

Brighter and unique colours are picking up

says **Navdeep Singla**, Director, Riviera Home, a company making finest floor covering solutions, talks about the present flooring trends, and the latest products offered by them to **Architecture Update**

Q Tell us about the types of floor; the market size of the same; and the opportunities in that sector?

A. Flooring industry is comprised of soft flooring and hard flooring. Soft flooring consists of carpets, rugs, wooden flooring, laminates and vinyls. The hard flooring covers primarily the ceramics tiles. According to our sources, the market size of floor covering in India is estimated to be around \$1.7 Billion. Flooring is the integral part of any commercial or residential building, and hence opportunities in the industry are being presented by growth in end-use sectors like real estate, hospitality and organized retail. Increasing disposable income, affordability, urbanization, brand aspiration and increasing desire for home aesthetics have catalyzed the demand.

Q. Outline your business in India and abroad?

A. Riviera Retails is the Indian retailing arm of Riviera Home Furnishings. The mother company that started in year 1978 enjoys a great reputation for crafting and supplying innovative and luxurious soft floor covering products including bath mats, accent rugs and area rugs globally. The company has strategic tie-ups with major distributors in North America, Europe, Japan, Australia. We also have our own sales and marketing offices in Hong Kong, Germany, UK and USA. The annual sales in fiscal year 2010 were over \$50 million. We are the largest cotton bath rug producing company in the world, with all the techniques available to construct the bath mat in any given yarn/fiber.

Riviera Retails is established to cater the growing demand of quality floor covering rugs. Since its inception in 2008, the company today has made a niche in the soft floor covering segment and is dealing with all the major retailers throughout the country.

Q. What are the latest products offered? Which one is the fastest selling and why?

A. Product development, creativity and innovation have always been the back bone of our company and have helped us leading the market. We always offer latest trends and colours with the help of designers - both in-house and overseas. Some of the latest products are Non Skid, Washable Kitchen and Accent Rugs made of 100 per cent superior quality cotton yarn, natural rubber backed combed cotton yarn bath mats for bath rooms that are fully anti skid, and hence protect in slipperly. We are also planning to offer our innovative range of area rugs and accent rugs made of special fiber cushion. The rugs have a bouncy effect and have a sheen and touch of silk, but don't shred like traditional silk rugs. The product has been very successful in countries like USA, and we believe Indian consumers will find it truly valuable.

Q. Tell us about the new process, materials and techniques you use in manufacturing/installing flooring material and beddings?

A. We have recently made some new developments using micro fiber and several ecological yarns like blend of cotton bamboo, viscose, and linen for our bath rugs, accent and area rugs collection to promote the 'Go Green concept'. In terms of techniques, we have recently bought some tufting and weaving equipments from Europe and USA to produce the products, which were only being produced in these countries. With the combination of our innovative skills and new machines, we are offering several new constructions of products in market. Apart from above, we have set up our own latex producing unit, so that we can produce own latex that is used in several of our products. Further, all our manufacturing facilities are fully complied and audited for a healthy and safe work environment by the major retailers around the world. We hold Oeko-Tex Certificate as well.



Q. How are the products viewed as part of lifestyle in residential/hospitality sector in India?

A. We have received phenomenal response from our customers - whether it is individual consumer or hospitality sector. With the growth in our economy and presence of global lifestyle brands, the individual consumer has become more aware of the latest trends, and is ready to spend on products to match international standards. Soft flooring are slowly becoming an integral part of living spaces - whether it is accent rugs for bedrooms, area rugs for living rooms, or bath rugs for bath rooms.

Q. What are the trends being witnessed in the home décor sector?

A. Consumers are looking for a personal touch and are willing to spend on products that are customized. The preference for brighter and unique colours is picking up. Traditional handmade looks products are in demand with globally inspired ethnic looks. Environmental and organic products too are currently getting popular. Consumers have begun spending on this category in a fashion similar to clothing, making changes as per the prevailing fashion trends.

Q. Tell us about the needs of modern Indian consumers in terms of size, functionality and versatility?

A. Indian consumers are intelligent and put in their money where they get the best value. Providing best valuable products is the mantra of success in Indian market scenario. An average consumer demands for products that offer both functions as well as décor. Spaces in urban areas are getting smaller and preferences are changing accordingly for smaller and more compact options. Several of our products are being used for multiple purposes.

Q. Outline your plans ahead? What kind of future do you foresee for the sector?

A. We are planning to increase our penetration in Indian market as we see a very promising future for this sector in India. We have already identified the areas where we see the void and how we can fill that with our products. Further, we are also putting up several new equipments to strengthen our backend supply chain that includes our own spinning to produce different variety of fibers and hence make new, unique, consumer friendly products.

Growth in urban population is one of the key drivers of the floor covering industry. India will need to add 700-900 million square feet of new floor space a year to support urbanization, and this will present opportunities for growth in the sector. Demand will also be stimulated by non residential building construction and growth in organized retail, with growth in retail sq ft. estimated at over 50 per cent and growth in commercial space estimated at 20-22 per cent over the next three years. Corporate interiors are receiving increasing attention, driving demand for aesthetically appealing floorings. ▲

about Navdeep Singh

Navdeep Singh, a young and upcoming entrepreneur, is the Sales & Marketing director of Riviera Home Furnishings. He has graduated from Southern Methodist University, USA, with a bachelor's degree in business finance. Navdeep has acquired a vast knowledge of floor covering industry over a passage of time by hands on experience and by participating in best exhibitions & seminars across the world. He has been very deeply engaged with the overall working of the entire Riviera group.