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# Strong Footing

Rug companies bring optimism to High Point Market

■ By Cecile B. Corral

Resilience might be a good word to describe the year in area rugs.

Business has been challenged by multiple external pressures, from labor shortages to raw material price hikes to emerging tariffs.

But 2018 is certainly not over, and High Point Market is poised as the year's last major market opportunity for category players to achieve a strong fiscal finish and move into the new year on strong footing.

"Rugs are an important home furnishings product for consumers, and consequently, they are a key focus for [High Point] Market," Julie Messner, senior vice president of home décor and leasing for International Market Centers, told HTT. "The variety of designs, prices and materials represented in the rug category at High Point Market continues to grow."

Among this season's category highlights, she noted, is the returning "The Rug Show" – a curated collection of 20+ rug vendors from around the world – to the top floor of the Suites at Market Square, "complementing an already robust category offering that includes the major rug producers many retailers and designers want to source."

Market has been on the upswing since last fall, and the trend seems to be going strong, observed Kaleen senior vice president Blake Dennard.

"Our industry is seeing great markets again, and it's been great for business," he said. "We've been seeing traffic higher over the past year than we have for a long time, and it all started at High Point last October."

The company is bringing an array of new styles for launch, including new all-wool hand-tufted collections.

"We are definitely showing new machine-mades, but we are also making a big push for hand-tufted wool products," he continued. "That market is shrinking, but our competition there has been shrinking faster. And we are seeing an opportunity for us to jump on it with better quality products and better value."

Nourison is readying for "a major launch" at market – the expansion of its Calvin Klein designer program with 10 new collections, giving cause for the company's ongoing confidence.

"We expect busy traffic during High Point Market," Alex Peykar, principal, told HTT. "For our overall business in 2019, we want to continue our focus on mid- to high-price products, and focus on low- to mid-price products for e-commerce and retail chain stores."

New brands and product innovation are giving Kas Rugs reason for its own set of high expectations for market.

At its showroom, the company will be spotlighting its recently added program with California lifestyle brand Hang Ten with a special cocktail hour and design trends presentation as well as a lunch-and-learn seminar with designer partner Libby Langdon.

"We're expecting strong traffic at High Point Market," Santhi Yariogadda, vice president, e-commerce, licensing and new business. "We're looking forward to an incredibly robust finish to 2018 and a very healthy start to 2019. We have an incredible team excited for an even better 2019 and are looking forward to many products already in the pipeline and initiatives to launch soon."

High Point Market is where Lili Alessandra this past spring first debuted its rug category alongside its luxury bedding and accessories.

Company founder and designer Sandra Hernandez Yedor is now looking forward to bringing it back with new line extensions, including the hand-knotted Waves collection made of wool and viscose in India.

"The High Point market is ideal for us because it attracts high-end interior designers that are specific-project driven," she said. "Our line of high-end bedding and rugs offers many options for those specific design projects."

High Point Market is scheduled from October 13-17. HTT



Karastan is presenting the Scott Living collection with HGTV Property Brothers stars Drew and Jonathan Scott. Artisan is a grouping of Art Deco-inspired designs illuminated by a palette of mineral-inspired colors on a SmartStrand Silk construction. #PCH-309

The Rockford collection by Orion Rugs is machine-woven in the USA of 100% polypropylene and constructed in a dense, soft pile. SP 5233



Surya Inc.'s Panipat collection is hand-hooked of 100% wool in low-pile construction, and features updated traditional patterns interpreted in both bold and subdued palettes. SP4100



Harounian Rugs International is showcasing the new gray-and-blue colorway addition to its Intrigue collection of hand-knotted wool area rugs. #PCH-407