

H O T E L M A I S O N

ROOM SERVICE FOR THE HOME

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“HOTEL MAISON” LINE BRINGS RELAXED LUXURY TO HOME FURNISHINGS

High Point, N.C. (April 17, 2010) – Inspired by innovative designs from hotels around the world, Judy George International (JGI) and Home Furnishings International Brands (HFI) will launch Hotel Maison, a furniture line bringing hotel comfort and high style into the homes of consumers, at the April 2010 International Home Furnishings Market.

Designed to tap into consumers’ desire to make their homes a restful haven at a reasonable cost – without sacrificing freshness and innovation – Hotel Maison combines influences from regions as diverse as Hollywood, the American West, Asia and Paris. Approximately 300 very distinctive pieces will be presented in a loft-style showroom in Market Square designed to take the visitor on a virtual trip around the world. Upholstered and case-good samples will be displayed in hotel-like settings, grouped in six distinct collections bearing intriguing names like Hollywood Regency, Luxe Lodge and Via Royale.

Several factors make Hotel Maison a revolutionary furniture line. With its eclectic style, quality craftsmanship and materials, the line is truly unique in the mid-price point category. Every piece is a style statement strong enough to stand on its own – or alongside other pieces from the same collection. And although pieces within the collection have a common “DNA,” a variety of carvings, finishes, hardware and colors make for rooms that are coordinated but not exactly matching. A homeowner with an eye for design will find places throughout her home for signature pieces from each collection.

Hotel Maison is a JGI partnership between Judy George, a leading expert, icon and visionary in the home furnishings industry, and Kim Salmela, a young designer who combines a fresh, creative approach with business acumen. George, an entrepreneur, author and businesswoman, broke new ground in the home furnishings industry with her Domain Home Fashions retail stores, using intimate room settings to showcase sophisticated designer furniture for every room of the home. The women first met about ten years ago at the High Point market, then crossed paths again in an airport in 2008. The second meeting was fortuitous, as George was searching for a business partner who could bring the Hotel Maison concept to life.

As an experienced retailer, George knows what it takes to motivate shoppers to invest in furnishings again. “To get people to move from their home computers to come to a retail environment, they have to be excited about visiting a store. They have to know they will have a very emotional experience when they visit the retail environment. Hotel Maison has made it effortless for retailers to create this experience as long as the collections are given the appropriate in-store attention and focus. The consumer today expects an exciting interaction and that can only occur when she experiences something meaningful,” she said.

Hotel Maison will offer a first-of-its-kind online “concierge service” (the Room Service for the Home) including customer service, design assistance, trend and style information, inspiration from Judy and Kim’s world travels and interactive consumer elements, George said. “We are providing very tightly focused programs to make the shopping experience easy for the consumer and productive for the retailer.”

Salmela has co-founded, owned and operated a succession of home furnishings businesses in the Minneapolis area. She has worked with performing artist Prince on set designs and special events and founded the Haute House Upholstery manufacturing company in Los Angeles. Her clientele has included Nicky Hilton and Jessica Alba.

In designing the collections, Salmela drew upon her own extensive experiences traveling and staying in hotels around the world. “Hotel design today is a real arbiter of style,” she said. “Shelter magazines regularly feature news about hotel designs. Hoteliers create fun, dreamy atmospheres of escape. You hear people on HGTV say that they want their homes to look like a hotel.”

Although Hotel Maison emulates the styles of luxury hotels, the collections’ pieces fall squarely in a mid-price point. “There is no other line as fresh as this one at this price point,” Salmela said. “It is very approachable by the retailer and the consumer. There is nothing in the line that is elitist. The pieces create a feeling of luxury, but the definition of luxury has changed. It doesn’t mean frou-frou or overdesigned anymore. It means comfort, individual style, things that make our lives easier. It is a relaxed elegance you find in the great stylish hotels of the world.”

Home Furnishings International Brands (HFI), founded by industry veteran Steve McKee, is providing the product development, marketing and distribution structure for Hotel Maison. With strategic alliances in Asia, HFI is structured to give brands exceptional product, quality assurances, and the profit potential they need. McKee is past president of Henredon, Gabberts, the Home Company, and was chief merchandising officer of Robb & Stuckey Interiors.

Hotel Maison is a concept that will entice consumers to buy furniture again, McKee said. There is evidence that the furniture industry is stabilizing and that spending on hotel stays is increasing – a trend that bodes well for a furniture line inspired by travel. “The indications are that consumers are willing to spend money if they are excited about what they are getting. In recent years many brands have focused simply on lowering costs instead of presenting innovative pieces. Hotel Maison is an eclectic collection that will capture a customer’s imagination.”

Hotel Maison’s six collections are designed to appeal to retailers and consumers in geographic regions throughout the United States, McKee said. “We acknowledge that all six may not be right for all regions of the country – but three of them will be right for any particular region,” he said.

THE SIX COLLECTIONS ARE:

METRO CLUB: A sleek, modern, masculine collection with a sophisticated urban loft look inspired by mid-20th century design, incorporating dark woods, neutral-colored upholstery and metals.

HOLLYWOOD REGENCY: The “seductive feminine” elegance of a silver screen starlet, combined with “21st-century sass.” Geometric and Scandinavian influences meet highly stylized glamour reminiscent of a Fred Astaire movie set.

LINEN HILLS: Natural, relaxed, understated designs reflective of a casual beach cottage. An elegant simplicity is reflected through light, weathered finishes and relaxing fabrics such as linen and cotton.

LUXE LODGE: A rugged but refined collection reminiscent of a boutique hotel in a mountain resort. With influences as diverse as an African safari and an Aspen ski lodge, rustic, worn surfaces are combined with luxe finishes and materials.

VIA ROYALE: Dramatic flair and European glamour reflecting the boutique hotels of Paris, but with contemporary updates. The collection is influenced by French style, but ranges in time period from Louis XIV to Art Deco.

PAN ASIAN: An exotic, refreshing fusion of styles from Asia, India and Turkey. Dark wood pieces include such touches as Asian-influenced carvings and oriental-style drawer pulls.

The Hotel Maison line was designed with the retailer as well as the consumer in mind, McKee said. "Our concept is to drive consumers to the website to view the products, but retailers will do the fulfillment in their stores. Our distribution will have much lower overhead than many other lines. We will be able to provide exceptional profit margin for the retailer – as much as 8 to 10 percent higher than other lines."

For more information, visit Hotel Maison during the April Market in High Point at Market Square, Room 348. Or, go online to www.hotelmaison.com to see sketches of the fabulous designs. Photographs will be available in mid April.

An exclusive feature event will be held each evening in the Hotel Maison showroom -- the Bacardi Bar. Bacardi will offer signature drinks at the luxurious Luxe Lodge Bar to those guests who have been given a Hotel Maison Room Key. "Bacardi and Company Limited is one of the most prestigious companies worldwide and to have them represented in our showroom is an indication of how masterful the Hotel Maison brand has become in only six months," said George. "The Hotel Maison introduction is one of the most exciting new brands to hit the High Point Market in decades."

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