

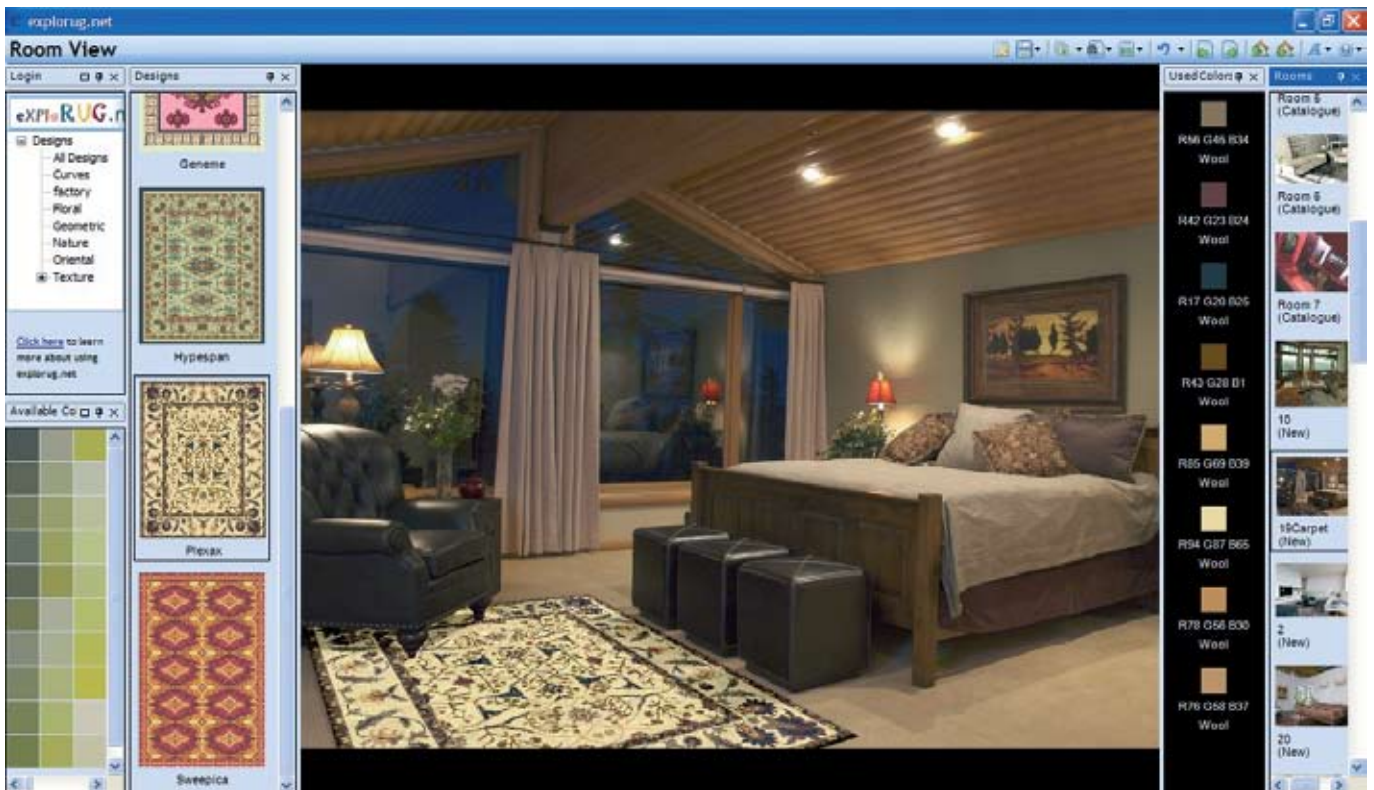


Pure Luxury


Ball & Young
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Meet your maker



In a world where everything is standardised, it is impossible to stand out from the crowd, and being unique is about as easy as being president.

Limitation of creative freedom is one of the most frustrating aspects of choosing a floorcovering as most people don't want to settle for something that every other Tom, Dick and Harry has.

The internet is changing this. With its endless flexibility, accessibility and potential, the internet has paved a new path for flooring, and in particular rugs.

Rug-maker.com is a hand knotted custom rug company based online. It offers a completely bespoke and revolutionary service which allows customers to convert anything from a piece of wall art to a picture in a magazine into a rug of any size or specification.

Its website enables users to create individual, personalised rug designs beginning with selecting the exact dimensions of the desired product. Once this has been established, the design and colours are chosen, not from a generic stock of existing images and ideas, but from the users own plan of what they are looking for.

Users then decide on a material, with the most popular being hand-knotted wool and silk, however there are many different options available.

For complete piece of mind, the user can then view the final product by magnifying it in a three-dimensional view in order to make any finishing touches, for absolute perfection.

The digital representation of the final product transforms the way that rugs are designed. Any element can be adjusted at any time during the process so there is no chance of mistakes or unhappy customers. To add to this, people can also submit digital pictures of

the room they intend to place the rug to ensure that it is in keeping with its intended surroundings.

The system behind the facility is Galaincha software, designed by software experts Jyoti Tandukar and Shreeniwas Sharma from Nepal. They designed the software especially for the rug industry and it runs in conjunction with a similar software system they built called exploRUG.net.

Intuitive and user-friendly, the superior quality and precision of the output from the software has been instrumental in flawless communication and customer confidence.

