

China's Influence Being Felt:

Domotex asia/ChinaFloor Reflects Country's Growth, Importance

Record Numbers Expected For 7th Show

By Matthew Spieler

SHANGHAI, CHINA China's influence on the world's flooring industry in recent years continues to grow at an unprecedented rate and all indications are that trend will continue in 2005.

This is no more evident than in North America, as manufacturers, distributors and retailers have turned their attentions to the Far East for sourcing products.

One of the best ways to gauge how quickly the Chinese market is growing is through the country's largest floor covering trade show, Domotex asia/ChinaFloor (DACF). The seventh edition, set for March 22 to 24 at the Shanghai New International Exhibition Centre here,



DACF officials expect this year's show to be the largest in its seven year history.

is already shaping up to be the show's biggest in terms of both See Domotex asia, page 4

Mohawk Provides Floorscapes Dealers Bridge To Success

By Louis Iannaco

SAN FRANCISCO With this city's scenic bay area serving as the backdrop, Mohawk Industries staged quite an event for its Floorscapes dealers here Dec. 2 to 5. Billed as the Bridge To Success, more than 370 dealers representing over 500 storefronts gathered

at the downtown Hilton in the shadows of the Golden Gate Bridge for the 2004 Mohawk Floorscapes convention, which featured new products and programs; educational seminars with Mohawk University's Sam Allman; entertainment from singer Vonda Sheperd of Ally McBeal fame, as well as networking for all.



Farewell dinner hardware winner. The 2004 Floorscapes Dealer of the Year, John Millar of Avalon Carpet & Tile in Cherry Hill, N.J., is flanked by Mohawk's Ed Williams, left, and Marny Llerena.

We're in an industry where innovation is constant, Jeff Lorberbaum, the mill's president and CEO, told Floorscapes members during the event's general session, and taking advantage of new products and services is what allows us to profit and grow in our businesses. I am sure each of you, as successful See Mohawk, page 3

Sell A Lifestyle Not Just A Brand

HANNOVER, GERMANY Because each individual has her own style, products must not merely be trendy but rather match the lifestyle of consumers, so says international textile and area rug designer Elke Arora, during one of her many seminars she has given on the subject this year.

To stress her point, Arora pointed out the concept of Carpets of Dalton. She explains that instead of just selling a product, the spe-

cialty retailer presents concepts which can achieve product acceptance on the basis of quality, color and design in order to meet its customers' personal desires and needs.

In discussing this theory, she says the design world is being marked by two movements: forwards/backwards and local/global.

Forwards/backwards is bringing back the precious weaves of the baroque style and colorworld, said Arora. The wave of the retro-design will remain for years to come but the materials and fabrics will become increasingly influenced by technique and chemistry. It will become more intelligent, equipped with catalyst-coatings and will allow for additional functions. New areas of use will be opened up.

For some time now, the local/global combination has had us under control, she continued. Our

Bologna, Italy The 22nd edition of Cersaie, the world's largest exhibition of ceramic tile and bathroom furnishings, held recently at the Bologna Fairgrounds here, turned out to be a record-breaking event as a total of 98,592 total visitors attended the market. The addition of two new halls increased the size of the show to 156,000 square meters allowing a total of 1,057 exhibitors to participate. With the record-breaking attendance and a larger show floor, Cersaie was the perfect place to see the latest fall/winter trends in color, format, technology and style.

At the show, Italian manufacturers mixed a taste for minimalism with boldly colored accents that popped in high relief. Cool gray tones, slate, stone and concrete looks continue to be popular, noted Christine Abbate of Ceramic Tiles of Italy, however, color, texture and shape were presented in bigger and bolder ways.

Texture was on display across the show, she noted. From bas to high relief, tiles were made to add a touch

Ceramic Report: Minimalism Mixed With A Pop Of Color



of richness to any setting. Brix Nudo, designed by Milanese Claudio Viola, has the delicate texture of a sandy surface and is See Ceramic Trend Report, page 2



Renowned rug designer Elke Arora discusses trends during a recent public speaking engagement.

