



from rugs to riches

A management graduate from Boston College, USA, Yogesh Chaudhary has led the expansion of Jaipur Rugs from two to more than 45 countries. In a chat with iDecorama, the young director gets candid about how the company incepted by his father - Nand Kishore Chaudhary imparts economic independence to the rural women folk whilst showcasing their creativity across the globe

“Our design philosophy brings in newer trends where original designs are created by the rural weaver communities”

What led to the inception of Jaipur Rugs?

The inception story of Jaipur Rugs is quite interesting. My father Nand Kishore (N.K.) Chaudhary, the founder and CMD of the company, grew up in a small town in Rajasthan, a state in north western India. After graduating from the University of Rajasthan, he began his career in his family's shoe shop. However he was keen to initiate his own business. He found that the demand for high quality rugs was quite encouraging following which he installed two looms in his house. Gradually he educated himself about the creative and technical aspects of weaving and added six more looms in house. And then another six in the nearby villages. He gave up a bank job and borrowed Rs. 5000 from his father to start his carpet business. This was the time when India was under great influence of caste system and intermixing with backward castes was not socially accepted. NKC rejected this and in over 3 years, NKC's production expanded across 10 more looms with a larger pool of artisans and then there was no looking back.

In a time line when industrial revolution enables mass production of a wide range of products, how safe was the idea of investing in a business where the role of machines is minimal?

Jaipur Rugs started working on a business model which was dedicated to serving the society and at the same time, it was required for it to be a capitalistic institution. The company worked on a vision to bridge the gaps between the two worlds, viz. the grassroots and the global markets. This vision motivated us to stay strong and focused. Over the years, working on this model helped Jaipur Rugs in becoming a successfully scaled

“Normally designs emerge in design studios on a computer, but we allow art to be born on an unassuming loom. The craftsmanship of our weavers has created a unique language”

global social enterprise which connects the richest of the rich with the poorest of the poor through its luxurious quality carpets.

When it comes to the finer aspects of design, how is it addressed? Given the fact that a dedicated task force of weavers, hand craft the end product?

Our design philosophy brings in newer trends where original designs are created by the rural weaver communities. Many of our aesthetic and appealing designs emerge through the process of rug weaving as well as through the interaction between the weavers.

Normally designs emerge in design studios on a computer, but we allow art to be born on an unassuming loom. The craftsmanship of our weavers has created a unique language in the world of design which has gone on to win the world's top global awards. These rugs have also created a trend as they are handcrafted using reclaimed yarn.

Integrating current designs with the sustenance of our communities, Jaipur Rugs brings weaver's art directly to homes and delivers not just a carpet but the blessings of a family. Offering a curated line-up of contemporary



Yogesh Chaudhary,
Director, Jaipur Rugs

“Jaipur Rugs works with close to 40,000 artisans in 600 villages in India, providing families with sustainable livelihood at their door steps”

with the German Design Award-2016 in the product design category by the German Design Council. The Anthar Rug designed by Kavita Chaudhary, Design Director, Jaipur Rugs, which won the international accolades, studies the beauty in imperfection as three weavers struggle to find their rhythm to produce a design side by side.

