



Dialogue

Design Studios, new AVA software, the latest Quality Questionnaire Results & 'Supergirl'!

Spring 2000

Design Studios grow with AVA

A major area of strength within AVA's customer base is that of the independent studio – driving design trends in the USA, UK and Europe with small teams of talented designers who use CAD as a vital tool to supplement their traditional techniques for creating artwork that ultimately appears as wallcoverings, or woven and printed textiles.

One designer who has successfully integrated AVA software into working methods which encompass a career of three decades is **Janet Bevan**. Now employing three designers, and an AVA partner for 15 years, Janet uses her systems for designing both dobby and jacquard weaves, as well as highly contemporary wallcoverings designs. Janet's studio has always been at the leading edge of technology, and her workflow for design creation and approval bears testimony to this.

With her AVA software, the design is developed on screen, approved by the client, translated into the woven construction and the loom file forwarded by email ready to weave. This has speeded the design to production process from weeks and months to hours and days.

As a member of the prestigious Colour Marketing Group, as well as a leading trend consultant, Janet is in a good position to judge the impact that technology has had in her industry; "We are



specialists in woven textile design for both dobby and jacquard but with CAD we can offer design to the wallpaper and printed textile markets internationally."

It is this versatility that has enabled Janet Bevan to fully adopt CAD into her working methods, combining technology with traditional techniques to create an exciting and successful portfolio.



Janet Bevan (right) pictured with her two designers Kelly Edwards (centre) and Hartley Hemisphere Millennium competition winner, Louise Randle (left)

Much newer to CAD, but with a similarly illustrious career underneath his belt, Glenn White, founder of **de-zign**, has embraced computer technology and has recently installed his first AVA system.

Aware of the impact of new design tools, Glenn decided to further his education in design techniques and CAD technology. Currently studying for an Art Degree in Printed Textiles and Surface Pattern Design at Leeds College of Art & Design in England, Glenn told **Dialogue**, "Technology is the future and any company that ignores it does so at their own peril."

Glenn approached AVA in September 1999 and recently purchased his AVA software and is now armed with the latest Apple G4 technology on which to run it, equipping de-zign to bring the company into the forefront of colour and design.



Glenn took some CAD proofs of his first collection to Heimtex and his experience there convinced him that the choice he'd made was the right one. "The response was terrific! We coloured the motif, stripe and border up in an afternoon, and I was able to show my prospective clients a portfolio of different colourways that would normally have taken me weeks to produce."

The new de-zign website – www.hangit.co.uk –



will be up and running soon, including information on the six new collections launched at IntoHome 2000 in Birmingham, UK.

Gill Stirling, owner of **Elizabeth Stirling Designs** in Leicester, UK also took the plunge in 1999. Primarily seeing CAD as an important tool for handling difficult designs and



... continued on Page 2

©de-zign

continued...

Designers

... continued from Page 1

saving time for colouring, her studio manager, Jenny Osborne said, "Having heard so much about AVA from our wallcoverings customers, we felt that a system compatible with so many of our industry partners would be of real benefit."

Operating in the home furnishings market, including woven and printed textiles, bedding, wallcoverings and table linen, as well as the gift wrap industry, Elizabeth Stirling Designs serves markets all over the world, with customers in the UK, USA, Australia, South Africa and Continental Europe. "We specialise in a traditional look, which is generally difficult to source. This is probably because it's so labour intensive and time consuming, so a good CAD system has made the world of difference," said Jenny. "We mainly use it for colouring our wallcoverings lines, however it's becoming increasingly important for the creative design process as well."

Using the AVA system for more design oriented tasks has already played a crucial role in the creation of two new wallcoverings collections for Seabrook and Blonder Wallcoverings in the North American market.



Another studio who are busy in the US is **Wallflower Studio** headed up by Linda Marmash. Having done a large amount of research into colouring and design software at her previous company, Linda says, "When the time came for me to purchase CAD software for Wallflower, AVA was the first to come to mind."

