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SEPTEMBER 2012

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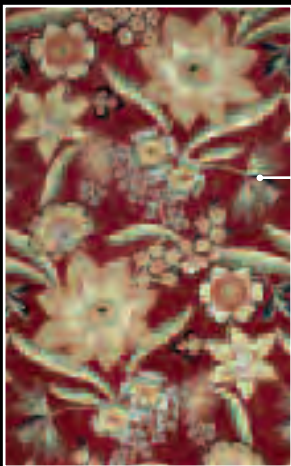
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THE BEGINNING OF AN HEIRLOOM CREATED

Observations

By Leslie Stroh

After Atlanta, Las Vegas, and New York trade shows, it is clear that new introductions will favor new (often geometric) designs and color palettes.

Color is back, but not saturated color, and not strong contrasts.

At one point in Atlanta I was convinced that the whole market had shifted to non-traditional designs. I ran into an older and wiser friend who pointed out to me that traditional was classic, and would always be in fashion.

I asked a few machine made vendors what was selling. Basically the answer was 40%-60% traditional, but not in the dark high contrast colors.

This means that the old truth about what you show, and what you sell still holds—you show new and sell old, just not 3-5 year old colors.

The best place to see new colors and new designs is “Walking the Market” online at www.rugnewsanddesign.com. There you will find new introductions from Atlanta, Las Vegas and New York.

If I had to pick a design trend it would be geometrics, again in unsaturated colors, and low contrast. Beige still sells at retail.

PINTEREST

We are now pinning pictures of rugs that appeared in Collections on Pinterest. Visit www.pinterest.com/rugnewsdesign/collections/.

ALL ABOUT RUGS

In July 2011, we launched our new website for www.rugnewsanddesign.com. In our first year of posting pictures from trade shows we posted approximately 600 pictures from 12 trade shows. We did this so that “You can see what we see, when we see it.”

In August of 2012, we started reposting articles from Rug News Archives in a section called “ALL ABOUT RUGS”. The first article posted, written in 1984, is titled “In China with Mr. Nazarian in 1928”. Now you can read about rugs, rug making, the business of rugs, and the history of rugs online as we contin-

ue to post articles from the past 30 years.

The All About Rugs section will continue to expand as we find more and more educational resources.

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE MARKETS

Doug Tashjian, a knowledgeable rug man, has joined Momeni to head their Custom Rug business. One of the new Custom products being introduced at Momeni can be made up to 40 feet wide, and for rug sizes, can be delivered in 6 weeks.

The basic rule is simple, the customer wants a specific size, color or design. The answer is YES. Reality says that not every size will be in inventory, and that means custom, and custom means waiting. How long is the question.

Joyce Lowe, Director of Area Rug Sales at Nourison, said that “any retailer that doesn’t have a web site is signing their own death warrant.” She wasn’t talking about e-commerce, but a website as a tool for consumers to do information gathering and shopping.

Ms. Lowe was specific about showing and selling. She said “What’s new is showing, traditional design machine woven is selling (at retail \$299 for a “5x8” in polypropylene.)

Ron Couri, principal Couristan, said that there were very few looms making machine made rugs in wool. This lack of

production highlights the gap between mass market machine woven rugs, (synthetic fiber) and a step up product in wool or other fibers for brick and mortar specialty stores and designer resources.

We mention other fibers above, explicitly because there is experimentation going on at many levels working with non-traditional fibers. Couristan has introduced a hand spun, hand knotted, Nepalese weave rug using bamboo fiber called Sagano. It has its own look, feel and hand.

Scott Hayim (principal Rug Décor) said that in the St. Louis Rug Décor store they are doing about 90% of the level of business from before the recession, with 40% of the traffic. He added, “that if it weren’t for custom, we wouldn’t be here.

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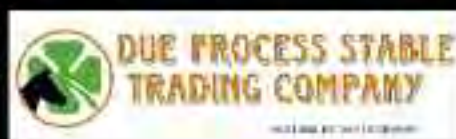
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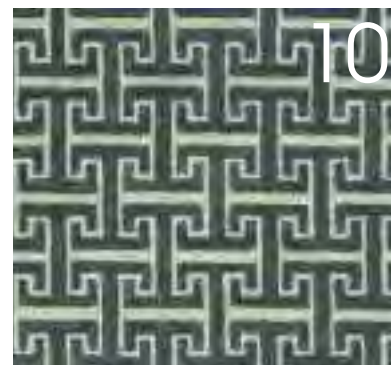
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- Atlanta Market July 2011
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- Atlanta Market August 2011
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- Atlanta Market October 2011
- Atlanta Market November 2011
- Atlanta Market December 2011
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Retailing Washington/Baltimore: Pushing Ahead

By Jack Maier

Since we began a few months ago doing these articles on rug retailing in various cities, we've been asking retailers about the recovery from the recession. It's an obvious question.

Retailers have often responded with statements comparing where they are now with where they were before the housing bubble burst in 2007-2008. That's an obvious way of responding.

