

Product Spotlight

Milliken's Whale Song Carpet

By Emily Torem

It's one thing to think of saving the whales in the abstract, but quite another to see their beautiful songs transposed onto the textiles beneath our feet, reminding us everyday what is at risk if we don't protect our oceans. The latest collection from Spartanburg, South Carolina-based textile company **Milliken—Whale Song Carpet**—has interpreted the sound patterns produced by four species of our largest water-dwelling mammal and used them as templates for four corresponding carpet designs that transform the spaces they furnish.

Whale Songs and Sounds Inspire a Unique Aesthetic

The collection's four designs recast sound waves and patterns onto highly textured, loop and tip shear designs. "Capturing the behemoth mammals' musical spectrum, from steady bass tones to sweeping crescendos—these complex ballads guide and connect us to another world of communication in the depths of the ocean," the brand says.

Milliken selected four species of whale to inspire each design. **Orca**, an angular yet organic pattern, represents conversations taking place between the creatures underwater. **Narwhal** was inspired by the speedy movement of sound through the ocean, which takes place up to four times faster than it does on land. The resulting carpet is full of movement and repetition, creating a pattern that energizes. **Humpback** toys with scale, offering a lower contrast design with plenty of depth. The fourth pattern of the standard collection is **Beluga**, a whale species that harkens back to many of our first lessons on marine life and further connects our everyday with the majesty of the ocean. This pattern, like the beluga itself, is graceful and calm. The carpets are available in an 18-color array of Oceanic blues, mossy greens, and sandy off-whites. "Whale Song reminds us that each environment, whether outdoors or inside, tells a story," says **Stacy Walker**, director of customer experience for the Milliken floor covering



The Whale Song Carpet collection's four designs recast sound waves and patterns of Orca, Narwhal, Humpback, and Beluga whales onto highly textured, loop and tip shear designs.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF MILLIKEN



IN CONVERSATION with Christine Knapp

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audiences that we would like to get engaged. Greenworks has traditionally been a little bit more focused on city government, so we're trying to consider how we can reach residents and businesses and community groups, and all sorts of different partners to really be more directly engaged with it.

gb&d: Are you a native Philadelphian?

Knapp: I'm not. I grew up on Long Island, but I came to college here and have been here ever since. So it's home now.

gb&d: What do you think Philadelphia's strong points are in the sustainability realm?

Knapp: We like to say that Philadelphia has strong bones, a really good structure for sustainability work. We have an incredible parks system, we have these really walkable neighborhoods, we have a good transportation system, we have energy efficient building stock—there are row homes everywhere. We have all these inherent pieces of the city that help Philadelphia to start out on a higher rung of the ladder in terms of sustainability. I think we also have the

"It feels full circle to have advocated for the creation of this office and then to come in and take over eight years later."

added benefit of having a lot of academic research institutions here that are a great resource in helping us figure out where we want to go and how to move the needle forward.

gb&d: How would you rate the city's sustainability efforts or the last eight years since the framework was adopted?

Knapp: I think we are seen as leaders. I'm now part of the **Urban Sustainability Director's Network**, which is made up of all of the sustainability directors from around the country. Just seeing the work in that group and where a lot of the other cities are, I feel that we're definitely seen as being an early adopter and a leader that folks are now looking to in order to figure out how to do this work in their cities. Also, just anecdotally, I had a great experience conveyed to me, which was a friend of mine was in

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Made completely from various nylon waste materials, such as abandoned fishing nets, ECONYL yarns breathe new life into old products that would otherwise pollute the world's oceans and landfills.

division. "We steward these environments by selecting clean materials to create interiors and manufacturing them responsibly to protect the natural world, dovetailing these harmonious concepts to create cohesive space."

Recycled Material Reclaimed from the Oceans

For the material used to create their Whale Song Carpets, Milliken sought to integrate a message about how the beauty of whales helps beautify their environment. "Whale Song is inspired by the life and habitat of the very oceans from which nylon waste is reclaimed," the brand says in a release. "Made completely from various nylon waste materials, such as abandoned fishing nets, **ECONYL** yarns breathe new life into old products that would otherwise pollute the world's oceans and landfills." The carpets contain, on average, a Total Recycled Content of 55.6%. Additionally, Milliken manufactures the Whale Song collection using 52% renewable energy, and sends no process waste to the landfill.

Improves Interior with Low Toxin Manufacturing

Whale Song's minimalist carpets also left out unneeded byproducts by ensuring that their materials were PVC-free. PVC, though long lasting and durable, can also stubbornly resist biodegradation. Embracing new designs and patterns responsibly can also mean allowing those designs and materials to cleanly return to their composite parts decades into the future without burdening future generations with their disposal. PVC-free as well, the ES Cushion Backing on the carpet improves air quality and provides 50% more noise reduction than other hard-backed carpets. The collection also carries an **Environmental Product Declaration** and **Declare Living Building Challenge Compliant** transparency label, which is a stepping-stone for LEED, the Living Building Challenge, and other green building certifications. [gb&d](#)



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