See Lifestyle, page 23



## CERAMIC TRENDS

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available in a range of geometric shapes including polygons, mosaics and strips. The company's new Wave series also features undulating patterns in sand.

Ceramica Viva showed two new textured series Melange and Textura. While Textura has the feel of a bamboo shade or a Chilewich rug, Melange has the look of a handwoven textile crafted with natural wools. Marazzi's Muri tiles create the impression of shifting sand patterns. Three-dimensional forms seem to rise from the tile surface creating the effect of movement, said Abbate.

Ascot's Interiors featured an elongated subway style format with tiny, thin decorative grooves of varying size, while sister company Dom showed Superfici, which includes tiles with the look of leather, cardboard and even curtain iron.

### Retro Color

With a look around at the new collections, one could not help noticing the playful motifs that were inspired by the mod colors and shapes of the 70s. Circular rings, waves, tiny bumps, sunbursts and flowers stood out at stands across the show, noted Abbate.

Some notable examples of these fresh bright looks were: Ceramica Viva, Monocibec, Naxos, Emilceramica, Dom's Revolver, Marazzi's Fashion, Sicis, King's Living, Rex RGB - Pop Art, Progetto 14 and Floorgres Bagno.

### Respect For Nature

The wood look, which has continued to grow in popularity in recent years, was once again very prevalent at Cersaie. Rex Abisko is a playful collection of wood looks that includes teardrop shaped pieces inspired by knots on a tree. A portion of the proceeds from Abisko's sales will be donated to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) for forestation purposes.

Other standout wood looks were spotted at Marazzi's Woods with a rich mahogany, as well as Kerex Comelegno (which means like wood) and Lea's Texture Legno. These versatile new series include ceramic wood planks and insert pieces.

Italian tile manufacturers have long made a broad commitment to responsible tile production, noted Abbate. In fact, just this year the Italian tile industry launched a new Web site, www.s-tiles.com, dedicated

to the subject of sustainability and Italian ceramic tile.

At Cersaie, many companies highlighted their sustainable product offerings. Caesar, which was recently awarded the highly desirable Eco-Label, introduced Feel, a new series with the look of wood that is sustainable and comes in seven colors.

Leonardo 1502, Marazzi, Italganiti and Imponta also showed tiles that were produced in state-of-the-art facilities that have received industry certification for their environmentally responsible production procedures.

Another example of an eco-tile is a new collection from Gamberelli



Ceramica De Maio's Terra Magna

called Oxigena, which has pioneered a new technology to create tiles that react with CO<sub>2</sub> to cut down pollution. All the tiles in the Gamberelli collection can be ordered with the Oxigena process.

Companies continued to experiment with format and shapes. Cersaie was the launch of a brand new technical innovation. Two companies introduced oversized porcelain tiles that are extremely thin. Created with state-of-the-art technology and measuring 3X1m, both collections, Otto D'Este's KerLite and Provenza's Endless are a slim 3mm thick.

Provenza took technology a step further partnering with faucet man-

# Critical Alignment

ufacturer, Fantini and Davide Groppi, an Italian lighting partner, to create installations that mixed these slabs with fixtures and lights. This revolutionary and light new format is ideal for floor, wall or countertop applications, said Abbate.

Ceramica Vogue added elongated glass slabs to its collection. The slabs measure 12X48-in. and are available in 17 colors.

Other interesting porcelain series that feature modular formats and minimalist lefty looks are Su-



Larger format tiles, whether they be in living or bathroom applications, are still one of the hottest trends in ceramic flooring today.

perges Suburbia, Floorgres Sala, Monocibec's Open Space, Edilcuoghi's Com-

pass, Isla's Next, Rondine's Mineraria and Leas Midtown.

