MSC Holdings, Inc. acquires Farnsworth Wholesale Company

Fort Worth, Texas — MSC Holdings, Inc., parent company to Morrison Supply Company — a leading wholesale distributor of plumbing, HVAC and builder products in the Southwest, and Express Pipe & Supply, a leading wholesale distributor of plumbing and builder products in Southern California — has acquired the assets of Mesa, Ariz.-based Farnsworth Wholesale Company. As one of the largest plumbing supply businesses in the Arizona market, Farnsworth Wholesale Company has five locations and focuses on the Plumbing, HVAC and Waterworks markets. Farnsworth Wholesale will continue to operate under its existing brand name.

Chip Hornsby, Chief Executive Officer of MSC Holdings commented on the acquisition: “With the addition of Arizona to our business, we have become a formidable supplier from Texas over to Southern California, giving us the opportunity to be a predominant supplier in the Southwest. Our focus will continue to be on servicing our customers at the local level. We look forward to working with Farnsworth Wholesale Company’s leadership team to achieve their goals in the Arizona market. The performance of each location is what creates our success today and in the future.”

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INSPIRED DESIGN

Victoria + Albert has captured the attention of the architecture and design community lately with multiple wins of some of the industry’s most prestigious awards. They won a coveted Metropolis Likes award for their elegant Drayton tub during the 2013 International Contemporary Furniture Fair followed by two Platinum ADEX Awards for their exotic Calabria tub and coordinating basin.

These achievements, while certainly an exciting honor, serve as a reflection of the company’s lofty standards of excellence and their trend-inspiring designs.

Throughout their 16+ years as a high-end manufacturer of freestanding bathtubs, basins and lavatory faucets Victoria + Albert has been the recipient of many awards for their exceptional product designs. They have built an international reputation based on the fashion-forward sophistication of their freestanding tubs and an uncanny ability to capture the newest trends. Their mastery of the aesthetic side of design is only part of the story, however. Their creative team also understands the science behind the design – the precise engineering of the slope of each backrest, the strategic placement of every drain, the way a human body fits the contours of a tub. The company also appreciates sound business practices – the fundamentals of providing prompt service and good support, of targeting the right message to the right audience. It’s this singular combination of art, science and business that sets Victoria + Albert apart as a brand worthy of the high honors it so often wins.

One word: ENGLISHCAST®

Other bath companies may offer pretty designs, but no other company can boast of the ENGLISHCAST® material that is a trademark of every Victoria + Albert tub. They have always been about the next idea, the new look, the concept that no one has thought of yet.

“'At Victoria + Albert, we are incredibly proud of our unique designs,' said Javier Kornelius, President of Sales for the Americas. By controlling the complete end-to-end manufacturing process in-house, we have huge amounts of flexibility and can therefore design truly with the bather in mind.”

Sometimes the inspiration for new ideas involves re-writing the past. Victoria + Albert recently unveiled their "new traditional" design theme which captures the time-honored elegance of the Victorian era and infuses it with a modern edge. One example is the aforementioned Drayton tub, which pays homage to the traditional slipper bath but adds a gracefully flowing rim and streamlined feet.

Inspired designs, outstanding service and dedication to dealers

The brief was straightforward but daunting – maximizing the bathing experience for people of different shapes and sizes by providing supreme comfort and exquisite styling. In short, revolutionizing the freestanding tub.

The dilemma boiled down to the lack of support that smaller bathers experience when their feet don’t reach the end of the tub, yet still needing to provide enough space for tall bathers to stretch out. Victoria + Albert solved the problem with a solution of beautiful simplicity – the development of a raised central bathing well that is curved to form a connection between the bather and the bath regardless of feet position. This allows the bather's legs to extend over the raised midpoint and relax in stable comfort. It’s worth noting that the end result was visually stunning as well, with a curvy silhouette that makes the tub a true stand-out. With two low ends and two drains, the Cabrits has a sleek profile that reveals more of the surrounding wall and floor, making it a popular choice among designers.

In addition to tubs and basins, the company also offers two distinctive styles of high performance faucets – the new traditional line Staffordshire and a more contemporary line Tuba. Consisting of a tub filler and lavatory vessel faucets, these collections reflect the same quality English-made craftsmanship and elegant designs.
INSPIRED DESIGN

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the company is known for.

What a customer wants

A big part of success in any business is anticipating and understanding customer demand. Victoria + Albert seems to have an inherent sense of this. They have watched carefully as consumers trended away from noisy whirlpool tubs and air jet systems, noting their dissatisfaction with cleaning and malfunction. They have observed with interest as the demand for oversized showers has diminished and people are once again clamoring for more intimate spaces and spa-inspired tubs. They have taken note of a rising appreciation for eco-friendly products. All of these things are carefully factored into the company's product development processes.

A global presence for Victoria + Albert

“Consumers do have certain requirements and often these are conflicting such as wanting a large impressive bathtub suitable for two people, but only having a small space to fit it in,” says Kormelius. “This is when having the personal interaction between dealers and customers become important, as the dealer often has to help determine the best tub through careful questioning. Sometimes works directly with public relations firms in the USA, UK, France, Italy, Germany, Australia, and most recently Asia.

Sales & service strategy

Victoria + Albert may be an international powerhouse, but they have a hands-on management style and customer service strategy that emphasizes personal interaction and quick response times. Two U.S. sales teams on the east and west coasts manage 50 representative agencies, which in turn provide support to independent dealers. Architects and designers are attended to directly by a designated sales team with specialized training. A corporate policy of no internet sales may seem counterproductive in today's digital age, but it is meant to protect both the brand and their dealer network. They hope to discourage consumers “showrooming” and promoting direct interaction with dealers who can offer the best possible service, product knowledge, and the opportunity to touch and feel the product.

Victoria + Albert has a dedicated customer service team based in North Charleston, S.C., that works with both dealers and customers. Major problems are rare, but in the event that something does happen, the company has excellent stock inventory and a helpful customer service team at the ready. Their commitment to aftercare has been recognized by the Forte Group buying group who named Victoria + Albert the 2012 Vendor of the Year for “outstanding service and continued support of the Forte dealers.”

Target markets

Victoria + Albert has made great strides in its outreach to the design community in recent years. They expanded their ASID membership to 15 chapters across the country and have developed a series of Continuing Education Courses covering such topics as minimal space design and manufacturer selling in and around Cape Town, South Africa. Today, the company is one of the largest freestanding bath specialists in the world. The turning point came in 1996 when a small group of British investors recognized the potential of ENGLISHCAST®. It was this fusion of world class material and classic British style that lead to the rapid success of the company. They began shipping product directly to the UK, where consumers loved the new material of the baths compared to the heavy mass and chippable enamel of cast iron. Sales grew as quickly as their reputation for quality. By 2001, Victoria + Albert expanded into Europe and turned to the US in 2004. The company’s status as a visionary designer was cemented with the introduction of rimless tubs, followed by compact minimalist designs and the new contemporary slipper bath. As the company looks to the future, they are not resting on past successes but actively working on new product launches and planning a busy schedule of exhibition appearances in 2014 and beyond.

The award-winning Drayton bathtub and Drayton 40 basin along with the Staffordshire saucepan.

Left to right: Eric Phelps and Jonathan Carver of the Victoria + Albert Sales and Marketing team.

The Arrolyf lounge bathtub supports the head and neck while allowing bather to recline and relax.

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