But it's odd – and getting odder – that we find that kind of response useful. Questions about “recovery,” and the kind of answer they elicit, are ultimately based on the idea that things will more or less go back to the way they were.

“How things were” is a useful point of reference a year or two into a recession of average severity. But this is an economy that experienced a sudden and deep recession, then a very weak and so far only partial recovery, and is now some five years into that process. The way things were isn't much of a marker for assessing where we are now. The changes in the market brought on by the recession have been overtaken by changes stemming from other causes.

Whether or not there had been a recession, people would still be selling rugs over the Internet. Whether or not there had been a recession, the middle of the market would have moved from hand-knotted rugs to machine-made and hand-tufted rugs. Whether or not there had been a recession, brick-and-mortar retailers' margins on the middle market rugs, which for many were the basis of their business, would have collapsed.

An example that perhaps illustrates better the effect of the recession is that of the soaring cost of hand-knotted rugs – which forced the middle of the market to machine-made and hand-tufted rugs, which pushed prices on middle market rugs down so far that customers were willing to buy them on the Internet.

The soaring cost of hand-knotted rugs can be, and has been, attributed to the recession. The recession killed orders for hand-

knotted rugs, the weavers lost their jobs and found others. Now that orders are reviving the weavers aren't coming back to the looms, producers' labor costs are soaring, and those costs are being passed along to the importers, wholesalers, and ultimately the retailers and end-users.

But the remarkable statement in that sequence isn't that the recession killed the weavers' jobs, but that the weavers found new and better jobs outside the rug industry. That was going to happen, whether or not there was a recession. In this case, it wasn't so much that the recession caused change, as that the recession accelerated change.

Arguably, US rug retailers also find themselves in an economy, the weakness of which is forcing change that that very weakness makes more difficult to effect. And we're so far into it that it's not a matter of recovery, of getting back to where we were. It's a matter of finding the way forward.

MATCHING INVENTORY TO DEMAND

What got us thinking along this track was a conversation we had with Zubair Mohamed of Senneh Knot (with stores in Timonium, MD and Maple Lawn, MD). Mr. Mohamed established Senneh Knot 25 years ago. He currently carries hand-knotted rugs and flatweaves/soumacs, along with a very few tufted and machine-made rugs.

He described how middle-income consumers had all but disappeared from the brick-and-mortar retail market. “They're buying tufted online,” he said. But he didn't want to lose them for good. To keep them he had to find an alternative to the hand-knotted rugs that were now too expensive for middle-income consumers.

First he tried carrying tufted rugs, but found that they came with too many problems. Customers complained about the rugs

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SENIOR EDITOR AND PUBLISHER: • Leslie Stroh • publisher@rugnewsanddesign.com

DESIGNERS NOTEBOOK AND COLLECTIONS EDITOR: • Dasha Morgan • 828-676-6011

dasha.morgan@rugnewsanddesign.com

and DESIGN EDITOR • Sarah Stroh • sarah.stroh@rugnewsanddesign.com

ART DIRECTOR/PRODUCTION DIRECTOR • Ellen G Bair • ellen.bair@rugnewsanddesign.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE: • 607-263-5411 • rugnews@rugnewsanddesign.com

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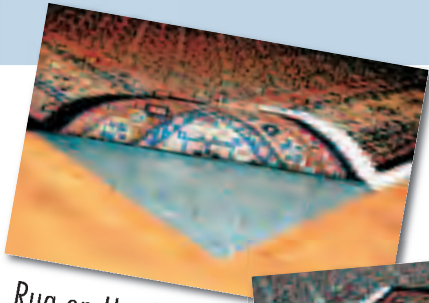
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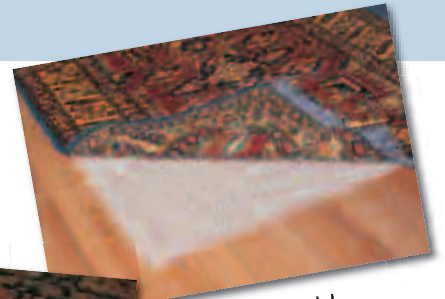
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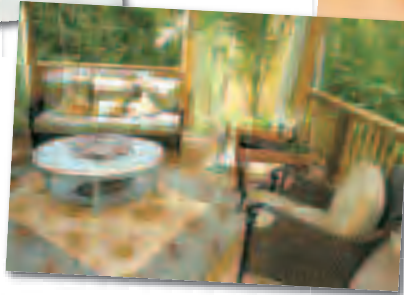
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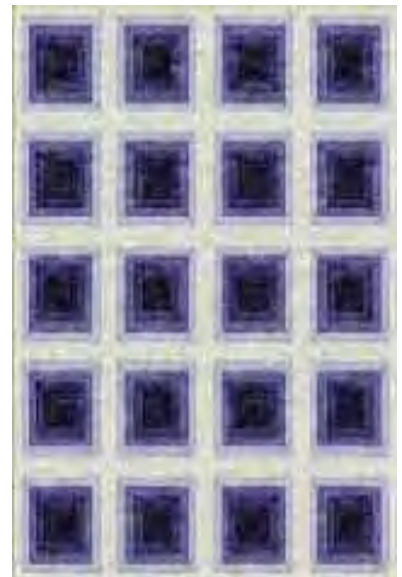


