



Dino Green has opened Green's Auto at 156 Main Street, across the street from Pizza Chef. Dino is shown here with his daughter, Nicole. Dino lives in Franklin with his wife Judy and daughters Nicole and Elizabeth.

Staff photo: Charlie Darling



A large assortment of hooked pillows designed by Jodi Sleeper complement her rugs and the assortment of furniture and decorative accessories at the new American Cottage store on Main Street. Staff photo: Heather Makechnie

American Cottage Opens Flagship Retail Store

By Heather Makechnie
Beacon staff

Why *not* Andover? American Cottage, a wholesale manufacturer and importer of handmade rugs and decorative accessories, opened its first retail store at 46 Main Street in Andover on August 1. Award-winning home furnishings designer and Andover resident Jodi Sleeper, who is the creator of all things American Cottage, states, "We have wanted a destination retail store for American Cottage for a long time, and Andover seemed the appropriate and natural place."

Jodi's colorfully rich, joyful, and eclectic designs are sought after by upscale companies and featured in trade magazines such as *Architectural Design*. With an art background in botanical illustration, she was the art director at Claire Murray and started the art department at Bob Timberlake Collection. She has been a licensee for Capel, Shaw and others.

Jodi and her husband/business partner Kevin Sleeper spend a great deal of time traveling all over the world to find just the right craftsmen to produce Jodi's handmade products – places as far away as China, Nepal, and Bolivia. Her studio and their home are in Andover.

While their wholesale store is in Atlanta, anchoring their world-renowned business in Andover was not a difficult decision for the Sleepers. Andover's location on Routes 4 and 11, which are the only major east-west connectors between routes I-89 and I-93 in the heart of the Lakes Region, brings heavy traffic through town. Andover is central to Sunapee, Newfound, and Winnepesaukee lakes, and well within reach of the Boston and New York markets.

Kevin explains: "Many of our patrons and dealers have summer homes or vacation in the area. When our friends Doug and Joanna Gay created their new professional office building, we knew this location was a winner.

The new building, with its ease of accessibility and parking, tall ceilings (to display full size rugs), and location, location, location, sealed the deal."

If the constant flow of visitors during the first two weeks of operation is any indicator, their decision has paid off. Customers have come from all over the region to see the store. The most commonly heard statement in the store has been, "Oh, my gosh! Look at *that* one! It's so beautiful."

The new store contains the full line of American Cottage handmade rugs and home furnishings as well as several other home decor items sourced from friends of the Sleepers in the industry. Everything in the store is handmade, and almost every item is made of natural, sustainable materials from around the world: heirloom quality Amish furniture from Ohio, fine hand-knotted Tibetan rugs of wool and silk from Nepal, decorative accessories carved from stone from Bolivia, and hand-tooled leather items from Peru adorn the store. They even have butterflies for your walls.

Kevin states, "While American Cottage was created to showcase Jodi's designing, many of our products are very affordable and comfortable in any style home. From completely outfitting your 'castle' with fine wool rugs, furniture, and decorative accessories, to the purchase of affordable, unique, natural, original gifts, we have something for everyone."

American Cottage will have new products coming in regularly, such as lighting and other decorative accessories over the next few weeks. Stop in and visit Andover's newest addition to fine retail.

Who says Andover cannot become a *destination* location?

American Cottage is open 10 AM to 7 PM daily through Labor Day weekend. Beginning in September, the store will be closed on Tuesdays.

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