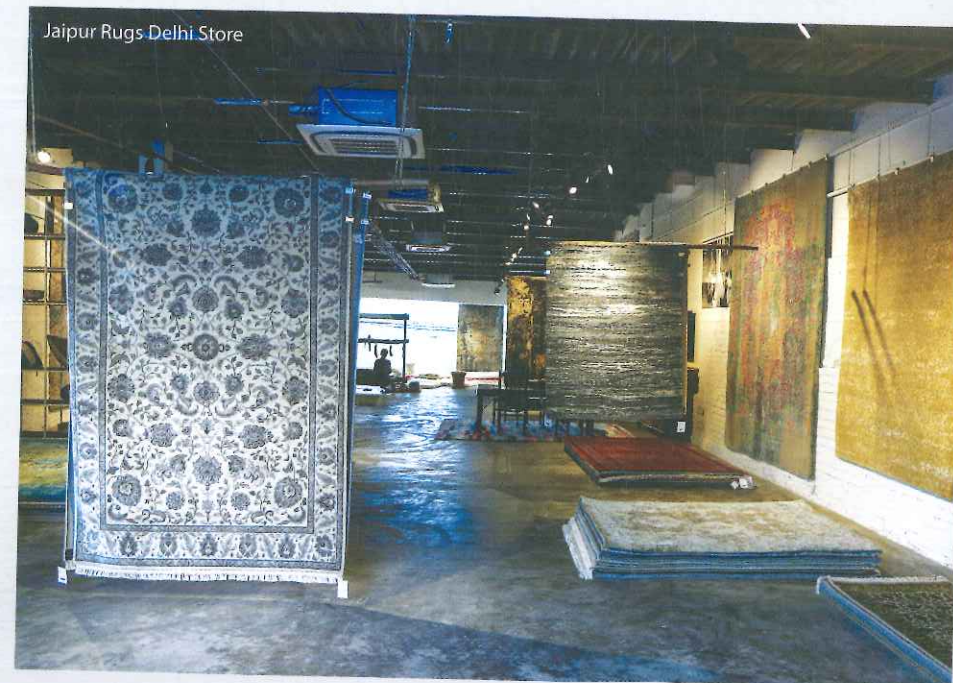
The Project Error collection comprises contemporary rugs which discover beauty in errors. Project Error studies the concept of misprints, nature's interruption of mechanical duplication to create unique pieces

to transitional and eclectic carpets handmade in rural India,

Jaipur Rugs works with close to 40,000 artisans in 600 villages in India, providing families with sustainable livelihood at their door steps. Each of our rugs passes through 180 hands, perfecting the timeless art of handmade rugs. We continue to work with over 2500 women yarn spinners from Bikaner to spin yarn on a rudimentary 'charkha', consciously choosing not to replace hundreds of hand-spinning jobs with machines.

Jaipur rugs was conferred with the German Design Award, can you tell us something about this achievement?

Jaipur Rugs has become the only Asian carpet manufacturer to be awarded



Jaipur Rugs Delhi Store



of overlooked art. Made of hand processed wool and bamboo silk, each rug employs 180 artisans to create these exquisite rugs.

The German Design Council is an independent and internationally active institution that supports companies in efficiently communicating design expertise and also seeks to strengthen the understanding of design.

After winning the GDA 2016, Jaipur Rugs has garnered German Design Award 2017 (Special Mention: Excellent Product Design), second time in a row. What makes this achievement all the more special is that this year it was two of our rugs which had won the accolades. The award ceremony had taken place on February 2017 in Frankfurt, Germany.

The two rugs – Kras and Taittu – were a part of Jaipur Rugs' Free Verse collection, designed by Kavi. Kras recreates patterns from crushed foil paper. The rugs are created through

carefully studying the way light falls on each crease. Taittu is designed from the patterns of a rib knitted sweater. More recently we have won Carpet Design Award(CDA); this achievement has been a big encouragement to all of us since CDA is akin to the Oscar of the carpet industry

Jaipur Rugs recently opened a retail outlet in Delhi, can you tell us more about this initiative?

Jaipur Rugs, being in the wholesale carpet business for the last 40 years, identified an industry gap which it intends to fill through its first retail store. Hence we have set up this retail store to bring awareness about the realities of rural artisans and their art to the urban consumers. At the same time it also serves my father's vision to connect the weavers directly with the end consumers.

In the Retail Startup of Jaipur Rugs, we have dovetailed rusticity with

“The store brings to life, the village set-up, in which an artisan spends months to hand knot an intricate rug. The retail store has a working loom installed inside it. Customers are encouraged to tie a knot to experience the dexterous process through which their priceless rug gets made”

contemporary style to offer an epitome of experiential retailing. The ceiling of the retail store has been restored to its original organic form and the flooring resonates to that of a village house. The store brings to life, the village set-up, in which an artisan spends months to hand knot an intricate rug. The retail store has a working loom installed inside it. Customers are encouraged to tie a knot to experience the dexterous process through which their priceless rug gets made.

The artisan corner is a real attraction for any global consumer, having access to one of a kind art pieces. These are rug masterpieces which have been designed as well as knotted by the weavers, unlike the regular rugs,





whose designs are pre-determined and shared with the weavers on a design map.

