

FACTORY-MADE

THE CAPRONI AERONAUTICAL FACTORY COMPLEX OF 1915 HAS BEEN RESTORED BY PIUARCH TO CREATE THE GUCCI HUB, A NEW ADDRESS IN MILAN FOR THE ICONIC BRAND

NO WALKOVERS

RUDRA CHATTERJEE, CHAIRMAN, OBEETEE (FOUNDED BY OAKLEY BOWDEN & TAYLOR IN 1920) TALKS ABOUT COLLABORATING WITH TARUN TAHILIANI, RAGHAVENDRA RATHORE, DAVID ABRAHAM AND RAKESH THAKORE TO LAUNCH AN EXCLUSIVE LINE OF CARPETS PRICED, AT ₹ 12 LAKHS, TO BE SHOWCASED AT THE NYFW

Team Patriot

YOU HAVE launched an exclusive range of hand-knotted carpets... Why the theme of 'Proud to be Indian'?

Obeetee did work on the Bengal project because Bengal crafts needed to be preserved, and the 'Proud to be Indian' collection, which are high-end, but exclusive carpets designed by best designers in India using Indian motifs, colouration and dyes will be a first for us. As carpet manufacturers, it is crucial for us to preserve the craft of hand knotting. Demands are really high for these across the world. Part of the reason, is, we feel that we haven't had any new design inspiration, since the last few decades. We really wanted to push ahead a contemporary, but traditional theme of hand knotted carpets and India is the largest producer of such carpets in the world. But, in terms of the designs, patterns, it is mostly Iraq and Turkey, but these days it is mostly done in the West. So, to save the palate of the Western consumer, we want India, not only to be a fine manufacturer, but Indians to appreciate its own crafts like chikankari and many others that are done in Bengal and Rajasthan.

What made you choose Tarun Tahiliani, Raghavendra Rathore and Abraham & Thakore?

They are the best designers in India. Also they represent different parts of India, styles and have different hand writings and the diversity of India reflects in their designs. They are incredibly talented and motivated people to work with. None of these designers have actually worked on this kind of a project before. They have to step out of their comfort zone, use the massive knowledge and experience in design, understanding of Indian motifs through years of their incredible work and apply it to a new product. It's an incredibly challenging project for them. We are delighted that we started with Tarun Tahiliani, who has created wonderful carpets.

How much will these carpets priced at?

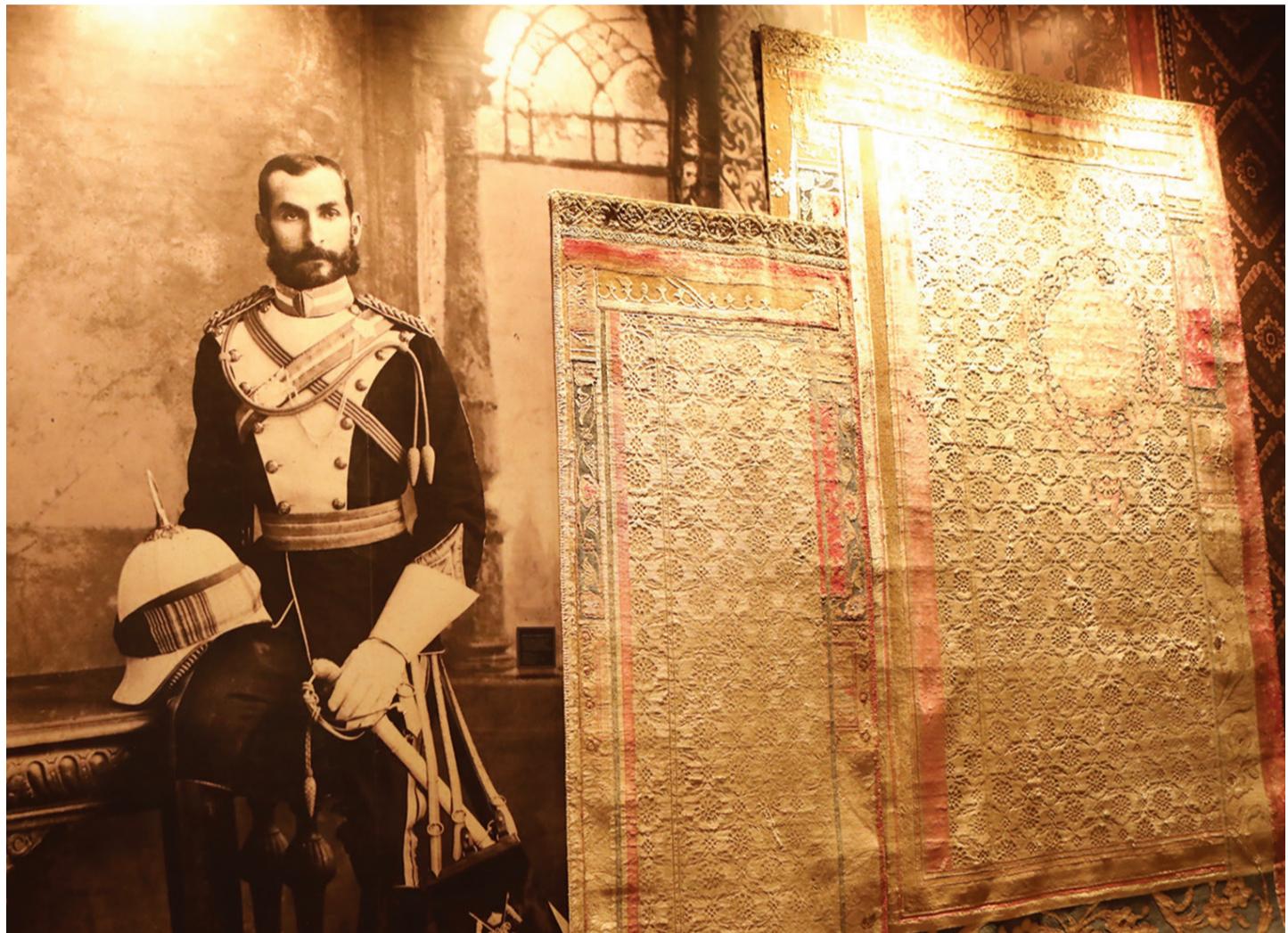
Price range between ₹ 5 lakhs to ₹ 12 lakhs (depending on the size).