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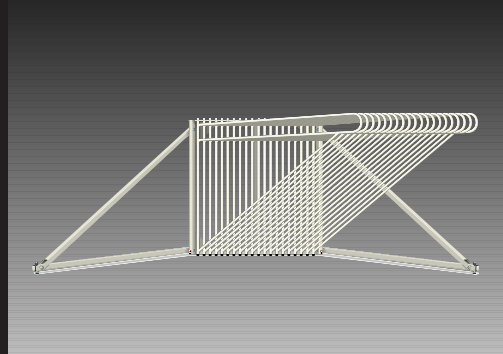
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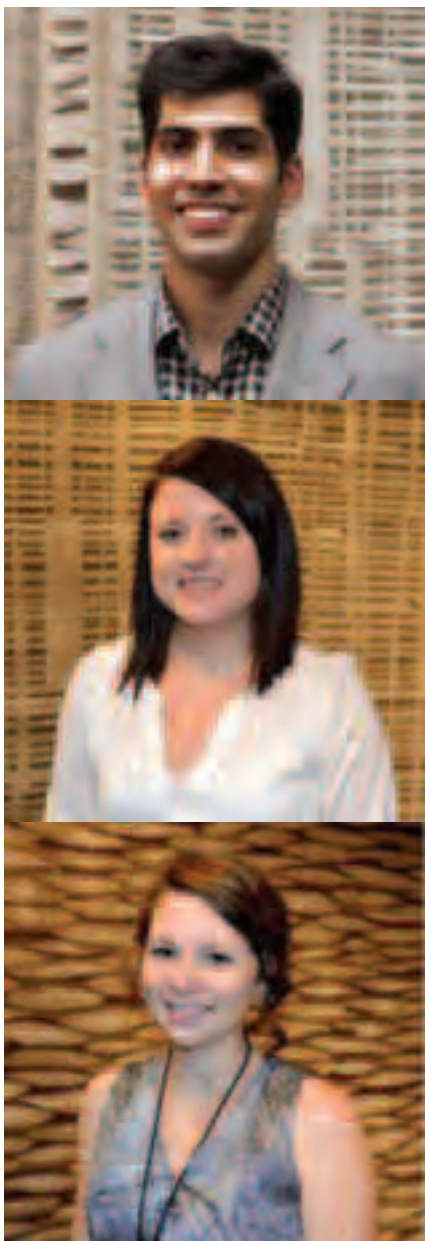
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Rugs were once considered a luxury item for wealthy homeowners, but modern advancements in design over the past decade have transformed the rug category entirely, resulting in beautiful styles that are affordable to everyone. While this transformation is well-known, many people still don't feel comfortable buying (or selling) rugs because of the multitude of different rug types available in the market today.

Cyrus Loloi, an executive with Loloi Rugs along with Cherisse Jensen and Emily Lancaster, two of Loloi's product developers aim to share their rug expertise with you so as a buyer you will become more knowledgeable about the different rug categories. This seminar will cover the basics; different rug constructions, fiber types, tips & tricks for selecting rug sizes for your room and more. Cyrus, Cherisse and Emily will also share what's hot right now in the rug market, explore upcoming trends and leave time for buyers to ask individual questions. Everyone is invited!

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Lunch and Seminar are free of charge. Seating will be limited. Reservations are recommended by emailing Lchastain@imcenters.com



Observations

continued from page 4

He went on to say that about 90 designs out of some 9,000 available accounted for 50% of retail. We have heard other numbers that are more concentrated than even these.

Jan Soleimani (principal Bokara Rugs) told us that there is growing interest in traditional hand knotted oriental rugs. He said that they went out of fashion, and people stopped making them, and now there is a growing shortage.

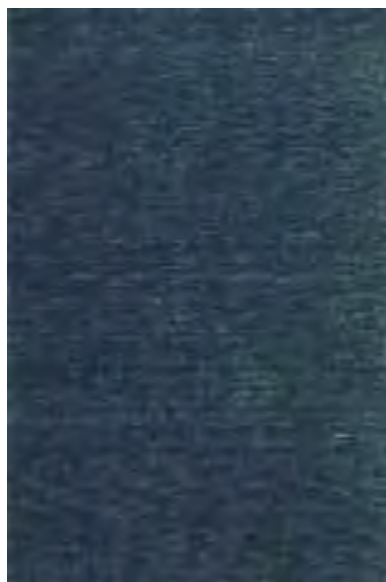
From what we hear from various sources, production of hand knotted rugs is off by about 90%. Even if 90% is not the right number, when importers stopped placing orders during the great recession, weavers had to find work elsewhere. They are not coming back until demand and wages are strong enough to guarantee them regular work and a decent life.

