

Technological Advances to Ease Ordering of Custom-Made Rugs

By Crystal Honores

NEW YORK—Suppliers and retailers are turning to new software programs to facilitate the process of ordering custom-made rugs.

With the use of customization software, retailers want to increase interest from consumers in a business that is traditionally designer-driven. These programs are making custom rugs less intimidating for consumers and designers alike because they allow them to see the rug on the computer screen and on a full-color printout. Tufenkian Carpets, Michael David, Masland and Tamarian Carpets are some of the companies using these programs.

Last month, Tufenkian introduced its custom rendering system. This software, which was developed exclusively for the importer by Artful Technologies, is available at some Tufenkian dealers and in Tufenkian's showroom. Without assistance from a representative or dealer, consumers can recolor rug designs with a "point and click" system and print out a full-color rendering.

The program has been designed so that the color the customer sees on the computer screen and on the rendering match the yarns in the final product exactly. Users can choose from more than 300 stock colors for more than 2,000 design and colorway combinations. Another feature is the design portfolio, which lets consumers save designs for future reference. Color poms are also available.

While Tufenkian's new rendering system was targeted to designers, "it might open up a little more business on the consumer side because it's easy and fast," said Mark DaSilva, director of marketing for Tufenkian.

In the past, consumers have been wary of ordering a custom-made rug because it was time-consuming and it

was difficult to visualize the final product, DaSilva said.

Not only has the design process become faster, but now the waiting period will be shorter, he added. The importer will now offer a 14-by-20 custom-made rug from Nepal in 10 weeks for a slightly higher price, DaSilva said. Previously, the turnaround time was 15 to 16 weeks.

CyborRug is Tamarian Carpets' new design customization software. The program allows clients to pick from 350 designs and 400 colors, or they can create their own pattern by incorporating up to 500 different motifs into their design. The image is then e-mailed to the supplier, and production on the Tibetan hand-knotted wool rug begins in Nepal. The rugs are available in various knot counts, pile heights and in sizes up to a 30-by-60. Customers can also request silk accent yarns.



Tufenkian Carpets introduced its custom rendering program in May.

According to Robert Tuttle, marketing director for Tamarian Carpets, the software has boosted the company's overall custom business, including a rise in demand from consumers.

Michael David, a subsidiary of Rite Rug specializing in high-end products, began using Masland's custom rug program last year. The Columbus, Ohio-based retailer's custom rug clientele is divided evenly between designers and consumers, said Jeff Treneff, retail manager.

"To me, it's a real closing tool," Treneff said about Masland's program.

Masland's custom program is available online, and offers more than 500 patterns—grouped into 13 levels of complexity—and 130 colors. Because Masland's custom rugs are fabricated out of broadloom pieces, the manufacturer can deliver a custom-made rug in two weeks through its ZAP quick-delivery program. ■

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