She continues, "After talking to different people in the wallcoverings industry, it was evident that AVA was the best software of its kind."



Linda knew that using CAD would make a huge difference, but it wasn't until she really started to work with

the software that she realised by how much. "As a sole designer it has allowed me to colour a collection in 3-4 weeks rather than 2-3 months, and since I'm able to use separations directly from my engraver, I have a much better idea of what I'm going to get from the factory."


Designing collections for Walltrends International, Blonder Wallcoverings, Village / FSC and her two most recent collections; 'Simply Small Prints' and 'Blue Ribbon' for



S.A. Maxwell, Linda says, "In the future, I can see Wallflower Studio expanding its CAD with AVA and really keeping pace with the wallcoverings industry."


These four studios show that there is a very real use for CAD technology at all stages of the design process, and its adoption can work in harmony with traditional methods to ensure vitality and market success.


AVA provides a sophisticated design solution that can save a significant amount of time and energy for designers, and the new modular software makes it even more accessible for smaller studios with start up costs becoming lower and lower. AVA's **Designer Solution** (a low cost startup package incorporating an Apple iMac, printer, scanner, graphics tablet and the AVA Create & Repeat software) provides a huge range of design tools, filters and techniques, with the advantage of working in full realtime repeat. Couple this with the ability to grow the AVA software as needs and finances allow, and a designer can be up and running with CAD in next to no time.

For a datasheet on the AVA Designer Solution, please call or email AVA. We can now supply all our marketing literature in pdf format, via email, which can be viewed with Adobe Acrobat Reader; a free piece of cross-platform software. Telephone AVA on one of the numbers on the back page, or email data@avacadcam.com 

Important Operating System Changes

We're notifying all our customers of some important changes to our support of old Mac Operating Systems over the next few months. Whilst there has always been an important balance between creating forward thinking software and supporting existing customer technologies, the advances that have been made by Apple with their more recent operating systems (and some of the problems that have been fixed in later releases) have prompted AVA to reduce the number of old operating system versions supported, so the oldest will now be Mac OS 8.6.

By doing this, we can test software more thoroughly, spend more time writing features that take advantage of these newer technologies and continue to drive up the standard of our software – and therefore improve the productivity of our customers. 

The cheapest way to upgrade your Mac is by investing in the latest OS. The most recent is OS9, which costs less than US\$100 (UK£67+VAT) and greatly improves large file size handling, memory management and stability, as well as including many other useful tools. More details will be sent to our customers soon, but should you have any queries, call our Tech Support lines for assistance and advice. 

Contacts

Janet Bevan Design Studio
www.janet-bevan-design.co.uk
tel: +44 (0)190 242 0170

de-zign (Glenn White)
www.hangit.co.uk
tel: +44 (0)113 276 0555

Elizabeth Stirling Design
(Gill Stirling)
tel: +44 (0)116 233 1055

Wallflower Studio, Inc
(Linda Marmash) WFLstudio@aol.com
+00 (1)216 732 9968

Exciting new Software from AVA

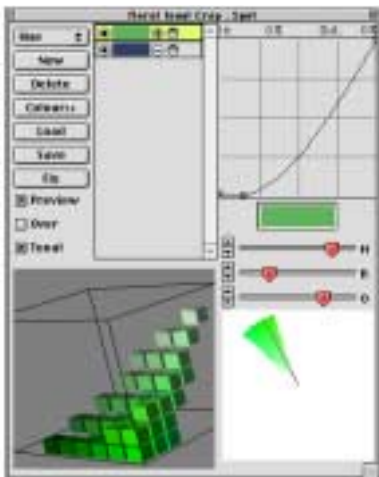
Hard at work over the past few months, AVA's R&D team have been developing software on all fronts. Design & Separation, Colour, Weave and the Archive software have all seen major feature updates which ensure that the AVA software becomes far more powerful and valuable than the day it was first introduced to your CAD studio.