Color & Metallics

Many exhibitors showed collections that mixed rich color with glass and metallic effects. One such manufacturer was Ceramgres, which displayed Opus, a line that combines liquid glass cut into thin strips and mixed with ceramic.

Gabbianelli showed the work of Dutch designer, Wouter Dolk. His new col-

lection titled, Cornici, features cartoon-like frames with a distinctly Baroque feel, noted Abbate. Sister company Bardelli showed Bronzi, a new handmade floor and wall series, which has the appearance of a rich weave of fine wool and copper yarns.

Cotto Veneto showed SottoVetro, a new collection that mixes glass and ceramic. Painterly color swirls are captured under

glass. Available in a 4X12-in. format and a 4X4-in. format, these tiles shimmer with color and light. Cotto Veneto also showed Infomale, a collection that captures the iridescent glazed effects of the raku technique used in Japanese pottery.

Also on exhibit were a series of new products created by student-designer teams working at Milan's Domus Academy. Some new ideas to come out of the program were leaf-shaped tiles with LED lights for garden walkways and modular pyramid-shaped tile systems for exterior cladding that can support plants creating a green wall effect.

Additionally, on the cutting-edge of technology, Mapei introduced Ultra-color Plus, a new mold resistant grout ideal for damp environments.

Louis Iannaco

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## MOHAWK

From page 1

ful dealers, have many insights into what has created the foundation for your business. One of the key factors is, building a relationship with your customer.

Your Floorscapes store itself speaks directly to the customer, he explained. It helps her solve her purchasing dilemmas. Industry studies tell us the culture of our business is in transformation. Our customers are willing to pay more for quality. She's more educated about product and design. What she wants to buy is a lifestyle.

This has been a driving force behind our magazine, Ideas To Go, he added, and it is most certainly behind the Floorscapes Studio design. We know making your customer happy and satisfied is your number one goal. Our goal is to ensure this happens for you. We are partners investing in each other for our continued success. We feel with Mohawk Floorscapes, there are no limits to that success.

Lorberbaum went on to discuss the economy, noting the shortest recession in U.S. history, low interest rates, increased government spending and a reduced tax burden. The result has been new job creation, housing starts at historic highs and a rebound in both remodeling and commercial spending. Our industry is reacting positively to this rebound. This year, the carpet industry has been growing at 5% to 6% in units, and hard surfaces are growing at almost 10%. Next year, the flooring industry should grow 4% to 5%.

Manny Llerena, vice president of retail marketing, told members the home improvement industry is forecasted to be phenomenal over the next five to 10 years. This means your sales should soar. The baby boomers have either successfully planned for retirement while others are now inheriting their parents' fortunes. This will be the greatest transfer of wealth in the history of the world. Close to \$10 trillion will

change hands.

There is a worldwide behavioral shift taking place, he explained. It's just no longer the wealthy, but America's middle-class consumer who is trading up to luxury. Consumers are willing to pay a significant premium for goods and services that are emotionally important to them. Consumers are looking for that emotional lift in the form of a new luxury purchase.

Are we ready to capitalize on this opportunity? he asked the members. I



Moving on up. Husband and wife team, Beth and Mark Hilbert of Discount Flooring Supermart in Albany, N.Y., have been Floorscapes dealers since October. Both believe the move has broadened their business, enabling them to sell categories other than carpet much more easily.

believe you, as Floorscapes dealers, are leading the way. You have improved your retail environments, your stores and merchandising, all of which not only send a message to your customer, but educates them as well. You are ahead of the pack.

Among the new items offered to members at convention were Smartstrand, a new fiber made with DuPont Sorona Polymer (FCNews, Dec. 6/13); Design at Home, a complete mobile selling system featuring a van with custom graphics, a shelving and sampling system, five-day

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## DOMOTEX ASIA

From page 1

exhibitors and visitors.

China is fast becoming the main hub in the Asia Pacific region at which to source affordable floor covering materials of high quality, said a show official. China itself has now become a major player on the world flooring market, due in large part to the competitive production cost. But, also because local producers have made great improvements in the quality of domestically produced floor covering materials.

