



Design

Haute couture is in the house

World-famous fashion designers know how to dress the body, but can they dress a home? From the pages of *Dressing the Home: The Private Spaces of Top Fashion Designers* (Abrams, \$45, March 2008), it appears that at least 21 of them can.

The book, by Marie Bariller with 300 photographs by Guillaume de Laubier and a foreword by Dolce & Gabbana, tours the homes of such boldfaced names as Christian Louboutin, Betsey Johnson, Elie Saab, Diane von Furstenberg and D&G themselves, whose house in the South of France features such unexpected style pairings as Old Master paintings and zebra stripes on black lava stone.

"The idea is to show the strong links between (the designers') work and the decoration they create at home. It is very close," says Bariller, a former model. "They dare everything as they do at work."

For instance, Johnson's New York apartment is as eccentric as she and her fashions: quirky furniture, surfaces jammed with kooky collectibles, and everywhere her favorite color of sugary pink. The Parisian apartment of Louboutin (he of the celebrated red-soled spike heels) reflects his passion for Egypt, and of course, delectable shoes, which are scattered here and there on consoles.

Individual designers occasionally have opened their homes to design magazines; this is a first book of such spreads. The designers cooperated, and it shows in the lavish photography. Says Bariller, "Except the fact that they all show great taste for dressing up a home, there are as many differences — as in fashion."



Floor coverings

Beautiful Afghan rugs are splendid poverty fighters

It's an age-old question: What can any one person do to fight global poverty? You can shop. For luxury rugs.

That's the answer offered by Arzu, a non-profit, for-benefit corporation that is bringing the traditional rugs of Afghanistan to the Western market while providing stable employment, education and health care benefits to female weavers and their families.

"This is a new trend in social entrepreneurship," says Connie Duckworth, president of Arzu ("hope" in the Afghan language Dari), a retired Goldman Sachs highflier. "The biggest empowerment for women is a job and the ability to earn income. The

idea was to (find) the highest-quality high-end product that can be produced for export."

The answer: Afghan wool rugs, which have been coveted for millennia. But near-constant conflict in recent years had diminished rug production and quality and threatened the loss of traditional patterns and techniques.

Arzu aims to reverse that. It employs the weavers — so far, 700 women, plus their families, in 10 villages — and pays them a salary plus bonuses for finished rugs. Proceeds of the sales of the rugs, about \$1,000 for a small one and up to \$18,000 for large, are invested in village schooling



ARZU

Stitch in time: A woman weaves a rug for Arzu, an organization that provides work for Afghans.

Stories by Maria Puente USA TODAY

and health care.

"Each rug is unique, and we know who made it and their family circumstances," Duckworth says. "They get away from the idea that charity items are junk made for tourists."

Since fall 2004, nearly 700 rugs have been sold through trunk shows in high-end markets around the USA, through the website (Arzu Rugs.org) and through architects and interior designers. She hopes to produce up to 1,200 rugs a year soon.