On the economist's other hand, there are at least 50 vendors showing hand-knotted rugs in New York City in September with the largest concentration of more than 30 in one place, at the annual NYICS show at 7 West 34th Street.

A CHANGING BUSINESS

Putting all this together suggests that there are more vendors with less supply chasing fewer retailers who have lower

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Eliko Antique & Decorative Carpets	25	Obeetee	4	Woven Legends	31
Endless Knot Rugs	17	Pasargad	21	Zollanvari	3
French Accents	24	Persian Gallery	13		

Ten Points About Rugs: 10 of 10

By David Lew

POINT 10: CUSTOM RUGS

Most custom rugs are custom sizes of existing patterns; your room needs a non-standard size. Nepalese/Tibetan rugs can be made more quickly than high knot count Persian designs. Size is the most important reason for custom rugs, color is next.

New colors can be introduced into existing designs fairly easily, but it does take time to make a custom knotted rug. On the scale of good, better, best you are looking at weeks for

Nepalese/Tibetan weaves, and months for Persian or Turkish hand knots.

It is important to remember that there are many looms up to 12/13 feet wide, but if you need a wider rug than that, you will have to wait for a loom up to 20, 25, or 30 feet wide to become available.

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.

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Retailing Washington/Baltimore: Pushing Ahead

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shedding, and about the odor of the latex used to stabilize the rugs. He worked with his customers to resolve the problems. But he found that while the price he could get was capped by the fact that the rugs were available on line, his expenses were driven up by the fact that as a brick-and-mortar retailer he was responsible for the rug in a way that Internet retailers weren't.

Then, two or three years ago, Mr. Mohamed switched to flatweaves. This was a product any customer might be interested in, but one that especially fit the needs of middle-income customers – it was a fine rug at a relatively low price point. Mr. Mohamed noted that flatweaves had been popular 20 years ago but since then have been transformed. The quality of the rugs, and in particular the quality of the wool, is way up. Flatweaves are now available in a wide range of designs and colors, and they're customizable. They're favorites in design centers like New York City and Los Angeles, and popular among younger customers.

Mr. Mohamed has had good success with flatweaves, and it's helped Senneh Knot keep the door of the brick-and-mortar retailer open to younger middle-income customers – who in a dozen years or so will be a core segment of the upper-income customer population.

What struck us about this story is that

Mr. Mohamed wasn't waiting for prices of hand-knotted rugs to decline, he wasn't waiting for middle-income customers to get rich, and he wasn't waiting for upper-income customers to pay down their debts and start spending again. He wasn't waiting for things to get back to the way they were. He was looking forward, not back.

FOCUS ON ONE-OF-A-KIND RUGS

Another part of moving forward is to look for the new opportunities created by change. One of the changes that's now presenting opportunities for brick-and-mortar rug retailers is the customer's interest in having a home that better expresses who he or she is – with original art, workshop furniture, and a one-of-a-kind rug.

Beyond the ego issue driving sales of one-of-a-kind or customized rugs, there's also a practical issue. The process of designing interiors is changing in a way that puts more of a premium on finding just the right rug, and makes consumers more willing to pay a premium for it. Whereas at one time the rug was often the first decision/purchase, retailers are finding that customers are now waiting until a later point in the design process to select their rugs.

Because customers are "buying the rug last," there are more constraints on the rug decision. Colors and case goods have already been chosen and bought; the rug needs to tie it all together after the fact. As Mr. Mohamed put it, "customers are now

buying the rug last. So they need to find something that fits the colors, design, and textures they've already selected." This puts a much higher premium on finding just the right rug, and explains some of the enthusiasm among customers for custom options.

One-of-a-kind rugs come in a couple of varieties – the custom woven rug (pile or flatweave), and the rug custom fabricated from broadloom. While custom hand-knotted rugs are expensive and mostly sold to upper-income customers, it's very far from being the case that rugs custom fabricated from broadloom are sold mainly to customers who can't afford custom hand-knotted rugs.

Custom fabricated rugs have many advantages beyond the fact that they're less expensive than custom woven rugs. They're a way of tailoring natural fiber and plain pattern – two of the hotter trends in interior design – to a specific room and room design.



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And they're ready for installation two or three weeks after the customer places the order, rather than the several months needed to have a rug custom woven. For these kinds of reasons, custom fabricated rugs are popular with many designers.

Among the DC / Baltimore retailers we spoke with was Shahram Bagheri of Georgetown Carpet. Mr. Bagheri has been selling rugs in the DC market for 40 years. He has stores in DC, in Bethesda MD, and in Fairfax VA. He sells both hand-made and machine-made rugs, as well as carpet.

Although his customers are upper-income, over the last seven or eight years the balance between rug and carpet sales in his stores has reversed – from 70% rugs / 30% carpet, to 30% rugs / 70% carpet. Georgetown Carpet stocks a wide array of carpet samples from which it fabricates area rugs in its own fabrication facility. Mr. Bagheri comments that “young people like custom.”

