

Dover

RUG & HOME

Baby Boomers Return to Boutique Retail Stores

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BOSTON, Mass.: Contemplating the third location for his family’s carpet store, Mahmud Jafri knew he didn’t want to it to be in a shopping mall or a “big box.”

Small business owner Jafri wanted to follow a trend he observes in New England: the move away from sprawling malls and endless parking lots.

“Small boutique retail stores are making a comeback,” notes Jafri, who launched Dover Rug & Home in 1989 in a small showroom in Dover, Mass.

Now joined by his son Hasan, a recent college graduate, Jafri, prides himself on personalized service based on direct links, many of them inter-generational, to weavers in India, Pakistan, and Nepal.

And he believes that large shopping malls are losing their appeal -- people are “sick of the no service phenomenon” and having to walk endlessly through malls to find their stores.

As consumers, particularly baby-boomers, develop an aversion to impersonal lifestyles and return to smaller, unique, retail stores, he wants his home-grown business to be there for them.

“Make trend your friend,” he quips.

The Jafris have just launched their newest outlet at the upscale shopping and dining boulevard on 3rd Avenue in Burlington, Mass., that is emerging as a unique shopping and interior design destination in New England.

The area’s high-end restaurants and designer wear and home furnishings outlets create the “center-of-town, downtown feeling, where people can come and browse” as Jafri observes.

A downtown feel – minus the parking hassles. Baby-boomers juggling kids and prams can head straight for the underground parking lot.

Inventory at the new location features Dover Rug’s trademark collections of new, as well as traditional and antique products. The earlier two outlets are in Natick – the flagship store with its accompanying squash and fitness complex – and in Back Bay, downtown Boston.