AVA Archive will soon be available with a fully web browser compatible version alongside an improved stand-alone product and a new multi-user network version. Archive is intended to work as a powerful Sales & Marketing tool, as well as its more traditional role as a database for the design team, and ensures that all sales people and customers are viewing (and selling) available and up to date work.

Far longer in development has been AVA's all new weave software "**AVA Weave**" – completely redesigned following over two years of ongoing development and customer feedback. Whether you want Dobby or Jacquard functionality, AVA Weave is capable of providing the highest levels of sophistication, in a format that blends seamlessly with the other AVA software modules. Colour management, 3D visualisation and page layout can all be combined, along with design creation and separation for jacquard users.

AVA Dobby Weave functionality (included within the Jacquard module) provides checks, stripes and plaids with

Spot separation window in AVA Technical Separations (below)



user editable pegplans and threading windows to fully customise the weaves. Custom weaves can be imported from weave libraries, "cut and pasted" and then repeated into a design, with full editing still available at any point.

It is possible to plan stripes and checks by eye, or by inputting formulae, then simply copy warp to weft to make a perfect check. Designers can use the colour palettes and drag and drop colours from a colourfile, or pick from millions of colours with the AVA Picker Wheel to colour up a weave.




The new AVA Weave software

The floating windows allow a completely new concept in workflow, with the pegplan and threading windows all editable in the same way as a standard design window. This provides enormous flexibility to the designer not just when creating and editing weaves, but in the whole workflow of using CAD. A full range of editing tools are available as part of the Weave software, and enable a variety of filters to be applied after designing the weave to simulate felts and other fabrics.

The appointment of a further software engineer to the AVA R&D team a year ago, has enabled rapid response to some "hot" issues as well as several long term strategic plans to be put in motion. Interface and driver solutions for the current crop of wide format digital printers for both the textile and decorative industries have been developed to operate with multiple ink types, substrates and paper / cloth sizes. In addition to this, major developments in design tools and filter additions have benefited separation and design users and work on the specific demands of the laminates sector has fine tuned our

highly successful and sophisticated overprinting model even further.

AVA Colour has also seen some significant R&D input, with its full integration into the Design & Separation software revolutionising the way that it is both written by us and used by our customers. The integration, whilst part of the AVA product restructuring that has been taking place for the last twelve months, was in response to a huge number of customer requests to include many of the Design & Separation features in the Colour software.

Displaying a colourfile in multiple layouts (as opposed to the standard vertical scrolling list) is just one example of such a request. This was possible because of the new relationship between the modules, resulting in features only having to be written once (rather than in two places). Development now occurs simultaneously with the other AVA software, allowing all the Colour features to be accessible within the Design & Separation software (when the Colour module is owned). The results of this can be seen in releases from 2.14 onwards, where numerous features have been added to take full advantage of this new format. As it says at the top: It's exciting new software! 


AVA's Supergirl' flies through London!

AVA CAD Support Specialist, **Jenny Barker** ran the 2000 London Marathon, dressed as Supergirl. . . and with mum



Jenny (left) and mum, Angie

Angie in tow! This was Jenny's second successful London marathon, and she beat her previous best by a quarter of an hour to finish in an excellent time of 4' 46".

Even more impressive was the £2,000 that she and her mum raised between them for Breakthrough Breast Cancer Research. Congratulations Jenny, from everyone at AVA. 

High results keep us hard at work!

AVA continue to set service & product development standards within the CAD industry but how are we going about improving still further?

Every 6 months AVA carries out a detailed, customer quality questionnaire. As far as we know, we are **still** the only CAD company who do this in the industry.

Subsequently, AVA are also the only CAD company who can respond quickly, reliably and willingly to customers' needs. Results show a significant improvement since the survey began, with September 1999's high scores proving our ability to maintain the standards we have set for the industry. The continuing drive to improve our level of customer service sets AVA apart from any other CAD/CAM provider. We know how important it is to our customers that for us, selling a piece of software is only the beginning of the relationship.

Of course the best we could do is 100%, and where we've not reached that, we know that there's still a need for us to improve. So what are AVA doing to create even more value for our customers?

