



Cheryl Rago and Amy Stewart

DESIGN CONNECTION IS AN INVALUABLE RESOURCE FOR LOUISVILLE'S INTERIOR DESIGNERS

By **MARIAH KLINE**

Photo by **KATHRYN HARRINGTON**

Since 2011, Design Connection has been serving the local interior design community as the area's only trade showroom. Owner Cheryl Rago and her daughter Amy Stewart – along with their four-legged office assistant, Dierks – focus on running the dynamic business with both efficiency and hospitality.

Located in the Brownsboro Road Shopping Center, Design Connection houses a massive library of fabric, wallpaper, trim and wallcovering samples as well as furniture and decor samples.

"When designers come in, they can easily find what they need," says Rago. "They're always in a hurry – going from one thing to the next – so the more organized we stay, the better it is for them when they come into work."

Hundreds of brands work with Design Connection, so the strong connections made by Rago and Stewart benefit the designers, architects and builders they serve. Rago has worked in interior design for almost 20 years and has developed lasting personal relationships with many of their clients.

"It's not just a job," she says. "It's like visiting with friends and family. Our whole focus is to know them and the kinds of jobs they do, then supply those needs."

Professionals can utilize the massive library and showroom, but they can also take advantage of the company's workspace, where they may assemble their jobs and give presentations to clients.

"Whether it's watching them work from a blank set of blueprints or taking a remodel project and making it current and beautiful, the process is always fun to watch," says Stewart.

Though Design Connection isn't open to the public, it is a hub for those in the trade who want to shop for supplies in person. As many people learn the hard way,

shopping online for furniture and other home items can spell disaster.

"Oftentimes, you don't really know what you're getting online," says Rago. "Sometimes people don't realize the hazard potential for ordering on the internet because so much of the time, once it's delivered to the door, it's yours. Hopefully, there are no problems, but we hear horror stories all the time."

While they're well versed in the craft, Rago and Stewart explain that they're always in learning mode, visiting the annual High Point Market trade show when they have the opportunity and learning as much as they can about the products they carry. They also bring sales representatives in at least twice a year to meet with designers and introduce new lines.

"We feel it's our responsibility to inform and educate the people we work with as well as supply their needs for the products," says Rago. "They don't look to me to tell them how to do their jobs since they're all experienced, but we provide a resource for them to come in and put their jobs together."

The mother-daughter duo is dedicated to their clients and even more so to each other as partners.

"Most people say they couldn't imagine working with their mother, but I love it," Stewart says.

"We get asked about how we do it all the time," says Rago. "For me, it's a joy."

As they work side by side, the ladies of Design Connection aim to provide the best service possible for their clients. Within Louisville's robust interior design community, Design Connection can offer design professionals exactly what they need to thrive.

"Everyone has a different opinion and different price points," says Stewart. "It's not just knowing what we love but knowing what they'll love, too."

Located at

4874 Brownsboro Center / designconnectionky.com / 502.690.3180