

Industry News

Rowe partners with designer Vivienne Tam

By Gary Evans

MCLEAN, Va. — Manufacturer Rowe Furniture has partnered with renowned fashion designer Vivienne Tam to create a collection of upholstered furniture that will be introduced in the fall.

It will include multiple sofa groupings and accent pieces and will feature exclusive fabrics by Tam, who has translated her apparel approach for the home. Fabrics will include her iconic “Mao” designs, as well as symbolic botanicals, geometrics and herringbone.

The collection will be unveiled at the Las Vegas Market in September and at the High Point Market in October. It will start shipping at the beginning of next year.

Rowe did not disclose the pricing, but said it would be competitive with other de-

signer lines.

“We are thrilled to have found a designer who appeals to the modern woman of all ages and ethnicities,” said Stefanie Lucas, Rowe president and CEO. “Vivienne’s fashion aesthetic is both sophisticated and unique — not a traditional East meets West, but rather a design used to create a harmonious line of furniture with just a hint of Asian mystique.”

Tam is known for her runway fashions and for her East Wind Code shops in New York, Los Angeles, Japan and Hong Kong. She has a long list of fashion industry honors, including Elle’s Style Award in 2008.

Tam also is a favorite designer among celebrities and has dressed Julia Roberts, Madonna, Goldie Hawn, Jennifer Aniston and Ashley Judd. Most recently, she was a guest

judge on the Bravo channel’s “The Fashion Show.”

Her celebrated and controversial Mao collection in 1995 pictured the former Chinese head of state with either a bee on his nose or in pigtails — a twist of cultural humor that appeared on T-shirts, jackets and dresses.

“That collection allowed me to cross over from the fashion world to the art world; pieces from it have been included in several museum collections around the world, including the Museum of Fashion Institute of Technology, the Andy Warhol Museum, the Lighthouse

Museum in Glasgow and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London,” Tam said in her book, *China Chic*, published in 2000.

The Rowe line will be Tam’s first venture into home furnishings.

“Designing furniture is such a natural extension and passion for me,” she said. “I have been thinking about this and collecting archives for years. I want to bring beautifully designed prints, fabrics, colors and textures to create a truly unique line with subtle and sophisticated pieces inspired by my Chinese roots.”



Vivienne Tam’s new upholstery line from Rowe will be the fashion designer’s first home furnishings collection.

Ultra Shield offers Amodex products, service by TLC

By Jay McIntosh

SOMERSET, Ky. — Fabric, leather and wood protection products source Ultra Shield is providing a line of ink and stain removers to retailers and consumers, and also is partnering with a Florida company to offer improved service across the country.

Ultra Shield said it has reached an agreement with Amodex, which has sold ink and stain removers for 50 years, to offer Amodex products.

Don Smith, president of Ultra Shield, said his company has been using Amodex products for about six months and has found them to work well. Amodex uses a non-toxic, eco-friendly, cream soap formula that removes stains from fabric and leather, and also from surfaces such as wood and metal. It works on inks, food, grease, blood and all other ordinary stains except mildew.

“After 22 years in the fabric, leather and wood protection business, Ultra Shield

has used dozens of different cleaning formulas and products,” said Smith. “Ultra Shield is convinced that Amodex is by far the best product we have ever used to combat stains. We are proud to offer Amodex to our customers.”

In addition, Ultra Shield said it is partnering with Total Leather Care of Florida, a service company with more than 60 technicians covering the state of Florida, and plans to expand the TLC service to other states. Smith said TLC has a “tremendous reputation” in serving clients, in response time, completion and turnaround on claims.

TLC has “actually become a part of our company” in Florida, acting as a distributor of Ultra Shield. The firm will hire more technicians as Ultra Shield helps it expand the service to other states, said Smith. He said Ultra Shield will work with TLC to offer improved service and sales training to its accounts.

Total Leather Care services all furniture, not just leather upholstery.

Buffett shares his wisdom, insights

URBANDALE, Iowa — As if the unveiling of the stunningly renovated Homemakers Furniture wasn’t enough, guests attending the retailer’s recent gala ribbon-cutting ceremony got an added bonus: An opportunity to talk to the Oracle of Omaha, Warren Buffett.



Buffett

Buffett is chairman of Berkshire Hathaway, the company that owns Homemakers Furniture, Nebraska Furniture Mart and other top furniture retailers, and was on hand to meet and greet, while sharing his views on a number of issues.

Here’s a sampling of what the Oracle had to say:

► On President Obama’s performance so far: “I think

he’s done a first-class job. He’s inherited a tough job, but in a few years everyone will owe him a big thank you.”

► On the country’s growing federal debt: “It’s not dangerous where we are now. But it may be dangerous where we are going.”

► How to invest: “Stick with what you understand. I don’t believe in going by sectors. When we bought Nebraska Furniture Mart, I knew they had a business that had compelling competitive advantages. I feel the same way about Homemakers.”

► On when the housing market will improve: “No one has a crystal ball. But my guess is if you had to pick a

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time when most of the housing issues should be over, I would say in 18 months.”

► On putting together a winning team. “Find your passion. Find people who share your passion. Go to work for a time for a company you admire. Invest in yourself. We can get more out of ourselves, me included. Take better care of your customer than your competitor can or will. If you do, you will win.”

► Does he have regrets? “Yes. I should have gotten into buying stocks sooner. I bought my first stock when I was 11. Looking back, I should have started earlier.”

— Ray Allegrezza

AICO moving to new IHFC showroom

HIGH POINT — Case goods and upholstery resource AICO will move to a new 30,000-square-foot showroom for the October 17-21 High Point Market.

AICO previously occupied two spaces on the seventh floor of the International Home Furnishings Center’s Green wing. The new showroom will in the IHFC’s Commerce wing, space 802.

“The High Point Market has been such an important

venue for our industry, so we wanted to make sure we continued our presence there,” said Michael Amini, company founder and CEO. “A new showroom made sense at this time as well, as we want to continually show our buyers new and exciting product in an updated environment. This highly visible new location will be the perfect place to do so.”

The new space will showcase AICO’s residential and

office lines. A bistro in the showroom will serve breakfast and lunch.

The company also will set up a Market Resource Center with video displays and catalogs showing in-line products not on display in the showroom. The resource center also will include sales tools, space planners and other presentations on AICO’s Web site.

AICO will hold a grand opening celebration in the new space on Oct. 16.