Richard Mathias explained a little more about the history of his company and how it came to be such a success:

'Jyoti and I met on the web as I had renamed my company Rugarlery with one 'G' and he had named his new software the same.

'Previously I had been in the rug industry for 30 years, and had just reduced the company down in size from six to one showroom, expecting tough times on the high street with more clients going on line.

'Jyoti and I seemed to have the same ideas about the future of the rug business. He had been encouraging manufacturers in Nepal that they could do things quicker using computers. He is connected with Kathmandu University and teaches computer studies along with having a couple of other companies and produced Galaincha v1 (meaning carpet in Nepalese) about 10 years ago.

'I met him about three years ago and felt that I could help develop products for the rug industry as I knew it well. A partnership was formed with Jyoti and Shree and they began developing software. They ran the technical side and the back end and I promoted the front end, explaining what we required from the software.

'The results are beginning to show as sales are coming from recommendation rather than marketing. The two software tools Galaincha and explorug.net have been taken up by some of the largest rug companies in the world and also some of the smallest.'

The online service has proved so successful that the company, who used to own six stores, now only have one in St.Albans. The St.Albans store is aptly named The Rug Gallery and it continues to display rugs although stock levels have been reduced due to the increased demand for individually tailored products.

There are few ways of avoiding the internet and it is no doubt the future. Only ten or so years ago, the internet was still battling for its place among other technologies, but since it has revolutionised communications and businesses, and it's hard to contemplate a world without it. With such a radical but logical route into the market and by offering such bespoke options, Rug-maker.com is ahead of its

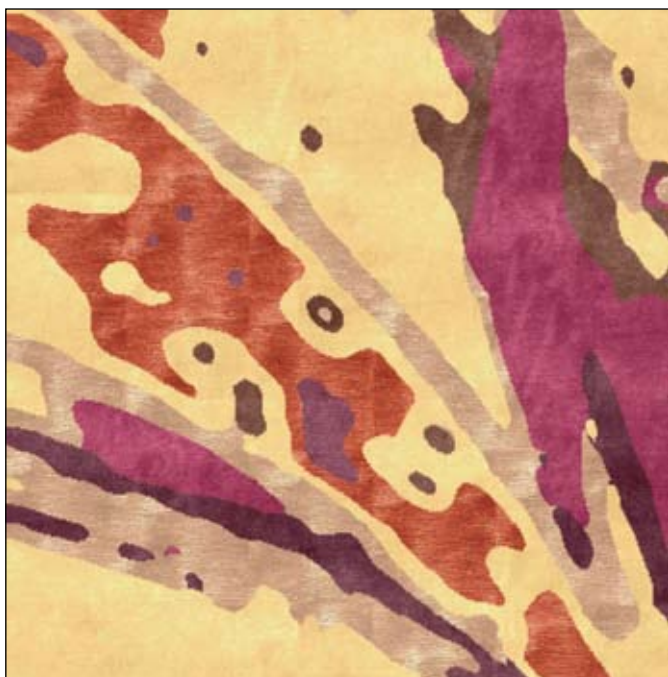
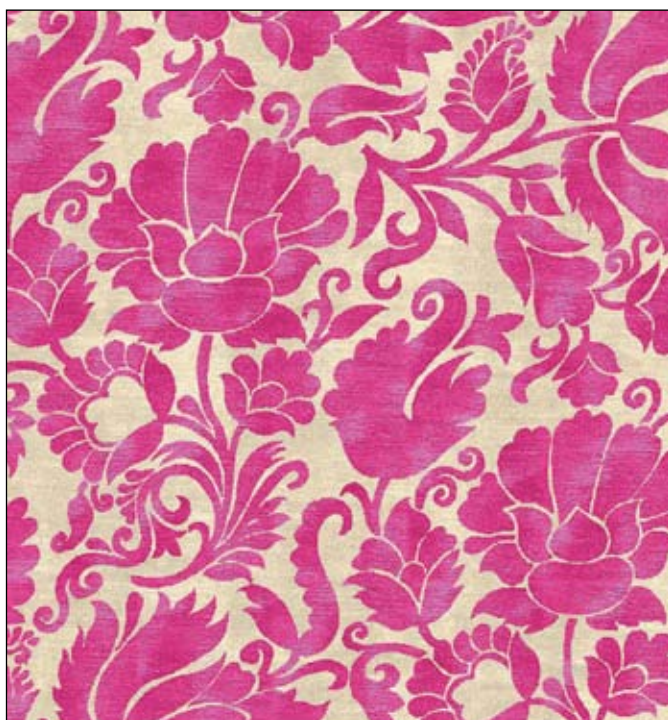
time.

By utilising the enormous benefits of the web, rugs.com has been able to reach across traditional barriers, breaking into new territory to offer the best.

Richard Mathias, founder of Rug-maker.com, describes it as the 'decision-making tool for the ideal rug', and it is exactly that. Customers have no pushy sales guys showing them the 'latest' products. Instead, they are free to choose, at liberty to create, and most importantly they are able to fulfil each of their needs no matter how complex. If you're a control freak, you'll love it as you have the final say on every aspect.

To demonstrate just how amazing the system is, Richard has a larger version up on screen in his shop. It makes impressive viewing and directly shows how it can be used to achieve the ultimate rug.

For more information visit www.rug-maker.com.



Glen Neath designed by Anne Reynolds