Alan Ahmadi is another fabricated rug enthusiast. Mr. Ahmadi owns Pooshan World of Rugs (Kensington MD), which he established 30 years ago. (His father began the business in Iran in 1940.) He carries rugs from several vendors, as well as carpet, and fabricates area rugs from carpet. He comments that brick-and-mortar retailers need to stock one-of-a-kind rugs. Offering custom fabricated rugs is one way of doing that, and, he says, “it's a good business.”

But offering custom fabricated rugs is only one way of stocking one-of-a-kind

rugs. Like some other retailers, Mr. Bagheri of Georgetown Carpet has rugs made to his own designs and colors in China, India and Pakistan. He says he isn't having a problem finding companies to weave the rugs for him, despite the shortage of weavers in the producing countries.

Antique rugs are another category of one-of-a-kind rugs. We spoke with Jon Levinson of Alex Cooper (Towson, MD). Alex Cooper is probably best known as an auction house, but it also has a traditional rug retailing operation headed by Mr. Levinson.

Mr. Levinson made the point that antique rugs are increasingly competing with new hand-knotted rugs. As several retailers have noted over the course of our interviews, the cost of hand-knotted rugs from India and Pakistan has climbed rapidly. Mr. Levinson brought to our attention the fact that the cost of antique rugs, on the other hand, has stabilized. In the past, Mr. Levinson explained, many of these rugs were bought in the US by dealers, to be sold in Europe, especially Germany and Italy, where they commanded higher prices. However, the European markets for antique rugs are now soft, fewer of the antique rugs are being bought in the US for export, and with the decline in demand, the prices of the rugs have leveled off.

THE NUMBER OF RUG STORES

So how good or bad is the market in DC/Baltimore now? Mr. Ahmadi at Pooshan World of Rugs says he's not seen

a full recovery from the recession. Mr. Bagheri at Georgetown Carpet says the recession didn't affect him much. Note that these responses aren't necessarily contradictory. It may just be that the market is “off” or “soft” but not severely depressed.

It may also have something to do with the number of rug stores. If in any period rug stores close their doors faster than total rug sales decline, then average sales at the surviving stores will rise. It's simple arithmetic. “The future of the rug store is all about supply and demand,” as Mr. Bagheri put it. He noted that in the last 15 to 20 years, the number of rug stores in his area had doubled, far more than the population had grown. Mr. Ahmadi noted that before the recession there were five other stores selling rugs within 20 blocks of his store, but now there is only one other store in the same area. Both operate in the DC metro area – in the city and its northern and western suburbs. By contrast, Mr. Mohamed, who operates two stores nearer to Baltimore than to DC, said that the number of stores is not decreasing.

While we can't draw a conclusion about the whole market from these few comments, we do have the impression

continued on page 23

ERRATA

On page 12 in the August 2012 issue, a contemporary chaise was mislabeled. It is not a product of Johnston Casual, but of Divano Designs. Rug News and Design apologizes for this error.



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Retailing Washington/Baltimore: Pushing Ahead

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that the retail rug market became “over-stored” during the housing bubble, and in the current market a lot of the newer stores are closing. We heard comments supporting such a hypothesis from retailers in Los Angeles and New York, as well as DC / Baltimore.

As Jon Levinson at Alex Cooper put it, “only the strong survive. The average ‘lower quality’ retailer is not going to make it,” he said. There just aren’t enough customers to support them.

DESIGNERS

Mr. Mohamed at Senneh Knot made the point that upper-income customers use designers, and that designers are thus a portal to upper-income customers. All of the retailers we talked to are continually building their relationships with designers. Mr. Ahmadi of Pooshan World of Rugs said designers mainly came to his store to go through his stock rather than place orders for custom rugs – he has some 3,000 rugs in his inventory. Mr. Bagheri of Georgetown Carpet said he made a lot of custom rugs for them.

Mr. Bagheri volunteered the information that a lot of designers are going out of business – something like 30% of the designers in his market, he estimates. He characterized this as a “winnowing out,” with the designers who know the market best actually getting stronger. Mr. Mohamed of

Senneh Knot commented that the degree of control exercised by the designer over the rug decision depended on the designer – the better known the designer was, the more influence he or she had over the customer’s decisions – and that he often had to be diplomatic when making a sale in which a designer was involved.

THE INTERNET

Many of the comments we heard about the Internet were about the trade-off between price and customer comfort. People can buy rugs on the Internet for less money, but for a variety of reasons they’re less comfortable doing so. This establishes a real, if vaguely defined, “ceiling” to the Internet rug market.

Mr. Mohamed at Senneh Knot summed it up. “Customers keep seeing prices of \$500 to \$1,000 on the Internet for an 8x10, 9x12 rug. What they see in the brick-and-mortar store is \$2,500 or more. But rugs can get too expensive to sell online. It’s the comfort factor. Above a certain price, customers want to see and touch the rug.” There’s also the issue of sending dollars into the ether. “They have no idea where the Internet retailer is,” Mr. Mohamed notes. “There’s not even a phone number on the site.”

