NeoCon 2016
Market Muse
13 design inspirations
Beaulieu Commercial
Revitalized
Bentley back on track
Bentley’s back on track

By Janet Herlihy

[City of Industry, Calif.] Established in 1979 as a leader in commercial carpet fashion and customer service, Bentley Mills has gone through major changes and is now firmly back as a force in the business.

After three years of reorganization, Bentley is now growing at a good pace by focusing on its traditional corporate segment and is ready to expand, according to Ralph Grogan, company president and CEO. "Corporate, where there is still a tremendous opportunity, will continue to be our bread and butter, but we are looking to grow into higher education, senior living and perhaps even hospitality," Grogan explained. "Bentley wants to be known as a fashion house that can hit a budget price point."

Bentley was acquired by Interface in 1993. Dominus Capital, a private investment firm, bought Bentley from Interface in August 2012. Grogan, who was brought on board in January 2013 to help steer Bentley back into the mainstream, pointed out, "Interface is carpet tile focused and Bentley manufactures broadloom and tile. It wasn’t part of Interface’s core business."

Grogan reported, "At our first conversation with Dominus, we all agreed we needed to grow revenue, but to do that we needed new products so we could attract the best talent and then we could sell the best products and increase revenue."

Dominus supported that plan by investing in new tufting equipment and a new backing line for carpet tile. Todd van der Kruik, Bentley’s vice president of design, created new products with the new equipment, so sales had fresh, fashion-forward styles to show existing and new markets, Grogan said, adding, "Then with new products, we invested in top talent salespeople. Bentley now has about 60 sales reps nationwide and 25 of them are new since 2012."

The carpet tile line is a success. Just three years ago, when Grogan joined Bentley, the company’s business was 35 percent tile and 65 percent broadloom. "Now it is 65 percent tile and 35 percent broadloom," he said.

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GOOD CHEMISTRY

A 30-plus year veteran, Ralph Grogan formerly held leadership positions at Collins & Aikman and Tandus, where he had forged strong bonds with several other executives, including Mac Bridger, who had joined Dominus Capital and was serving as a board member and interim CEO at Bentley immediately after the acquisition.

"Dominus and Mac Bridger knew me and the commercial carpet industry. Once I was hired, I brought in Jim Harlay as COO. We had worked together at Tandus as well," Grogan added. "Todd van der Kruik and Sherry Dregger, vice president of marketing, were already at Bentley. Jim and Todd had worked with me at Tandus and we knew Sherry. We had good chemistry and knew we had a lot to do, and that we had to do it quickly."

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— RALPH GROGAN
**Market Muse**

**Inspiring today’s design**

**Shining Bright Like a ‘Diamond’**

Armstrong Commercial Flooring will focus on its Natural Creations line with Diamond10 Technology. Its team of designers has approached 2016 with a new roster of colors, sizes, overlays, patterns and materials.

"As we are celebrating the ‘brilliance’ of our patent-pending Diamond10 technology, Armstrong will offer a strengthened lineup of commercial flooring solutions that give architects and designers a mix and match opportunity to specify products that fit their client’s needs. From timeless and traditional to contemporary and fresh, neutral and harmonious to bold and dynamic, Armstrong’s design stories represent broader trends in the design world making their way to the corporate sector," explained Debra Lechner, commercial marketing director.

Within the Armstrong booth, NeoCon attendees will find a "Designer’s Playground" complete with product samples with which they can position and experiment, a Design Visualizer to capture their designs digitally and a Diamond10 demonstration that will showcase this brand new technology.

**Urban Complexity**

Headquartered in City of Industry, a suburb of Los Angeles, Bentley identifies closely with L.A. Inspired by the many aspects of the City of Angels, Bentley looked beneath the surface to find a world of hidden and forgotten places for its (Los) Angeles collection.

"Los Angeles has an aptitude for reinvention so strong that its deep roots are easily overlooked as new buildings grow over the old," explained Todd van der Kruik, vice president of design at Bentley. "The gems of L.A. are hidden in plain sight. Our (Los) Angeles collection goes beneath the glitz and glamour and behind the urban decay to discover extraordinary, exciting and unexpected things."

The (Los) Angeles collection includes Underground and Trespass, styles that feature rich patterns realized in seven colorways ranging from urban neutrals to saturated hues. Underground is bold in a large-scale abstract block pattern, while Trespass offers a geometric design made up of pixelated plaids.

**Ageless & Timeworn**

The new Aspecta Ten collections from Metroflor are based on the continued influence of rustic, reclaimed woods, finished concrete and the influence of strong graining found in repurposed planks. To round out the tile range, the company included a new take on time-worn leather and an abstracted metal look.

Aspecta One will also debut at NeoCon with new, exclusive designs but the same high-quality surface textures, excellent design and color, durability and warmth underfoot that are the hallmarks of the entire portfolio.

**European Stones**

Much of Daltille’s inspiration is observed from trends that originate here in the U.S. as well as overseas such as large format tile sizes, innovative wood species, tone-on-tone cement colors, textile patterns, new colors hues and new stone looks.

The Stone Attaché collection from Daltille features large format tile that create that sleek, seamless look in residential and commercial spaces.

"The inspiration from this line comes from many European stones such as a quartz found in Switzerland among several others," said Massimo Balluzi, director of product design. "Daltille’s Marble Attaché is an eye-catching example of how we have taken an actual scan of rare marble and replicated it on tile."