The growth of the show continues, noted Wilbert Heijmans, senior project manager for VNU Exhibitions, one of the producers of the event. We're expecting over 600 exhibitors and 20,000 visitors for

the upcoming market.

DACF has grown so much, organizers which also include Deutsche Messe AG and China-floors have added another hall to accommodate the record number of exhibitors expected.

This year's expected growth is on top of a record-breaking 2004 show. In fact, since 2002, DACF has grown more than 120% in exhibitors and 75% in attendance, not to mention overall show space will have increased by almost three times since then.

While these numbers in and of themselves are dramatic, it is the growth and participation of the international community that has



European pavilion

confirmed China as one of the premier countries for sourcing all types of flooring. At the 2004 event, roughly 16% of all attendees were international visitors, a 36%

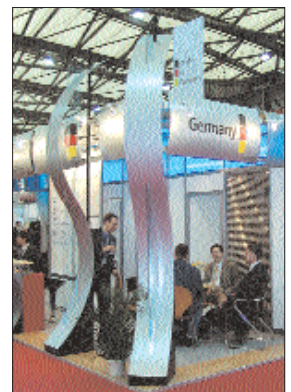
increase over the 2003 market. Of these, 12% came from North America, representing the third highest region for attendance behind Europe at 22% and the rest of Asia at 59%.

Though the majority of products sold at the show are for residential use, DACF is far from being a one-dimensional market.

In fact, the fair's premier satellite event, Contract+Design.asia, was one of the main highlights of last year's market. In fact, over 400 people from the A&D community participated in various presentations focused solely on the commercial arena.

Heijmans said DACF 2005 will also feature lots of activities, including an extensive seminar program which will present crucial market information along with the latest in industry innovations. In addition, we will once again be hosting Contract+Design.asia.

DACF has established itself as the Asian trading hub for the flooring industry, said a spokesman for the show. The tremendous



German pavilion

success of the show's sixth anniversary in 2004 confirmed that it has grown to be the Asian annual gathering of the world's leading flooring operators.

There is no doubt this edition of Domotex Asia/ChinaFloor will meet the expectations of all who participate, the spokesman concluded, and again solidify the show as Asia's pre-eminent trade fair for floor coverings.

For more information on attending or exhibiting at Domotex Asia/China-Floor, visit [www.domotexasiachinafloor.com](http://www.domotexasiachinafloor.com), or e-mail Heijmans at [wilbert.heijmans@vnuexhibitions.com.cn](mailto:wilbert.heijmans@vnuexhibitions.com.cn).

2004

*Retrospective*

# Year In Review: A I



Lew  
Migliore

## Claims File

wood flooring. One reason is due to ignorance about the product and its installation. Many of the problems are the result of moisture; not understanding its influence on the product and not properly testing for it or at all.

The increasing growth of wood is going to force the industry, particularly the retailer, to be more aware of what causes claims with this product. Add to the frustration, the wood manufacturers who are loathe to replace entire floors and some who are reluctant to deal with the claims they get. Enter Shaw, Mohawk, Mannington and Armstrong, whose relationship with the dealer gives them a leg up on less formidable competitors.

Still, a major issue is moisture in concrete relative to both installation and health concerns. The belief that moisture and flooring materials will cause major health issues due to mold and mildew is greatly exaggerated the likelihood of this occurrence is minimal. Installation concerns relative to moisture are another story.

Moisture is creating more complaints, litigation and monetary losses than any other category of claims within the commercial sector. As mentioned earlier, moisture is also wrecking havoc with wood installations. Every flooring firm, whether a contractor or retail owner, is going to have to learn to come to grips with moisture in substrates, to prevent the costliest of claims.

The loss or lack of technical knowledge in the industry is growing and, as a result, creating complaints. This is especially true in the commercial market.

