

RETAILERS

Holly Peters

AFTER GAINING INSIGHTS WITH WOVEN LEGENDS, HOLLY PETERS SPOTTED AN IDEAL OPPORTUNITY TO SET UP HER OWN BUSINESS. AS SHE TELLS **RACHEL MEEK**, HER NEW CLIENTS REQUIRE HER TO RESPECT ANTIQUE AND MODERN AESTHETICS

Holly Peters worked at the legendary rug company Woven Legends for nine years before founding Holly Peters Oriental Rugs & Home in Chester County, Pennsylvania, in 1998. Her gallery has been housed in a century-old former car dealership for the past sixteen years, providing an ample setting from which to inspire her clients.

When asked about her rug penchant, she says, ‘I have an affinity for one of a kind, vegetal dye rugs, old and new. I have always been fascinated by old village rugs and weavings, made with what was on hand locally in terms of wool and dyestuffs. They are quirky and beautiful. Their colour palettes are instinctive and bold. Spontaneous, folksy and prescribed, concise design decisions live side by side in these pieces.’

She describes having her intrigue piqued immediately upon entering the Woven Legends showroom, as a fashion design student at Drexel University: ‘Never having seen textiles like these before, I felt this pull to stay and learn—it was obvious to me this was my path and I inherently understood that I was in the right spot.’

‘In those days, Woven Legends was importing

and trading in all sorts of extraordinary antique rugs and starting to produce rugs in Turkey. It was a small gallery located in the antique district of Philadelphia, but it was an epicentre! There was always action—shipments and people arriving, dealers coming and going, auction runs, a steady stream of textiles, ideas and activities that made each day different.’

When she wanted a break from the wholesale scene and a change of location, she recognised a gap in the rug retail market in Chester County and opened a gallery there. Positioned close to the affluent Chadds Ford Township and Brandywine Valley, she serves many clients who have historic stone farmhouses that benefit greatly from the warmth and colour that a series of well-



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01, 02, 04 Holly Peters
Oriental Rugs & Home,
Chester County,
Pennsylvania

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05 Holly Peters

selected rugs can provide. Traditional timeworn beauty is often a required look, but in catering also to those from nearby Delaware, more formal, uptown style pieces are also offered. Zollanvari gabbehs have been a popular staple alongside Woven Legends-style traditional vegetal-dyed pieces.

She offers Tibetan production when plainer-woven ‘colour studies’ are required, and has just received a shipment of newly commissioned thick-pile Afghan rugs in abraded block colours with spots. She stocks new rugs by Bokara Rug Company and Wool & Silk, but 50% of her sales today are old rugs. ‘Many of my clients want a rug to look like its been there for ever. They don’t want really obviously designed pieces. So, we try to

encourage them to start their room with a rug.’

She also offers fabrics and upholstered furniture, as well as rug cleaning and repairs. But custom pieces are not a mainstay, as Peters explains: ‘So many beautiful pieces have already been made—it’s just a matter of finding them and connecting them to the right people.’

We discuss the potential effect of the impending trade tariffs. She concedes that they will certainly have an effect on pricing, saying: ‘With the sentiment of hand-woven rugs being a want, not a need, and the psychology of money—as those who want rugs watch their portfolios shrink—it won’t generate business. It will also hit hard on those who work in the regions where rugs are made. I am hoping for a change of

mind from our government. However, it may help sales of vintage and antique rugs already in the US.’

She is encouraging a new generation of rug buyers by holding annual tag sales of entry-level pieces and highlighting that a beautiful rug is the perfect way to express personal taste and to make a new space a home.

After a period of minimalism ruling social media content, she notes that bolder colour palettes are now emerging, and says ‘I am thrilled! Strong design elements and colours are what we have always emphasised. Clients want rugs with individuality. My intent has always been to create rooms where the rug is the lead, the foundation, the strength of the room.’ www.hollypeters.com



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