We had heard that some rug vendors were withholding some lines from the Internet to protect brick-and-mortar retailers. The retailers we spoke to were skepti-



cal. Nevertheless retailers still stock rugs from vendors whose products are available online. The catch is they tend to carry the hand-knotted rugs from these vendors – which takes us right back to the price issue.

That was a new wrinkle for us. Yes, there’s a price point of maybe \$800 to \$1,000 below which consumers will buy a rug online without seeing or touching it. Yes, above that price consumers can and do go to brick-and-mortar stores to see and touch the rug, and some consumers will then buy it online. But seeing and touching isn’t enough to make a lot of consumers completely comfortable with the online purchase of a more expensive rug. Those customers will pay more to buy the rug from a retailer with a physical presence in their part of town.

Please email comments/criticism to jack.maier@rugnewsanddesign.com.

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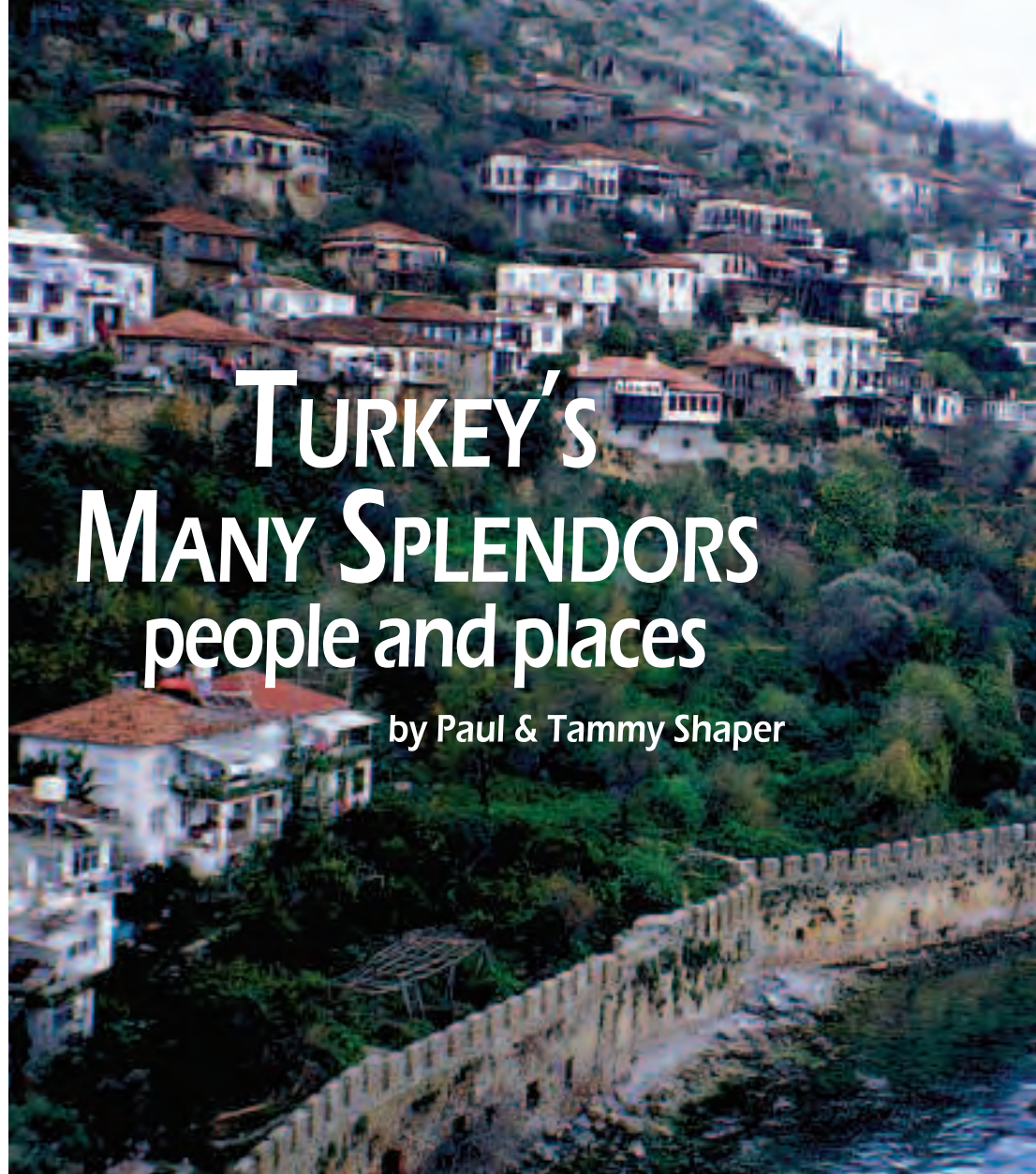
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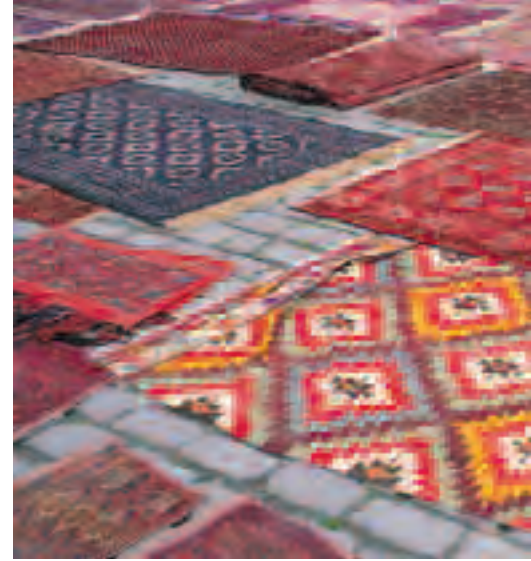
by Paul & Tammy Shaper

