



In each issue of Interior Floors magazine, our editor Charlotte King looks at what is new and interesting in flooring for the home. This month she speaks to Richard Mathias from www.rug-maker.com, about a branch of his business that makes regal-looking Stamp Rugs.

Rug-maker.com make high-end, hand-knotted customised rugs. Around five years ago the company moved away from selling in shops, into manufacturing using software that allows bespoke designing of a carpet.

"There used to be a lot of stock left over and a lot of wastage, as well as high overheads. If blue was suddenly out of fashion and pink was in, we had to have a sale to be able to get new stock in. Our new model allows a customer to see what their rug looks like on screen, and make their own perfect rug to match their home," says Richard.

Customers can send an email picture of their lounge to the company, who will superimpose the rug they have designed from scratch onto the image. It allows the company to manufacture only what is required. This means the rugs are of high quality but they are not Ikea-cheap, and are particularly suitable for specialist jobs and for those with a healthy budget.

The designing software the company helped pioneer is available for anyone in the rug industry, with a bespoke version being used in shops including Harrods, so customers there can design their own rug.

The Stamp Collection

The new Stamp Rug branch of the company was inspired by cushions embroidered with the Queen's head. Richard says: "we manufactured the rugs to see what they would look like. Some people love them and some people think they are revolting. Some interior designers say they are fantastic and some say that 'they are just not me!'".

Rug-maker.com acquired a global licence for the rugs, to enable them to manufacture the exclusive Stamp Rug Collection by capturing the iconic images from the Royal Mail stamps.

But it was not an easy task to get the initial licence: "Royal Mail's lawyers went backwards and forwards, and we understand that one went to the Queen's office.

One of the rugs that was taken in that direction during the talks was not returned, so I like to think the Corgies are on it! We worked closely with the Royal Mail to get the design right and now they are opening up a store in Selfridge's".

The rugs have their own dedicated website: www.stamprugs.com. The company do their own designing, customisation and pre-processing work using a rug designing program called Galaincha, which produces precise and high quality results.

The rugs are hand-knotted onto cotton warps and wefts using 100% New Zealand Wool in factories in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. The wool is spun and dyed using aniline colouring for the illusion of depth in the finished result. There are four factories that do different things, depending on what is required.

The rugs can be made at any size, as long as they maintain the correct proportions of actual Royal Mail stamps. The looms are especially made for each different size. The colours and prices of the stamps are taken from the current 2010 Royal Mail Machin series.

Each standard size rug takes around 12 weeks to weave and if being laid on a hard surface, the company recommends that an underlay is used to prevent it moving around. The rugs can also be hung up on wall to brighten a room.

The culmination of the weavers' experience combined with the highest quality materials creates the perfect hand made rug.

"I think they have a lot of potential as they have such an iconic image on them. We think that they will become collectible as stamp colours change and old ones are not made anymore".

The company are also working on antique, distressed-style Stamp Rugs, to appeal to different markets.

The explorUG presentation software can be tried out on: www.rug-maker.com, by clicking 'guest', or for the Galaincha design software a three month trial is available for £100. Contact: Richard@rug-maker.com or 01727 841046.