

A combination of trust and friendship allows Zweigart-Hotel Line of Germany and B.F. Hotel Supply of Jordan to achieve a successful business relationship. Cheryl Mandy reports

Family business

A unique business relationship and great teamwork has led leading table linen manufacturer Zweigart-Hotel Line and linen supplier B.F. Hotel Supply to be nominated, from June last year, to supply its exclusive table linens to the InterContinental Group Middle East and Africa for a five-year period.

This is not the only coup; other five-star hotels they supply table linen to are: the Grand Hyatt hotels in Dubai and Amman; the Shangri-la in Dubai; Le Meridien hotels in Abu Dhabi and Fujairah; Sheraton hotels in Amman and Deira; Moevenpick Hotels in Aqaba, the Dead Sea and Petra in Jordan; Four Seasons hotels in Jordan, Damascus and Dubai; the Kempinski Ishtar at the Dead Sea; the InterContinental Hotel Makkah — Dar Al Tawhid; and the Royal Palaces in Jordan.

B. F. Hotel Supply is based in Amman in the Hashemite Kingdom. Since 1997 it has been, and still is, the only representative of Zweigart Hotel-Line in the Middle East. Zweigart, with a manufacturing plant in Sindelfingen, near Stuttgart, was established more than 128 years ago and now employs 160 people, plus has agents throughout the world. It also has a partner in Switzerland, Zetag AG, which B.F. Hotel Supply also deals with regularly.

Co-owners of B.F. Hotel Supply, Marianne and daughter Jasmin Hadeed, are not only suppliers — they place great emphasis on how they represent Zweigart Hotel-Line.

"A professional run down of fabric profiles is one special service that we give to our customers," says Hadeed.

"Cotton is not just cotton. It is very important that customers know what kind of fabrics they are purchasing or planning to buy, whether it is a dyed weave or a piece dyed fabric — there are differences of course. We explain to customers about the workings of fabrics, such as the construction of the fabric in weaving weight; factors like this are important because we want the customers to be happy they have made the right choices for the right reasons. We go the extra mile too."

Hadeed sometimes spends two or three hours in the hot and steamy bowels of a hotel, investigating the workings of its laundry room for the benefit of her customers.

"The laundry in a hotel is the most important element since it has direct influence on the lifespan of the table linen fabrics, depending on what chemicals are used and how they are used," she explains.

"We advise on what detergents to use, the washing temperature and washing cycle, all of which have an effect on the durability of the fabric. We look at ways to ensure fabrics do not fade and remain in their original form."

Hadeed carries out the visits herself in Jordan and in the UAE, giving advice accordingly.

"I love my job. It is a dedication," she says. "Sometimes we get calls just for a consultation and we are happy to give advice."

Zweigart has a wide range of custom manufactured exclusive table linens specifically for hotel use, as well as metre ware, which is produced according to customer specifications in terms of size, composition, colour and embroidering of company logos. All processes such as weaving, dyeing, as well as finishing of the fabrics are done in-house at Zweigart.

Zweigart's hotel line collection includes more than forty designs in various compositions and more than 300 colours. Examples include 100% fully twisted and highly mercerized damask cotton; 55% cotton 45% rayon easy care; 50% cotton 50% linen; and 50% cotton 50% polyester.

These designs have been created for banqueting and are ideal for different themed restaurants, catering to each hotel's specific design and style. They also offer a selection of exclusive Jacquard damasks, and structured fabrics, as well as towels and bed kitchen linens.

Zweigart's philosophy is to produce a consistently high level product, with a friendly and fast service and the flexibility to individually react to almost any customers wish due to their "all under one roof" motto.

All the fabric comes exclusively from Germany and Switzerland and most of the manufacturing is done there through direct orders. However, B.F. Hotel does process some orders received from Jordan and the UAE. They have their own marketing division, sewing unit, rigid quality control system and packaging departments.

"The most important aspect of all is quality control, especially when it comes to seaming and fitting," says Hadeed, and she rigidly carries out the checks herself.

The beauty of manufacturing locally is that the company will provide three different themes for the customer to choose from should they be looking at ordering special settings for a banqueting room, for a wedding party for example.

"Looking through a catalogue you cannot fully visualise what the table will look like at the end of the day. That's why we provide samples offering different combinations of overlay, underlay, fabric and colour choices," Hadeed explains.

"We make up three full length samples and display them, complete with all the usual table decorations and cutlery, so the person making the choice has absolutely no doubt about what they are getting."

The most popular products at the moment though, are damasks in a cotton and polyester blend. Two coloured 55% cotton and 45% polyester damask fabrics can be used two-ply, with contrasting tones creating different effects. The damasks are called Viva — this is a geometrical flowing modern design and Fleurie, which provides a contrasting fun, fresh and flowery design. These are available in fresh and modern colours like Bloody Mary, Cappucino, Mango, Curacao and Kiwi.

Zweigart has a few new projects for the InterContinental Group Middle East & Africa in the pipeline, and will be updating its new additions within the coming year. Great expansion plans are being considered by Zweigart for the Middle East region, with a special concentration on Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, including Qatar, which they see as a fast expanding potential market. Feelers are also out in the direction of Asia.

Purchasing trends emerging within Middle East hotels differ from one hotel chain to the other. However, in general terms, the trend here could be defined as 'less is more' according to Hadeed.

Modern-styled dining room settings are very straight forward, with the use of simple colours. Of course, when it comes to banquets for grand occasions such as a wedding, things are a little different. Underlay and overlay linen, the full works of organza and trimmings remain. Opulence is still the name of the banqueting game, although hoteliers are becoming more daring in their choices for banqueting linens.

Certain trends have developed within hotel chains, such as in the purchasing of specific types of linen. "The trend seems to be slowly going away from the table cloths for restaurants and tending more towards table runners and place mats," says Hadeed.

There are two reasons behind this trend, she explains. A major determining factor is that most upscale outlets have elegant table tops that they do not want to cover up with table cloths. But cost factor is also an issue, according to Hadeed, as table runners require less fabric and can therefore be made more cheaply.

B.F. HOTEL SUPPLY

B.F. Hotel Supply has been in operation for more than 10 years and now employs 36 people. The initials, "B.F." stand for Blue Flower, although that was not the original name Hadeed had had in mind. "It came about in a rather unique way," Hadeed laughs.



Marianne Hadeed (left) and her daughter Jasmin (right) are co-owners of B.F. Hotel Supply.

When she was registering the name at the Ministry of Trade in Amman, she was told that her original choice of name was "impossible to translate". "We were told to come up with another name," she recalls. "The queue was very long behind us, and soon people were getting anxious. People were shouting 'come on, think of something!'"

"People started suggesting names, then one person said: 'You look so pretty...like a flower...a blue flower!' And that was it — we became Blue Flower Hotel Supply."

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