From top-left going counter-clockwise: 1. An Ayacek weaver near the Mediterranean city of Antalya proudly sits for this portrait. 2. Beating down the completed row of knots with a wooden comb, insures the tightness of the woven knot. 3. A young mother and children visit a local neighbor at the foothill of the Taurus mountains in Southern Turkey. 4. Once the permanent home of the governor of Rome and the Virgin Mary, Ephesus remains a wonder of the ancient world and leading tourist attraction. 5. Carpets are washed the old fashion way in Istanbul. 6. Tools of the weavers trade amongst the background of graphed guide for weaving, called a cartoon. 7. Tunch Togar's village weavers of



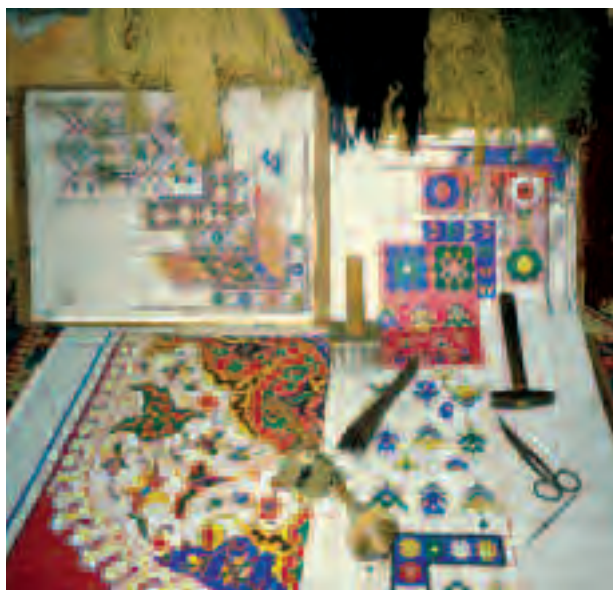


Aegean Sea, Southern Turkey



the Taurus mountains, live in the foothills above Antalya, display a wonderful, newly completed Dosemealti rug which we purchased. 8. The Istanbul Carpet Museum's gift shop displays reproductions for sale from their museum collection. 9. Carpet vendor displaying a magnificent antique reproduction of a Milas. 10. Istanbul's street market where one may purchase rugs from around Central Asia.

© Paul & Tammy Shaper are photographers, designers and printers providing unique marketing for the oriental/area rug trade. Their 2013 advertising calendar for retailers, "Woven Treasures" is due out in September. www.orientalcarpets.com



Observations

continued from page 18

traffic. Mr. Soleimani also observed that traffic is down so much that it is difficult to figure out what is going on.

We don't know how the business of rugs is changing. We do know that it is changing.

We believe that there are two segments of business not three. The old low, middle, high is now low and high, no middle.

At the low end, mass merchants and the internet dominate.

At the high end, interior designers represent the buying population.

We all have to deal with this reality

A NEW IMPORT REALITY

Like any business, credit is the grease that makes the wheels go around. For years there has been too much credit, and too many rugs lying unsold in stacks around the country. Some rugs age well, like wine, but most wine is made to be drunk young. So it is with rugs. Not all colors and designs age well.

Most rugs are subject to the whims of fashion. Perhaps not fashion as changeable as a teenager's whim, but still changeable. We have gone from 20% non-traditional to about 50% non-traditional in less than five years.

Apparently, with the difficulties in the US market selling rugs, not everybody has been paying their bills to the Indian rug exporters.

The Government of India has changed the payment rules. Effectively the change means "Cash Before Delivery" for arms length transactions.

Specifically, the new regulation says that "Export shall not be permitted on the basis of "Documents Against Acceptance" unless Such export is covered either by Bank Guarantee or ECGC Guarantee or Such export is to own Subsidiaries/ own Trading Companies/own Office-cum-Warehouses."

This restriction applies to "Handmade Woolen Carpets including other floor coverings like "Woolen Durries, Druggets, Gabbas, Namdhas and Shaggy" also "Handicraft items, Silk Garments, Made ups, Fabrics and Accessories" in Section 8A, 8B, and 8C Classification of Export Items.

