



A sampling of the architectural products available from Central Distributing & Yosemite Home Décor.

YOSEMITE HOME DÉCOR

In 1983, ambitious businessman Rockie Bogenschutz recognized the demand in the central California Valley for fireplaces and was determined to fill the void. He started out literally selling out of his car, driving around the San Joaquin Valley, calling on builders with great success.

During his travels, Bogenschutz met someone who would become a lifelong friend, Farshid Assemi. The two opened a small shop where they sold pre-fabricated fireplaces to the local building industry. Since replacing traditional brick and mortar fireplaces with the modern zero-clearance

model was a revolutionary concept at that time, the fledgling business steadily garnered fame around the area. In the late 1980s, they decided to include major household appliances in order to diversify the product lines offered by their company, Central Distributing. Whirlpool® Corp. – together with its subsidiary brands KitchenAid® and Roper™ – became the first partners. Soon other international appliance manufacturers were signing up. The quality of the product mix together with an unwavering dedication to customer service made Central Distributing one of the biggest suppliers of all major appliances in the San Joaquin Valley.

While the firm was doing a stellar job of giving the community what it needed, Bogenschutz continued to put his ear to the ground, listening to what his customers wished they had next. He took their input, looked around at all the brands in the market-



The headquarters for Central Distributing, parent company of Yosemite Home Décor, in Fresno, California.



At left: Mike Salway, general manager of Yosemite Home Décor, admires one of the permanent showrooms in the World Market Center Las Vegas with Rockie Bogenschutz, company founder.



Continual growth means needing more room to warehouse product. This recent ribbon-cutting commemorated the company's warehouse expansion.

place, and thought, "Why can't I do this?" He scoured the world evaluating factories until he found the ones that best shared his vision of producing a new brand of lighting, fireplace mantels, and vanities.

Meanwhile, Central Distributing was growing at a fast pace, with still so much more opportunity on the horizon. Bogenschutz and Assemi continued to poll their customers and, in response, started up a new brand called Yosemite Home Décor, named after Yosemite National Park. The name was chosen because Bogenschutz wanted to ensure the brand retained strong ties to the local community of Fresno, which is known as the "Gateway to Yosemite." The new brand allowed Bogenschutz and Assemi to satisfy the unique needs of the community that were thus far going unfulfilled.

Yosemite Home Décor began with a line of traditional mantels, vanities, and lighting; however, realizing that the potential of the company was much broader than serving the local market, Bogenschutz staffed the corporate office with a group of carefully chosen, equally ambitious and educated individuals to help materialize his dreams. Mike Salway was brought on board as the general manager of Yosemite Home Décor, and Bogenschutz's son, Brock, was appointed national sales manager. The two began searching for reps who could help reach the goals they had set in place.

As the Yosemite team grew, so did the brand. Over the next few years, as word started spreading about the new company, the lighting and mantel categories expanded and four plumbing lines were added: stone, copper, glass, and stainless steel sinks. Not long after, artwork, range hoods, electric fireplaces, and architectural décor joined the mix.



Shown here is a stone sink and Lu Preville lighting, both available from Yosemite Home Décor.

Having dedicated project specialists for each line is Yosemite's secret to staying up on the trends in the home décor industry. Each manager brainstorms with the rest of the team to come up with ideas for improving the lines and assessing feedback from the customer support department on what clients and end-consumers want. Since the home décor industry closely follows the housing sector, Yosemite Home Décor's ties to the building community have helped the firm stay current. The sales

reps assist by relaying information about the specific market needs in their areas.

Yosemite began exhibiting its lines at trade shows across the country, beginning with a hospitality suite in the Anatole hotel in Dallas, then spreading to the Dallas Market Center, K/BIS, HPBA Expo, PCBC, High Point Market, Las Vegas Market, Inspiredesign, and the KEM markets. They established a permanent showroom in Building C at the World Market Center® Las Vegas. With each passing market, the company has expanded into more exhibit space, numbering a total of seven showrooms during the Winter 2010 Las Vegas Market! For the summer edition, Yosemite will be displaying its products in C-1035, B-0501 (the former Murray Feiss showroom) and A-0417.



Yosemite Home Décor's permanent showrooms in the World Market Center Las Vegas handsomely demonstrate the breadth of the line.





A customer favorite, this handcrafted iron Beowulf display decoratively holds eight sinks.

Word of mouth has been a great method of capturing more business. Yosemite has enjoyed a lot of recognition and feedback in response to its social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Blogger, and LinkedIn. Social media in particular has been a great tool, educating customers on what's new with Yosemite and in the industry, as well as letting customers know the people who make up the company – not just what they sell. That aspect dovetails with Yosemite's founding principles of forging a personal relationship between buyer and seller. This interaction expands much farther than conversations on social media and includes sending handwritten thank you cards to customers and welcome packages with employee and rep bios. Every account has a dedicated rep to help them get started with Yosemite and make sure they're successful with the lines. In return, Yosemite staffers love to receive feedback and photos from customers which they proudly display in newsletters and post on Facebook, Twitter, and Blogger.

For customers who are new to the brand, Yosemite offers display programs – the most popular is the plumbing display in which retailers are given a free Beowulf iron “tree” with each purchase of 11 sinks (8 to display on the tree, and 3 to stock).

Yosemite makes an effort to support the local community, putting together events such as Epicurean Delights (in support of the local fire chief's foundation) where area chefs are brought in to cook for guests at a gala event. Yosemite recently celebrated the construction of its new warehouse with Building a Better Community: Builders' Benefit to which the firm invited all of the local builders to Central Distributing to tour the facilities, hear a speech by guest speaker Paul Strohmman from the World Market Center Las Vegas, and have a first-hand look at the technologies implemented to increase efficiency such as GPS tracking on the delivery drivers and installers. They also enjoyed a session of the Working Smarter program, in which motivational speaker Jim Paluch encouraged attendees to come up with ideas to improve their businesses.

Both Yosemite Home Décor

and Central Distributing have had an important impact on the San Joaquin Valley. They have not only helped to raise money for countless local charities, but have instilled a sense of responsibility in their employees as well, encouraging them to give back to the community where they can.

Today, Central Distributing has become a premier destination for customers in the San Joaquin Valley just as Yosemite Home Décor has for showroom owners and designers looking for quality lighting, plumbing, artwork, mantels, range hoods, electric fireplaces and décor. The entire staff is continually looking for new ways to develop their products and services in the future. The companies have more than doubled the number of reps in the field and hired lighting industry veteran Dennis Hoth as its new national sales manager. While much of the country has been scaling back, this company has been bolstering its ranks in the customer service and marketing departments. The Summer 2010 Las Vegas Market will continue the Yosemite tradition, when it will unveil more artwork and lighting as well as some surprises. ❖



The recent Epicurean Delights fundraiser, held at Central Distributing this spring, drew a sizable crowd of homeowners from the community.