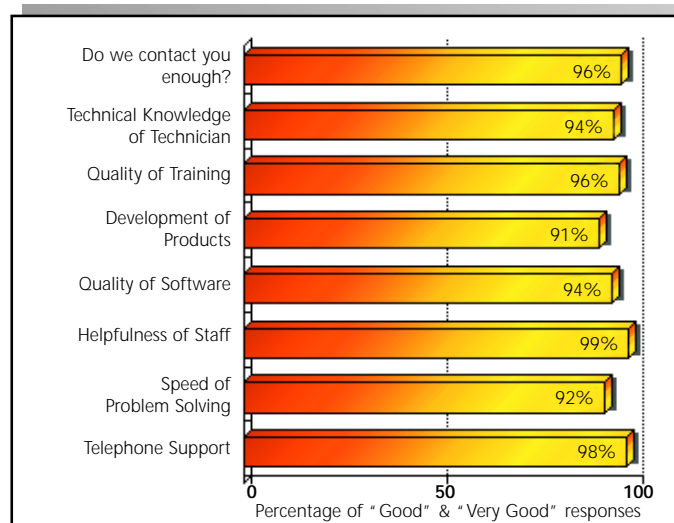
One area that we have improved is **internal training**. The score of 94% for the Technical Knowledge of the Technician, showed that in one in twenty cases, our customers felt that a greater technical knowledge was required. We have subsequently recruited personnel with systems and hardware knowledge, as well as run refresher programmes for existing Tech Support staff.

The lowest score in the most recent Quality Questionnaire (but conversely, the highest ever score on this question) was for the **Development of Products**. Whilst we know that our customers would like their particular feature requests to be top of every queue when it comes to programming priorities, it is obviously an important task to prioritise our software development. Having

browser compatible variations) and the continuing refinement of the software to take full advantage of the next generation operating systems.


The other (relatively) low scoring section was that of the **Speed of Problem Solving**. Every AVA CAD Operator is now included in our database, and every telephone call or contact with them is

logged. This enables us to then trace every activity, and ensure that it is completed satisfactorily. Some activities, dependent upon their complexity, may take longer to satisfactorily complete than others, however we will always try and keep our customers briefed on developments. We are continuing to further develop our internal database architecture to assist in monitoring outstanding actions, and the goal of having no incomplete actions is one we strive for each day.



recruited a fourth programmer in 1999, AVA now feels that it has the optimum sized R&D team, and with the assistance of other development teams from within AVA, major projects have been undertaken in the last few months (please see the article on Page 3).

This has all taken place alongside the three major feature releases that we deliver each year, the completely revised Weave software, three new versions of AVA Archive (due for imminent release, and including multi-user and web

With this effort, AVA are constantly working to improve customer service standards. With the Quality Questionnaire we have a tool with which to monitor our performance, and continued use of this (possibly in a slightly revised format next time around) will enable us to serve our partners to the best of our ability. Thank you to all of those who helped with this exercise by providing responses to our questionnaire. It is your comments that shape the way AVA evolves and operates and we treat all feedback as importantly as you do. 

AVA Dialogue

Editors: Duncan Jefferies & Christiane van Doorn

Published by AVA CAD/CAM, 1-3 St Georges Street, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK11 6TG, UK.

Tel: +44 162 550 6800. Fax: +44 162 526 1378

AVA CAD/CAM

1-3 St. Georges Street
Macclesfield, SK11 6TG

United Kingdom

Tel +44 162 550 6800

Fax +44 162 526 1378

AVA CAD/CAM

Poststrasse 17, Postfach
CH - 9001 St. Gallen

Switzerland

Tel +41 71 222 5023

Fax +41 71 222 6840

AVA CAD/CAM

PO Box 339
Hockessin, DE. 19707

USA

Tel 800 883 4555

Fax 212 391 4854

Website

www.avacadcam.com

Email

data@avacadcam.com

Technical Support

support@avacadcam.com