Working with pattern carpet is another challenge since it is growing by leaps and bounds and requires greater skill and know-how to work with and install. Because of this, installation of this product is more expensive.

Still, the largest cause of complaints is selling and installing the wrong product in the wrong place.

As for technology, you will see more new fibers (some are showing up now) and greater emphasis on recycling and green products. There is, in the wings, new technology that will revolutionize textile installation and eliminate wrinkling and adhesive failures, just to name a few. You'll be hearing more about this in the coming year.

This year saw an overall upturn in production and sales of textile flooring in both the residential and commercial sectors.

Residential sales are up slightly over 6% and commercial sales, lagging since 9/11, are up a little over 10%. Sales for the big three carpet mills are up, with both Mohawk and Shaw exceeding sales of \$5 billion. Mohawk is now the largest flooring manufacturer in the world; Shaw is still the largest carpet mill. Beaulieu has made a remarkable recovery with sales again exceeding \$1 billion. Beaulieu's focus is solely carpet. These three mills control over 80% of the broadloom market.

Claims are now a major area of focus for all mills. With rising production costs it is paramount that expenses be cut. One way is to reduce claims which are a direct expense off the bottom line. Though claims have always been about 2% of sales and they can be built into the price, they can easily exceed that.

A claim can wipe out a sales profit and then eat into overall profits. Nothing is so irritating and frustrating as complaints and claims; they drain time and money from any business.

In 2004, the big three mills started taking more control of the complaint issues. Because claims and complaints strain cash flow and relationships, they have become a more important aspect of doing business.

For many years, the manufacturer has possessed the capability of tracking claims to determine what they are and what products generate most of them. That's no longer enough because the retailer has to be brought into the mix to open up communications with the mill to prevent complaints from occurring. The dealer now has to do the same by bringing his people, including the installer, closer to the operation to prevent claims losses and complaints.

The biggest category for complaints we've seen in 2004, is with

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Kelly  
Kramer

## Retail

take small steps and make slight changes that accumulate as time passes.

Do you know the old saying, how to eat an elephant? The answer is one bite at a time. It's the same with any cumulative effort. Simply do a little something every day. Here's an example: My mother taught me to cook at a very young age because she worked during the day. I would start the cooking and she would come home and finish it, but the most important thing she taught me was to clean up while I was cooking, not after. That way, when the meal was ready, the clean up was already done. That lesson stuck with me in other daily chores. At my home, I try to work at least an hour on the yard every day in the warm months. At work, I make sure my desk is cleared each day before I go home and that all problems are solved. In writing, I try to stay well ahead of my deadlines so the articles are natural and not forced by a timeline. In fact, I often get calls from our East Coast readers who say they really agree

You might say this is the hardest column of the year for me because my short-term memory is very poor. When I think of last year, I can't say whether it was good or bad. It was simply another year.

I'm glad to be in a business I love, and have a great loving relationship with my wife and family. I live in a town and country of which I am grateful. To me these are the important things in life. Rarely do we think about what we want, not just how good we already have it. In the past few years, I've used this year-end column to reflect just that. It's time to stop and smell the roses.

Here's a story I heard many years ago which made me change my opinion about the passing of time. I was watching a comedian on television talk about this very subject. He said when you are a child of four you cannot wait for Christmas. The 12 months in between feel like 12 years when you're that age. In high school that last year as a senior seems like the four years it took since you were a freshman.

In your 20s to 30s a year feels much like a year. From your 40s to 50s a year seems like about six months. And from the sixties on up a year feels like a month. The older you get the quicker time really does seem to pass. Before you know it you hit a point where you say, I could have done better, or, My life is almost over, what do I have to show for it? I personally got past those thoughts years ago.

When I started writing for FCNews, I trailed over this column, because I knew my radical New Year's Resolutions of the past years had never worked. The ideas of a better diet, working harder and exercising more were great in theory but it normally lasted about one month, if I was lucky. That's when I finally faced the facts that goals very seldom work when implemented suddenly or drastically. However, life is long if we're lucky and we can

At work, I make sure my desk is cleared each day before I go home and that all problems are solved.

with what I've written.