The retail store also displays a working charkha. All the hand tools which are used by the artisans for processes like wool carding, shearing, hank making and knotting are easily accessible to customers and they thoroughly enjoy this educative & emotional retail therapy at the Jaipur Rugs Store. Further, customers are offered an opportunity to visit the real weavers at their homes, in the villages.

We hope that the Jaipur Rugs retail store inspires other retailers and businesses to work towards the cause of cultural sustainability and authentic craftsmanship.

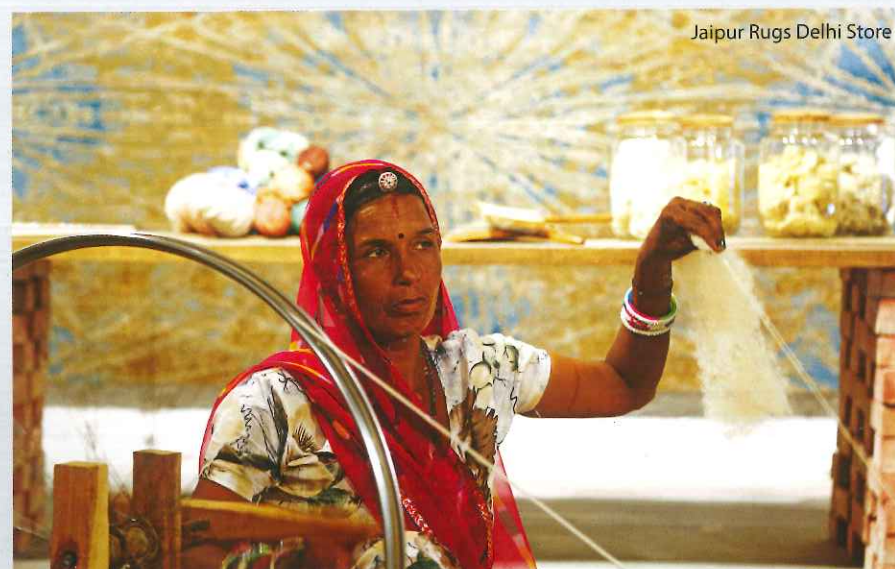
Given the number of man hours involved in designing the final product, what is the level of customization you offer and how much time is required to design a customized marvel?

We accept customization requests selectively from customers and interior designers. This offers customers an opportunity to choose from a variety of materials and get rugs custom made in varied qualities. Since we offer a wide selection of rugs available in various

designs, sizes, colors and materials, we also encourage customers to buy from the available stock

When it comes to consumption of the products, is it more of Indian clients or international, if possible can you cite the names of some of your prominent clientele?

Our client's base involves connoisseurs from the world who have an impeccable taste for good design. Some of our prominent clients are Ritu



“We accept customization requests selectively from customers and interior designers. This offers customers an opportunity to choose from a variety of materials and get rugs custom made in varied qualities. Since we offer a wide selection of rugs available in various designs, sizes, colors and materials, we also encourage customers to buy from the available stock”

Khandelwal - Alila Fort, Bhashangarh project, Rosy Malhi- Zanki Creation, Vinod - Samridhi Buildwell, Sruthi Reddy: Ceebros Hotels Pvt Ltd and Rakhee: Space Conception

Jaipur Rugs reminds one of the milk revolution ushered in by Dr. Kurien, like Amul, Jaipur Rugs has played an important part in imparting freedom in the lives of the women folk who otherwise have very few options in a globalized world, how does it feel to have contributed to the society in a noble way?

It gives us immense joy and pleasure to nurture the creativity of our artisans and help them fulfill their aspirations. After empowering the women in the rural belt we hope that they emerge as grass-root entrepreneurs managing a specific component in the supply chain. Our endeavour lies in imparting the right set of skills to our women artisans and enable them to gain economic independence whilst working from home.

Does this encourage you to widen your commercial interests outside your current entity which



is dedicated to designing hand crafted rugs? What are the possible areas of your interest?

We have to mention that our core focus is rugs - we also make cushions with handmade rugs as they complement the aesthetics of any living space. We believe in focusing on our core product. ■

Text Courtesy: Vikas Bhadra