



Heart Gallery

By Jennifer Quail

NEW YORK—Doris Leslie Blau Gallery partnered with Gilda's Club Worldwide to host a 600-guest cocktail party and fund-raiser this month to introduce the Fashion Designer Collection, created by the gallery and fashion designers Tommy Hilfiger and Nanette Lepore. As reported, the launch marks the designers' entry into the luxury carpet arena. The evening raised \$25,000 for the charity.

Three original carpets, two by Hilfiger and one by Lepore, each signed on the back by its creator, were auctioned off at the event, with the proceeds benefiting Gilda's Club Worldwide. Additionally, raffle ticket sales for 18 high-end items also supported the charitable proceeds for the evening.

The Fashion Designer Collection is now available at the Doris Leslie Blau Gallery. ■



1 The Fashion Designer Collection

2 Laura Wheat, Gilda's Club Worldwide

3 Nader Bolour, Doris Leslie Blau Gallery, and Nanette Lepore

4 Carson Kressley and Elizabeth Berkley



A 600-guest cocktail party and fund-raiser introduced the Fashion Designer Collection and benefited Gilda's Club Worldwide

Safavieh Makes Its Customer Service More Personal

By Christine Bockelman

PORT WASHINGTON, N.Y.—In a world where automated phone systems and e-mail rule, Safavieh is bucking the trend and making it easier for dealers to connect with someone—the same someone—each time they call.

“In the past, each time a customer called a different person would answer the phone,” said Arash Yaraghi, company principal. “The customer would have to start from the beginning and go through their questions, and explain what their problem was each and every time. It was frustrating for them.”

With the new plan, customer service agents and order processors will be teamed up. Each pairing will represent one of the company's 12 sales territories. It's too soon to tell how the program, which started about two weeks ago, will impact sales, but Yaraghi expects it to bring the company closer to its retailers.

“We'll be able to really hear the problems and issues of our customers,” he said. “If they didn't get their order, one person will track that down. If they're worried about two rugs matching, that same person will open the rugs to be sure they match. It will make everything smoother.”

Yaraghi also hopes the customer service plan will be more efficient for the company, since dealers will be talking to a representative who is familiar with their company needs and deals with them on a regular basis. They'll be able to cut through long explanations and get right to the problem, he said.

The idea for the new system stemmed from Yaraghi's own frustration dealing with customer service agents at other companies, he said, and how difficult it was to get even basic questions answered. “Infrastructures and formulas look good to a computer, but at the end of the day people like to pick up the phone and talk to someone they've talked to before,” he said.

Many of the customer service representatives and order processors for the new plan are current employees, but the company expects to make a few additional hires to flesh out the group. Teams will be extensively educated about the company's products, making it easier for them to address customer questions and concerns.

“The more they learn about the rugs, the better,” Yaraghi said. “The training will mean that our customer service personnel can actually help dealers, not just read information from a screen.” ■



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