

**Swiss Carpet Company Ruckstuhl: Nature becomes Culture**

The Ruckstuhl AG carpet company ([www.ruckstuhl.com](http://www.ruckstuhl.com)), Langenthal/Switzerland, processes natural raw materials to cultural values. The material for this is the regrowing fiber won from nature, animal or plant. The Swiss family company, founded 1881, practices quality requirement and material aesthetics in ecological consequence. The carpets made of natural fibers in a high-value design and long-living quality have made a name for themselves in the area of exclusive textile floor coverings for the living- and contract segment internationally, and Eicke Knauer, assistant CEO Public Relations, told Textination in an interview that they think of themselves in the branch as clearly leading.

They are selling at an export share of around 75% to the whole of Europe, the USA and to the Far East. A moderate growth of the company is aimed at, "however, to us mainly quality is important, not quantity". The enterprise is led by Peter Ruckstuhl since 1985 as owner of the 4<sup>th</sup> generation. Because of growing energy- and transport costs the prices had to be increased slightly in 2008. The carpets are produced in weave- and tufting technique with about 80 employees, entirely in Langenthal. "When we look for qualified specialists, it can become a bit difficult sometimes". Customers are mainly the upper special trade, furnishing shops, carpet layers.

The products are deployed especially in the living quarters but also in the contract business like in offices, hotels, museums, boutiques and other areas. They are visiting trade fairs like 100% Design London, ICFF New York, Interieur Kortrijk, Designers

Saturday Langenthal. Ruckstuhl-subsidaries with showrooms are located in Paris, Milano and New York. At the company headquarters three own designers are employed. However, they work also with external designers like Alfredo Häberli (collection plus 2005), Hugo Zumbühl and Peter Birsfelder (collection plus 2003), Fiorella Fasciati (standard segment) and Aude Genton (Edition Relax).

Eicke Knauer further told Textination that many of the Ruckstuhl-classics are made of sisal- oder coconut yarn, quantitatively, however, is wool the strongest, since this textile raw material has unbeatable qualities (balances wetness, easy to care for, long-lived, good rebound ability with pressure marks). The wool yarn comes from suppliers of Scandinavia, and the wool originally comes from Great Britain and New Zealand. "Maybe the carpet in the contract business comes more into use again since it means cosyness and has very advantageous properties concerning acoustics. In modern buildings with a lot of glass and concrete arise with the use oftentimes problems with noise, and a carpet is optimal in sound-absorbancy".

Since their founding Ruckstuhl is weaving among other things carpets out of coconut-fibers; it is today the only company in Switzerland using coconut. The machine spun long-staple yarn comes from Sri Lanka and is very wear-resistant. The Swiss carpet factory makes high demands on their cultural task: to seize the issues of the present times or to start a new trend. A special product is the new collection "Stripes". Peter Ruckstuhl: "The challenge was to find the prominent feature in

the multiplicity of possibilities and to join, what conceivably does not belong together.

It was also important to utilize new materials. E.g. we've joined wood with black polyurethane to a wool felt. This combination did not exist so far in the carpet area. If you replace the felt by wood you get a small sensation, a rollable wooden carpet. The limits of the carpet-from-the-roll are blown to pieces. This wooden carpet "Legno-Legno" was honored with the Red-Dot-Design-Award 2006". It is available in beech-, oak- and walnut wood. Different methods of treatment result in an extended color range: the wood can be oiled, steamed, smoked or glazed white. "Stripes" came on the market in 2007

for the first time and this collection was then extended appreciably in January 2008.

With the product "Feltro-Legno" oak wood is combined with pure new wool. On the "the design annual" this year from 4 to 7 July in the Festhalle Frankfurt Fair "Stripes" was presented as one of the winners of the Swiss Design Price 2007 ([www.designpreis.ch](http://www.designpreis.ch)) by the curator Heidi Wegner.

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