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COMPANY PROFILE

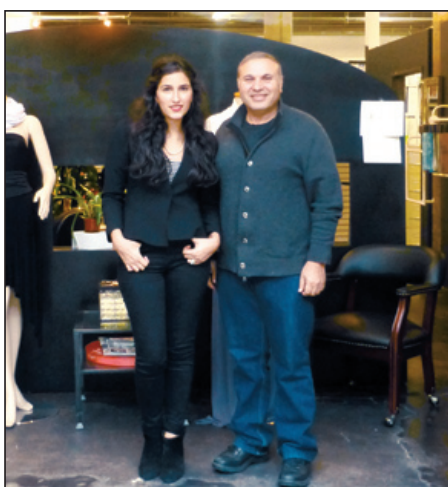
Asher Fabric Concepts: Capturing Domestic Demand for High-End Knits

With a client list that includes **Theory**, **Splendid**, **Rachel Pally**, **Graham & Spencer** and **Tart**, Los Angeles knitter **Asher Fabric Concepts** is looking to be an alternative to European knits for U.S. and international brands that want to source domestically, said Chief Executive Officer and President Asher Shalom, who founded Asher Fabric Concepts in 1991.

Shalom has a background in garment production in his native Israel. Until about eight years ago, the company was knitting its fabrics. But today, Asher Fabric Concepts operates as a contract knitter, helping designers and brands develop custom fabrications that are knit, dyed, printed and finished in Southern California. Asher specializes in knits for the better contemporary market, as well as swim and activewear customers ranging from small custom orders to large-scale big-box programs.

The company's website indicates Asher's range of offerings. Visitors can search by fiber content, fiber weight, construction or style number. The company also has an app, the **Asher Fabric Weight Conversion Calculator**, for **iPhone** and **Blackberry**, which allows users to convert textile measurements to determine GSM, or grams per square meter.

"We work with a group of five or six knitters. They can do anything," Shalom said. The company also works with three dyehouses and two production printers. A third printer handles just sample orders. Asher can also print samples in-house.



DOMESTIC DESIGN: Yael Shalom and Asher Shalom, pictured left, run Asher Fabric Concepts, a high-end contract knitter based in California. The company's headquarters and West Coast showroom are located near downtown Los Angeles, pictured above, right.



Speed to market

Working out of a 1,200-square-foot lofty design studio near downtown Los Angeles, Asher employs about 16 people, including Yael Shalom, the company's vice president of sales and Asher Shalom's daughter. Yael Shalom oversees sales and customer service, while her father oversees design and production. "He's the artist," Yael Shalom said.

Rather than concentrating on large-run commodity fabrics, contract knitting frees the company up to focus on novelty fabrications, Yael Shalom said.

"Everyone wants something new every day," Asher Shalom said. "It's the best for me. I love to make new things."

Asher has a warehouse near the design studio, where the company keeps sample yardage on hand. Typical delivery times are five or

six weeks for custom prints and custom yarn dyes and three to four weeks for PFD (prepared for dye) and solid goods. Reorders can be filled in two to four weeks.

That speed is crucial for the company, which fills sample requests and begins new design developments daily. For brands used to the long lead times required for offshore production, Asher's quick-turn development can also be a persuasive argument for moving production to the United States.

"We want more customers that used to buy from China," Asher Shalom said. "Dealing with China for high-end [fabrics] is not so easy ... and not cheap. You can get a great deal if you are ordering 10,000 yards."

Many designers and manufacturers are unaware they can get European quality made in the United States, Shalom said. "They thought

they couldn't get it here. Our prices are comparable to Europe—or are less expensive."

For offshore manufacturers looking to source in the United States, Asher's team can help them "dip their feet in domestic," Yael Shalom said, by recommending contractors or quality-control technicians.

Asher's local production offers another benefit over offshore production: quick response for corrections. "When it's [produced] here, if the color is wrong, in one week you can adjust it," Asher Shalom said. "We react very fast."

The Los Angeles studio serves as headquarters and showroom space for the company, which is represented in New York by Anthony Vecchinone, president of **Da-Solo Ltd.**

For more information, visit www.asherconcepts.com.

—Alison A. Nieder