All of these small things are now a habit to me and don't seem as if they take much of my time. I'm miffed when I hear others complain that there is not enough time in a day for whatever reason. For me, there's actually too much time and, I'm often bored. Well, maybe I could use that time for exercise. But then again, maybe not.

In closing let me thank all of you for reading my columns throughout the years. You are one of the things in life I truly appreciate. Here's to your good health and a wealth of happiness in 2005.

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# A Look Back At 2004

## Legal

It looks like we made it through another year and consumers are still buying carpet for their homes and offices. They are also buying laminated flooring, vinyl, cork, linoleum and even some rubber floor covering products. It seems the more things change, the more they seem to stay the same.

This past year has been relatively uneventful from the legal view point. No new major issues have developed in the industry, and there has been little happening with those carried over from years past.

### Air Quality Issues

The mold and other air quality issues continue to haunt the flooring industry, particularly those involved with broadloom. Although the industry has gone to great lengths to prove installed carpeting is not a significant source of the type of toxic mold that can cause physical injury or discomfort to those who live or work around it, it seems the media, and yes, the lawyers, just cannot seem to accept this fact as being valid.

The basic fact, however, as shown by numerous studies, remains that mold will not, and for the most part, can not grow on synthetic broadloom which is clean and dry. This fact, however, will not prevent an expert from testifying in a court room that: there is or was toxic mold in a certain area; that would cause personal injury to people who lived or worked in that area, and that the installed carpet in the area was a source of that toxic mold. Although such expert witnesses, proof has, by a recent series of U.S. Supreme Court rulings, been made difficult to bring into a trial, it still can happen and a jury may still accept it.

### Setting Them Straight

Regarding another air quality issue, just recently a prestigious New York hospital, in its newsletter, offered various tips for living with children suffering from allergies or asthma. One of these tips was the advise not to use rugs or carpets in these children's rooms because they, provide ideal places for dust mites to proliferate. This type of thinking has been determined to be unfounded by various scientific studies conducted in this area. I hate to say it, but these issues are here to stay. All we can hope to do is to minimize their effects on the flooring

Martin Silver



industry.

The independent contractor issue, once thought to be a major problem for dealers and contractors, has somewhat faded into the background. I have not heard any recent claims that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is targeting flooring people as I did in past years, although even then I questioned their validity.

Problems in this area occur when a retailer who treats and pays his installers as independent contractors gets audited by the IRS, his workers compensation insurance company, his state tax or labor departments, any of which will claim that these independents are really employees. This finding can often lead to large monetary assessments and penalties.

It appears that one reason this problem is not as prevalent as it once was is because most dealers now realize that if they want these installers to be considered independents they must really treat them as such.

### Who's Responsible?

Concerning concrete testing, the issue here is who should be responsible to test the concrete floor to ascertain whether it is suitable to accept the floor covering material that is proposed to be installed over it. In the past, this obligation has been placed upon the flooring contractor who, by first testing (or sometimes not testing) and then installing, becomes a guarantor to the end-user that the flooring material will properly adhere to and not be damaged by the concrete sub-floor.

The position of the floor covering industry is that the testing of the concrete should be performed not by the flooring contractor but rather by trained and qualified, independent evaluators using the latest in equipment and technology. This seems to make a lot of sense and this effort by the industry to have architects and designers specify this position continues.

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## Salesmanship

This was the best year in floor covering history. More square footage was sold at higher prices than ever before.

In spite of multiple price increases, flooring of all types gives American shoppers more value than most other consumer products. When I was a retailer, price increases were always welcomed. We are an under-priced industry and, like all professionals, we work on percentages which means we make more with every increase. Nothing on the market can make such a drastic improvement in the average home for less money in so little time as flooring. Moreover, floor covering doesn't just benefit a single individual; it provides a warm, attractive and secure environment for the entire family adding considerable value to the largest investment most families ever make their home.

