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THE MID-COLUMBIA BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS JOURNAL

# Innovation

TRI-CITIES

## Unique Finds

Terry Black seeks a wide variety of furniture that is unmatched in style for his America the Beautiful Dreamer franchise. See page 12

INNOVATION TRI-CITIES, 2509 WEST FALLS AVE., KENNEWICK, WA 99336

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At America the Beautiful Dreamer, shoppers find those special details that pull a room together.

# Unique Finds

Shoppers return to America the Beautiful Dreamer time and time again for its vast selection and specialty items — merchandise you won't find anywhere else.

BY DAVE TURNER

FURNITURE RETAILER AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL DREAMER OPENED its first store in downtown Vancouver, Wash., in 1970. The organization has since grown into a chain of more than 60 stores around the Northwest, many of them independently owned and operated as franchises. In fact, former company Vice President Terry Black, who became a franchisee in Kennewick about five years ago, says his business in the highly competitive Tri-Cities retail furniture market is going strong.

Just this March, Black opened his second America the Beautiful Dreamer store — a larger one on West Canal Drive in Kennewick to accommodate demand for more inventory, a bigger showroom and additional product categories.



**“We try to provide more fun, style and variety with our products, and offer items that you won't find anywhere else,” says Terry Black, owner of America the Beautiful Dreamer.**



**From the living room to the bedroom, America the Beautiful Dreamer has the furniture homeowners want.**

magazine's "Top 100 Furniture Stores in the United States." Such rankings are earned, says Black, by taking a long-

term view on customer relations. His sales strategy is rooted in customer advocacy. "We'll give you the education you need in order to shop," he says. "Even if you don't make a purchase from us, you'll know what you're paying for."

If the customer doesn't make a purchase on the first visit, Black believes that being up front and low pressure will eventually bring most customers back in the front door. And for those who do buy now or later, he says, a pleasant sales experience increases the chances they'll return for furniture purchases again and again.

Black is also committed to after-sale service and follow-up. The staff includes a service manager who personally visits any customer who has a problem. "And delivery employees are required to either provide in-home setup, or if that isn't necessary, to do more than just drop the furniture off at the front door," he says. "We want to make sure our customers have everything they need, and right where they want it."

#### TIME TO BE TAILORED

Robin Bissell of Pasco has bought several pieces from America the Beautiful Dreamer, including her daughter's bedroom set, a formal dining room set, a dinette set and a breakfast buffet. Being able to take her time and find something unique and just her style made the sale. "I probably went in there two or three times before I actually bought something," says Bissell. She calls the dinette set and buffet she bought most recently "tailored to fit." ♦

#### UNIQUE, WELL-MADE AND AFFORDABLE

Customers say they are choosing America the Beautiful Dreamer because the store is easy to deal with and sells distinctive, well-made pieces at competitive pricing.

"I really liked the selection," says Jennifer Brindle of Kennewick, who recently purchased bedroom furniture at the store and bought a futon from America the Beautiful Dreamer several years ago. "They had some unique stuff that none of the other places in town carried," says Brindle, who didn't see a lot of big names at the store in favor of pieces by smaller, high-end manufacturers. "And that's what we really liked. It is just a little different, instead of run of the mill."

That's the objective. "We try to provide more fun, style and variety with our products, and offer items you won't find anywhere else," says Black. "And we don't deal only in brand-name products because we get a great deal of high-quality merchandise from lesser-known manufacturers with whom we have built lasting relationships of trust. The bottom line is that we don't sell vinyl-wrapped particle board. Our veneers are high-quality veneers. Our solids are true solids. Many of our products are handcrafted. Yet we keep our costs down by buying from smaller sources in large quantities."

#### HIGH RANKINGS AND CUSTOMER ADVOCACY

The approach is apparently working for America the Beautiful Dreamer and its affiliated stores. The parent company has been recognized as one of *Furniture Today*

## QUICK STATS

#### COMPANY NAME

▼ America the Beautiful Dreamer

#### TYPE OF BUSINESS

▼ Furniture and home accessories franchise

#### LOCATION

▼ 7411 W. Canal Drive  
Kennewick, WA 99336

#### YEARS IN OPERATION

▼ Founding organization, 33 years  
Local franchise, five years

#### BUSINESS HOURS

▼ Mondays through Saturdays  
10 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
Sundays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Closed just three days each year (Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas)

#### EMPLOYEES

▼ 7

#### PRODUCT MIX

▼ Bedroom, kids' beds, futons, and conventional and specialty mattresses, upholstery goods and unique international furniture products

#### KEYS TO SUCCESS

▼ Selling pieces that are handcrafted and designed to last, maintaining a selection not available through competitors, giving each customer one-on-one attention, setting competitive prices, building repeat business

#### WHAT'S AHEAD

▼ The added capacity of a new location, carrying a wider selection of products and adding new product categories, such as motion furniture and leather

#### CONTACT

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## Winning lineup

Terry Black, owner of America the Beautiful Dreamer in Kennewick, attributes his strong growth in recent years to, what he calls, a winning lineup of products. Here's an overview of what the store carries:

**Bedroom suites.** From four-

posters to sleighs, from elegant simplicity to ornate styling and from pine to mahogany.

**Kids' beds.** From traditional twins and bunks to captain's beds and loft beds — all in a variety of designs and colors.

**Futons.** Multifunction futon

sofas and chairs, available in more than 500 fabrics and many different frame styles and colors. Inventory includes Gold Bond futon mattresses.

**Conventional and specialty mattresses.** A diverse selection of mattresses from some of the nation's largest

bedding manufacturers, such as Spring Air and Simmons. Also available — Visco memory foam, Illustra foam, latex and water products from Boyd Flotation, and specialty items including air mattresses from American National.