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Norman Carpet One stands apart from the crowd through first-class service, unmatched quality and variety, and community involvement.

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All Bases Covered

Through first-class service, unmatched quality and variety, and community involvement, **Norman Carpet One** stands apart from the crowd.

by **BILL DONAHUE** | photography by **JEFF ANDERSON**

Norman Carpet One has been in operation since 1978. The roots of the fourth-generation family business go much deeper, stretching back to the 1950s.

Norman Chaikin, owner of Norman Carpet One, has learned a great deal in his more than 40 years in the flooring business. While trends have come and gone, like so many of his competitors, he believes his business has endured because some things never go out of style—namely, a commitment to quality, service, and the community.

“I’ve lived on the Main Line my whole life,” says Chaikin, who has Norman Carpet One locations in Bryn Mawr and Conshohocken. “We have a full-service design center, where we help people choose from among the full selection of everything we do, both residential and commercial.”

As a result of the relationships the company has fostered over that time as well as its affiliation with the billion-dollar cooperative Carpet One, Norman Carpet One offers an expansive in-stock inventory of flooring. Whether someone seeks high-quality woven

wool carpet, handmade oriental rugs, wood flooring, luxury vinyl flooring, ceramic, or stone, Norman Carpet One truly offers options to suit everyone’s needs and tastes.

Chaikin has made every effort to become an integral part of the community. In fact, every month he donates up to 1,000 square feet of carpet to local nonprofit organizations such as the Montgomery County Association for the Blind, Habitat for Humanity, and the Narberth Community Food Bank. Some people might recognize his voice from the radio; his alter ego, “Norman the Floorman,” has been telling jokes on local airwaves for more than 15 years.

We spoke with Chaikin and two other members of the Norman Carpet One family, Design Consultant Amy Fontak and Vice President Dave Sulkin. Among other things, they discussed trends in flooring, the factors that set the company apart, and the value of a well-told joke.



Q&A

with **NORMAN CARPET ONE**

Norman, you've been in the business for more than 40 years. How does that kind of experience benefit the consumer?

We're a family business that is now in the fourth generation. This company was founded in 1978, but my family's business goes back to the 1950s. We have a bigger in-stock inventory than a lot of small mills in Georgia. We buy at half-price and sell it at half price. We also specialize in high-quality woven wool carpet, which is unheard of. I'd say we have the largest selection of wool in the region. For most flooring stores, 2 percent of their sales are wool. Ours are 50 percent wool, because people in this area are sensitive to quality.

You are a member of Carpet One, which has a fantastic reputation in the industry. What are the advantages of having someone like Carpet One behind you?

Carpet One is a billion-dollar cooperative, and that relationship gives us a lot of buying power. Carpet One also has specific products that, if you are not happy with your selection for any reason, we will replace it—no questions asked. There is a range of flooring options to meet the challenges and needs for every type of household. Ultimately, we want the consumer to be happy with the end result, and we're going to do everything we can to make sure that happens.



In addition to carpet, you also specialize in hardwood flooring, hand-made Oriental rugs, ceramic, and stone. How does the company help customers find what they need?

We have a team of in-house designers and commercial carpet specialists. Many of them are design school graduates who are working in a field they love. We also have weekly training sessions and the latest information about trends and eco-friendly products. We're constantly improving our team's knowledge so they can assist customers.

Speaking of trends, what's hot right now?

In terms of wood flooring, the wider planks and lighter colors are big now. Luxury vinyl flooring is growing in popularity, too, providing amazing wood and tile looks. In the world of carpet, things like geometric patterns, chevrons, and animal prints are all very popular. If people need ideas before they come in, we post a lot of pictures to social media, with examples of completed jobs on our Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter pages.

What can people expect from the installation experience?

Getting supply and material is very difficult throughout much of the industry right now. If people go somewhere else, they may have to wait two to three months. Considering the size of our inventory and the number of products we have in stock, we can get on a job in a matter of days.

You're known as "Norman the Floorman," famous for your radio jokes. How did that come about?

For years people would tell me, "You're a good joke teller. You're a funny guy." I met a guy from an ad agency who suggested



We have a bigger in-stock inventory than a lot of small mills in Georgia.

—NORMAN CHAIKIN, NORMAN CARPET ONE

we should use humor in our ads, so for the past 15 years I've been telling jokes on the radio. If you look at our trucks and vehicles, all of them have humorous sayings as part of their branding—"Driver carries no cash. He's married." We've had parents bring their kids here and say, "Our kids are obsessed with Norman. Does he really exist?" Having that kind of relationship with people has been a nice aspect of the business. Who doesn't like to laugh? ■



For more information on Norman Carpet One, call (800) 220-RUGS or visit NormanCarpet.net.