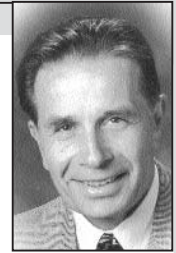
Some surfaces such as wood, ceramic and stone, for instance, are lifetime investments. Other products provide insulation and comfort and all contribute to a beautiful home. No one has to convince consumers of their desire for flooring: They want and desire beautiful floors and are willing to invest in them. All that is left to do is persuade your customer to buy from you.

Few industries offer more opportunity than in our own. Prognosticators tell us this industry will soar over \$100 billion at retail by the year 2020 an increase of 400%.

A few economic clouds hover to be sure signs of inflation and the exchange rate, but consumer confidence is strong and shoppers seem to be willing to open their pocket-books even wider. Good economy, desirable merchandise and lots of money waiting to be spent are a recipe for success. Many floor covering retailers are reacting to this opportunity by improving their operations. They are becoming more professional, providing consumers with better displays, more organized stores along with better educated service and salespeople.

The home centers have helped our industry tremendously by creating more desire for our goods. Professional specialty stores are capitalizing on their largesse. Flooring stores who have trained their sales and service people can't help but to be successful. The big boxes, unlike specialty

Warren Tyler



stores, are marketing organizations giving little credence to sales skills. No one can put thousands of cars in thousands of parking lots every Saturday morning like the boxes and they rely on some of this to stick. Independent retailers who have trained people can pick off customers who can't get needed information from the boxes just like shooting ducks off a log.

Most independent dealers, who can qualify, acquire the skills needed to be successful through joining a buying group. The major groups provide the skills and perform the functions to allow independents to concentrate on their power over the big boxes selling skills. These groups provide training and services that individual stores could never afford management, sales and service skills, financial, credit, merchandising, advertising, buying, branding, marketing, networking, personnel, shipping, complaint handling, related products market protection and so much more. The services and education has proven so valuable that 70% of all non big box volume goes through the groups. A final push is on for the few remaining qualified retailers. The results are in: Retailers who belong to buying groups produce far greater volume and profits than their non-aligned counterparts.

Manufacturers have formed their own groups in response to buying groups. They have learned a lot from these groups and are helping retailers as well. In fairness, I have never known of any confrontations, the lingering question in the minds of some dealers is, Who protects me from the mill which now controls both sides of the relationship issues such as disputes, market areas, pricing and rebates? Aside from these concerns, groups are the biggest single factor in making our industry more professional and making the outlook for 2005 even more profitable for most of us than 2004.

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## MOHAWK

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training sessions for two employees, merchandising and advertising support; Fashion Select, a high-end product line with 35x42-in. oversize blanket style samples made with Stainmaster Tactesse soft yarn; the Colors of Paradise collection, an all-Anso line with textures and a frieze in 60 colors and 12- or 15-ft. widths; an all new Main Street commercial selling system with a reference guide/brochure, and a number of new hard surface products including ceramics, exotic hardwoods and laminates with features such as beveled edges, random embossing and sound deadening systems.

By adding private label commercial products from Bigelow, Durkan and Karastan, Mohawk has definitely stepped up the Floorscapes program, said Mike Pavone of Sail-On Carpets in Spencerport, N.Y., who already owns and operates one Floorscapes store and will be opening another in June.

The brand new Home & Office program makes it easier for the commercial customer to shop. The Design at Home van system is phenomenal; it looks real good. Mohawk has introduced a couple of nice laminate products as well.

Smartstrand has really piqued our interest, said Beth Hulbert of Discount Flooring Supermart Albany, N.Y., who began life as a Floorscapes dealer in October along with her husband, Mark. It seems to be a really good product. The Colors of Paradise is something we are also very interested in, and are probably going to order after the show. Seeing some of the new products has been exciting.