In practical application, this means a tightening of credit in the industry, that will ultimately be reflected in the credit terms to retailers, and trade resources. It benefits vertically integrated manufacturers, and has relatively little impact on the strongest importers.

Musical Chairs

Starting with the July Market in Atlanta, several personnel changes took place.

Steve Roan left Karastan.

Brandon Culpepper joined Mohawk, leaving Orian.

Don Newton returned to Orian, leaving KAS.

Steve Roan joined KAS.

Great group of people, good group of companies, rearranged. 🌟

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Victoria E. Sanchez, ASID

Victoria Sanchez Interiors, Alexandria, VA

WHEN DO YOU CHOOSE THE FLOOR COVERING?

Basically each client is different. If I am starting from scratch, then the floor covering is one of the starting points, as is color. Sometimes there is an inspirational piece, such as a piece of art, which might dictate the color. Budget considerations must be brought in then too. If the total budget for a room is say \$15,000 then to allocate \$7,000 to \$8,000 just to the floor can cause quite a bit of anxiety.

WHAT MARKETS OR DESIGN CENTERS DO YOU ATTEND REGULARLY?

I, of course, go to the Washington, DC Design Center often and travel frequently to New York City, which is so near. I go to High Point and Atlanta at least once a year.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE FIBER OR STYLE?

For me, wool "takes the cake." It seems the very best. Lately flatweaves seem to be making a comeback. I have introduced some lovely hand knotted rugs, combined with a flat weave, for a stunning, elegant look to my clients, who love them. This came from the Stark Custom Rug Program. This high/low effect makes for something different for a client. Asmara has some too.

WHAT ABOUT THE CUSTOM RUGS?

I often choose a custom piece, because I need a particular size that is not a standard size. But generally speaking I try not to order a custom rug for my residential customer, because of the long lead time, which can be 8 to 10 months. Commercial customers can deal with a longer wait time, so for them I will order custom.

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

To me, bigger is better when it comes to the rug. It can make the space more grand and beautiful. I will always encourage the larger sizes, so all the legs of the furniture are on the rug if possible. Generally speaking, my design work is classic and timeless, and I try not to break too many rules with a high ticket item. I try to stay within good design principles, maybe pushing the envelope with the pillows or perhaps the colors on the wall.

WHAT ABOUT THE INTERNET OR THE COMPUTER?

Basically, I say "Yuk!" The colors are never accurate enough on the internet, so you always need samples. And then you can't really tell the quality of the piece on the computer! That is so important. If you look just at the price, it may look as if you are saving a lot of money by buying it online, but then you aren't comparing apples to apples. One may be good quality, and the other is not.

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“ Bigger is better, when it comes to the rug ”

Skip Sroka, CID, ASID

Sroka Design Inc., Bethesda, MD

WHEN DO YOU USUALLY CHOOSE YOUR FLOOR COVERING?

Floor covering and rugs are chosen early in the design process. They are the foundation of the room, and as such are often best selected at the beginning, especially if they are one-of-a-kind. While color is always part of the picture, initial choices are more centered around what uniqueness the floor covering offers.

WHAT MARKETS OR DESIGN CENTERS DO YOU ATTEND?

I use the Washington Design Center, Rug showrooms in NYC, and the High Point Market. I truly enjoy being able to see complete lines at the market. It is a great way to see what's new or what you may have forgotten about. Most of our carpets initially come from sales reps, who bring us architectural sample folders for our library. I have 9 people on my design team, so our library is in constant use. I also like the ease of coordinating selections and then calling for the larger samples for presentations or color coordination.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE STYLE OR FIBER?

Wool is incredible for its hand, durability, and clean ability. We use more wool carpet than any other kind. That's all I have in my home.

DO YOU PURCHASE CUSTOM OFTEN?

We probably produce 20 custom rugs a year, usually because we want something that isn't made. Normally I like the scale to be larger.

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

Good question! My personal rule is that small rugs make a room look and feel small. I like rugs that fill a room. I like rugs to be under furniture (or at least have their front legs on the carpet) to provide an inviting sense to the room. I also use a lot of non rectangular rugs. I find that circles and ovals are very welcoming. I also like octagons and rectangular rugs that have angled corners.

WHAT ABOUT PURCHASING ON THE COMPUTER AND INTERNET?

You can get inspiration from the internet, but you can't trust the color your monitor is showing. Rugs and fabrics will need to be seen in the light they are going to perform in. You can do some basic weeding out and research on the internet, but you need the actual samples to work with. Working with dealers that you trust and have a relationship with will produce better results than taking a chance on an unknown.

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A woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue long-sleeved dress with a white geometric pattern and black strappy high-heeled sandals, is posing on a colorful rug. She is standing on a small wooden crate with one foot and leaning against a large red circular rug with the other. The room is decorated with various patterned rugs, including a black and white checkered one, and colorful pillows. A large abstract painting is visible in the background.

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