apparel manufacturer in Oklahoma, and more recently joined Innovations International

In one of our conversations with those at Innovations International about the new interactive display technology, it was mentioned that the company now has a designer version of iRugz With a designer log-in and password, the designer on site with the client can, with a mobile phone, access the retailer's inven-



tory, in stock and online, at the prices set for the designer (on a designer-by-designer basis), leveraging the eCatalog data base with full visibility to the consumer.

Innovations International has shared with us examples of their new reports which range from analyzing product categories seven ways to Sunday, to showing the impact of one extra sale a day on the retailer's bottom line. Most of our readers from Brick and Mortar probably don't need a report to tell them that they can't make money at Internet price points for a 5x8 equivalent, But they can merchandise other sizes to meet their margin requirements. In today's business environment, information is key to managing the business.

Online in "What's New," at www.rugnewsanddesign.com, Innovations International has a short but very clear video of the eCatalog story. We are encouraging our advertisers who post to their "What's New" page online to provide us with videos available to the rug community.

#### and Design:

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and the lines that they offered — this custom rug was born.

Roz works with high end clients; custom products range from tufted to Tibetan and occasional Indian and Persian design rugs. She also finds that the size is the element that needs changing. In answering the question of why customers are going custom, Roz responded "There is little available inventory anymore. Fabrics are picked before the rug and mandate something that does not exist. Size and color have been prioritized and custom is the only fit." Roz talked about when a client can't "see thru" a color on existing samples - "that is where the black and white line drawcontinued on page 27



Design Inspiration for same as above came from the peacock.





#### Kathy Alexander, Alexander Interiors, LLC McLean, VA 22101

#### WHEN DO YOU CHOOSE THE FLOOR COVERING?

It depends on the look that I will be doing. If I will be using an Oriental carpet, then I start there first. I will have the client participate in the selection and then use that carpet as the foundation of the room. If I am going for a very clean look and am using broadloom or a custom area rug, then I choose it after the upholstery has been established. There are so many patterns and designs from which to choose. I always find the perfect selection that pulls the room together.

One of my specialties is custom homes. When working on a project I like to do a variety of carpets, textures and weaves. I select the carpet based on the function of the room, the amount of traffic it will get, whether there are pets or not and of course the look for the client.

#### HOW OFTEN DO YOU PURCHASE A CUSTOM RUG?

I purchase a custom rug frequently, as it is important to have the appropriate sized carpet for the room. I cannot stress this enough. The right size carpet makes the room look finished and even alters the appearance of the size of the room. It also softens the look of the room and creates an appealing atmosphere. Whether you are covering hardwood, tile or broadloom, the right carpet can make the space look finished, feel grounded, and bring life to a room. The carpet must be carefully planned.

#### WHERE DO YOU SOURCE YOUR RUGS?

My favorite is Shayan Persian Rugs. The owner has taught me everything I know about oriental carpets, and I can send clients there, knowing they will be kindly treated. For custom carpets and broadloom, I use Fabrica International and Stark Carpet located in the Washington Design Center in Washington, D.C. I do not purchase online or use catalogs, as I want to see the colors in person with the fabrics I will be using.

#### DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE STYLE OR FIBER?

I love the Persian carpets, because they are works of art and come in so many patterns and colors. Many clients have expressed a dislike of what they think oriental carpets are, until they meet me at Shayan Persian Rugs. I have converted many clients to Persian carpets. Wool is my favorite fiber for the look, the feel, the

color, and the practical nature of being easy to clean. It is also the green option, because it is a renewable resource.





...the right carpet makes the space look finished, feel grounded and bring life to a room.

"

#### and Design: Custom

continued from page 25

ings are invaluable. Then some clients find that they actually like a design that they disliked in a rug of a color they were not partial to. People cannot see beyond color to the design and that is important to keep in mind." When asked "what does custom mean for your business," her response was

- The ability to service and satisfy a client for whom there exists no 'prêt-à-porter' (carry-out) rug.
- •The ability to service a designer who wants something slightly different for his or her client.

Julie Dasher Rugs is a design firm that focuses on Tibetan wool and Chinese silk hand-knotted rugs that can be custom made in any size and color. They

believe their direct link to the manufacturer benefits the interior designer or client. Julie works with "interior designers to help them develop private label collections." A good example of custom rugs they have produced — there was a commission to custom design a rug for a client with a Ph.D. in neuroscience. "I hadn't worked with shapes like mitochondria and DNA double helix before, but they are certainly great inspirations for a design," fun rug she said.

Josephine Kurtz of New Moon Rugs states "a custom rug is the perfect alternative for clients who want uncompromising quality and the attention to detail with the ability to customize and personalize a rug in the shape, size, color and design of choice." New Moon is owned by a trained artist, giving them an in-house artistic team that can "bring any inspiration to life by hand, forgoing the use of computers to create a truly organic piece of art for the floor."

We are seeing more and more Designer Rug companies that produce high end niche market rugs for the individual. We will continue to search them out and report back to you on whom is doing custom rugs for and by designers — keep an eye on our website www.rugnewsanddesign.com and Designers' Notebook.

The Room: the custom rug, the peacock and the glass fish are the focal point of this room. Custom rug design copyright 2012 Rustigian Rugs.



#### ---designers' notebook

### Starr Miller, Allied ASID, Starr Miller Interior Design Lake Norman/Charlotte, NC

AT WHAT POINT DO YOU CHOOSE THE FLOOR COVERING?