We've always sold a lot of carpet, she explained, but now we are selling more hardwood. We have seen some of the new hardwood products and our installers have already put some of them down. We've also got some in our own showroom floor. We haven't done much with ceramic yet, but we are about to.

Since we became a Floorscapes dealer we are seeing a big difference because people can now come in and design their whole house in one store instead of going to a couple of different places, added Hulbert. We had been a warehouse/stocking store, now we have a showroom inside the stocking store. Being a Floorscapes mem-



Mohawk's new fiber, SmartStrand with DuPont Sorona polymer, was the convention's biggest hit.

ber has broadened our business so that we can do more than just carpet. We were just a broadloom store but now we can do hardwood

and ceramic and linoleum and all the other categories.

Alex Schwindt, vice president of Finishing Touch in Marysville,

Wash., liked Fashion Select. I believe the larger size of the wing rack in the display will appeal to the women who buy from us. It is the ladies who do the buying and this gives them a better perspective of what they are looking at. The grout cleaning is interesting. Our competition is getting into that, and I see a lot of referral business on the grout cleaning, so establishing that is important.

I'm real interested in the Design At Home concept, as well, he explained. The comfort zone for the homebuyer with the Design At Home program is a lot more relaxed. It's being done in her natural

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## MOHAWK

From page 21

environment, lighting and decor. It takes a lot of the stress out of the buying process for her.

Mohawk's Diane Gammell, who helped develop the Floorscapes Design At Home program, wasn't surprised with the overwhelming response it received at the show. The Design At Home concept is exactly what it says. Women want ideas. They want assistance in their homes. So at Mohawk, instead of going with just a Shop At Home concept, we're going to bring a consultant that is trained to do flooring design and window covering fashion into the home to assist the customer.

It's not just putting a bunch of samples into the van, she explained, it's getting the consulting and design ideas along with it, knowing that they feel comfortable with Mohawk standing behind them and a Floorscapes store, with the bricks and mortar, that is also there. It helps build credibility for that consumer.

The show's been phenomenal, said John Woolsey, director of marketing for Anderson Hardwood Floors, one of more than 40 vendor/partners to exhibit at the event. This is a positive relationship we have [with Mohawk Floorscapes.] We are honored to be here. You still have some of the dealers come by who primarily deal with carpet. We just had somebody who now, for the first time, is thinking about getting into the wood side of the business. And then there are hard surface retailers who are looking to get a uniform look throughout their store. We're seeing both.

The biggest buzz at the show has been caused by Smartstrand, of course, said Ed Williams, Mohawk's senior vice president of sales and marketing, and then the merchandising. There also has been a lot of interest from the dealers coming here and learning how to run their businesses better through the educational seminars, the attendance of which has been outstanding.

The dealers are very upbeat and excited about the Smartstrand introduction, said Mark Olsen, marketing manager for Mohawk Floorscapes. The reactions to Fashion Select and the Colors of Paradise have been extraordinary, as well as Home & Office. All in all, this has been an extraordinary event.

For more information on how to become a Floorscapes dealer, call 800/241-4900.

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**LIFESTYLE**

From page 1  
 local activities have been exposed by global intervention. Through Information Technology (IT), the globalization enters into the last remote corner of our lives. We still have our own local influences but, at the same time, we continue to watch what others are doing around the world. This is something we cannot escape.

Arora goes on to explain that consumers notice, live and experience many of the developments but are not physically affected by them. For example, a billboard advertisement may sway someone's color choice yet will have no effect on her personal life.

The dictatorship of the potential seller market ignores the needs of the individual and her changing life sentiments, says Arora.

We should bear in mind: the one who found her individual style is not in need of a trend but for a matching product for her personal style, she concludes. The products you offer must reach the consumer through her emotions by meeting her sentiments of life and living.

Kathlene Vercellino



Through her lifestyle motifs, Arora urges dealers to focus more on the individual.

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