What elements have you incorporated that revive Indian culture and arts through designers?

In the whole project, traditional Indian motifs from Lucknow, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bengal and from other states has been a huge inspiration for designers. So Tarun has put his Indian dresses, which he has designed next to the carpets, which highlights how the dresses and the carpets carry forward the same inspiration. The product that we make are from silk, wool and for the dyeing and finishing, we have secured the best. For which Tarun has been incredibly helpful because of his wide experience.

Tarun also trained your craftsmen, can you tell us a bit about that?

We have craftsmen, who have been working with us for years, their father and grandfathers have also been with us. We have been



TYING THE KNOT: Obeetee has roped in ace designer Tarun Tahiliani to create beautiful, hand knotted carpets

PHOTOS: OBEETEE

rooted to their manufacturing capabilities, they are mostly in Mirzapur. We have built facilities for them from schools to solar lighting in their villages and make sure they are able to continue the work. This is also one of the drivers, like I said in the beginning that the challenge is that the craft of creating high-end carpets need to be preserved.

Your company has also made rugs for the queen of England, who are your other famous clients?

All clients are equally important to us. Every carpet we make we caption it as 'carpets for life' because they are timeless, which can be passed from one generation to the other. We have made one of the largest carpets for the Rashtrapati Bhavan and the Oberoi Hotel.

Can you tell us about 'Antique Frame', 'Chikankari' and 'Abstract Art' lines?

As the name suggests, Antique Frames is based on the borders painted in the most elaborate refinement, on the periphery of most Indian/Mughal miniature paintings. Each rug encapsulates the mood, and is finished with a distressed look to reflect the patina of that era. The rich colour palette celebrates lively tones like Indian reds, burgundies and rusts. The second segment glorifies the traditional embroidery art of chikankari; the blocks have been sourced from the cornices of local architecture and have jaals and vines from Persian gardens. The canvases painted by the designer himself



TOP NOTCH: Tarun Tahiliani had to step out of his comfort zone to apply his knowledge to a new kind of product

inspire the third segment.

What have Raghavendra Rathore done in terms of design and A & T?

This will be launched later, for now we have showcased our collection with Tarun.

You plan to have exhibitions of these rugs all over the world, how many countries are you looking at and why New York?

We will be showcasing the rugs in New York, next month at ABC Carpets, post that we may look at UK. We are also going to tie up with

the New York Fashion Week.

How have you made your brand eco-friendly?

Obeetee has been ensuring that water used in its manufacturing facilities are treated before disposal. Our physicochemical-biological treatment of waste water involves the removal of biodegradable, dissolved and colloidal organic matter, using biological treatment processes. The effluent treatment plant is designed to reduce energy consumption. Dyeing of wool at our huge dyeing plant happens at a temperature of 98 degree Celsius. Instead of letting this energy go waste, this heated wastewater is run through a heat exchanger that collects the heat energy and uses it to pre-heat incoming water in the dyeing plant. The now much-cooler wastewater, along with wastewater from the carpet washing department, is mixed in an equaliser to achieve a homogeneous input for the chemical treatment. For the last 30 years, we have ensured that no hazardous water waste has been released into the environment.