In a perfect world we start with the floor coverings as they are the largest swatch in the room and often the most important and costly. However, sometimes we are working in reverse, because of a love affair with a fabric or piece of art.

#### WHAT MARKETS DO YOU ATTEND?

We always go to High Point and have attended NeoCon and ICFF in NYC. This year we added the Las Vegas Furniture Market in January. I shop the design centers when I travel, such as D&D, ADAC and DCOTA. We will be in Europe this summer, where I am hoping to find new sources.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE SOURCE FOR YOUR RUGS AND WHY?

We carry both Stark and Kravet (in sample form) in our studio. We love Stark for their custom abilities, and Kravet for their options and, best of all, their customer service. When the project calls for it, we will design custom rugs. Surya and Safavieh continue to have well priced contemporary options. Amy Butler has fun lively choices for kids' rooms. Company C has great lighthearted options. ABC Carpet & Home is always a stop, when in New York!

#### ARE THERE ANY DESIGN RULES YOU LIKE TO FOLLOW OR LIKE TO BREAK?

I want a rug that is properly sized for the room and large enough that the chairs around the dining table do not plop off when a guest scoots their chair back from the table (approximately 24"). Other than those rules, the trick is to know the rules and then make decisions based on the proportions of the room and furniture arrangements. If I have a rug with a dense, small scale pattern, I typically want it to be muted or have tea stained look, so as not to overwhelm the space.

#### DO YOU LIKE TO FOLLOW RUG TRENDS, COLORS, OR STAY AWAY FROM THEM?

I am actually a big fan of what I see coming out in the market place. The large geometric statement pattern rugs make a splash in the right place. I do not see them as a signature item, as they are very client specific. The washed out rugs with splashes of color are fabulous! I cannot wait to use Orientals. I tend to stay away from heavily patterned Oriental rugs. It truly depends on the client, but I find them to be heavily traditional, and most of my clients are transitional/eclectic in their tastes. I prefer open larger scale choices.

WANT TO SEE MORE? GO TO WWW.STARRMILLER.COM



"The washed out rugs with splashes of color are fabulous."

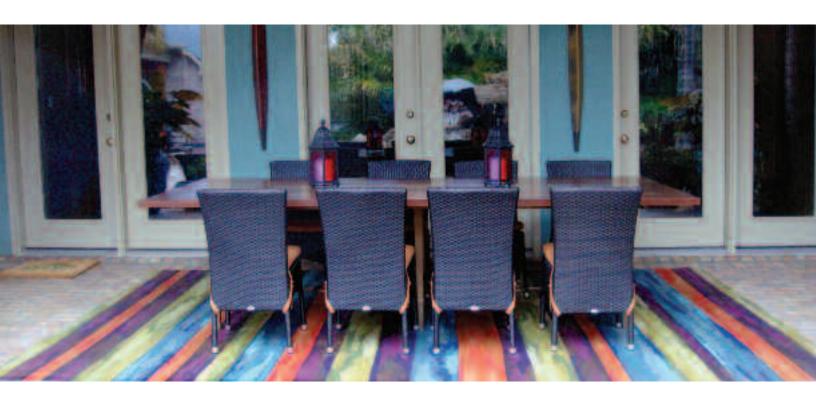
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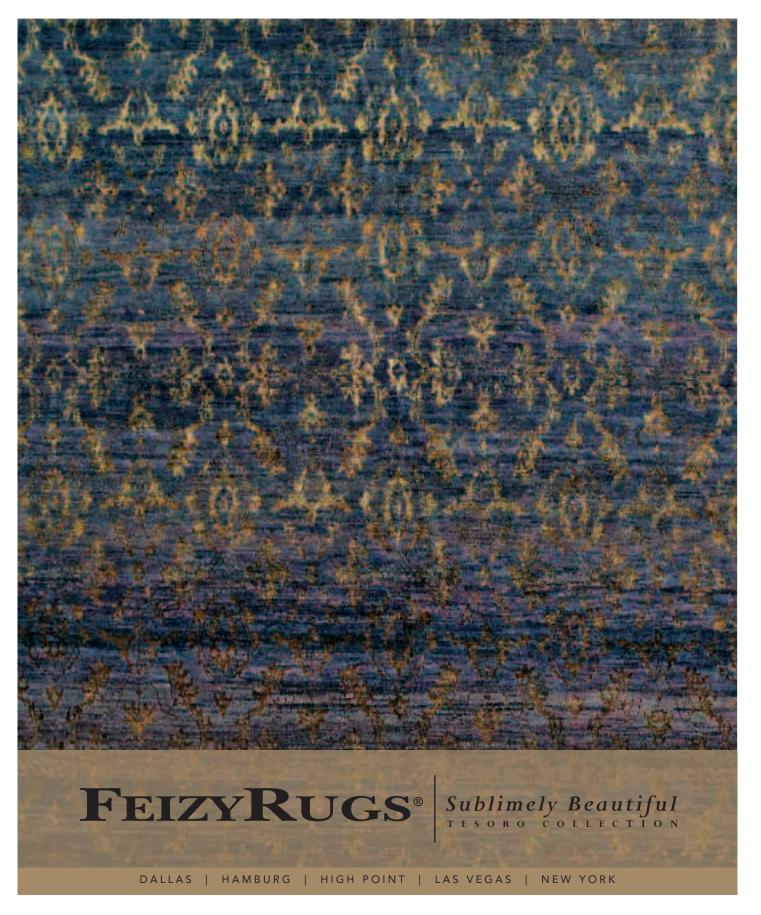
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