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GASKELL & CO HISTORY

From the very beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the North West of England had been at the very heart of the manufacturing boom, with Lancashire becoming a world renowned area for textile manufacturing. It was against this backdrop of exciting development that in 1902 at the age of 26, Thomas Gaskell, founder of Gaskell & Co, started out on his own as a felt merchant having gained experience in the felt-making industry. It was with some trepidation that he took this step, but within a fortnight he decided it had been a wise move and that success was certain. So much so that he discussed his convictions with his fiancée and she agreed to marry him forthwith.

At first, he worked from home and stored his stock in their drawing room. In fact, they had to sell the drawing room suite to make room. It was probably well for Thomas that such a step had to be taken before the first bloom of matrimony had worn off!

As a man, Thomas Gaskell had many things in his favour – good looks, a splendid sense of humour, a fondness for sport and a flair for conversation. These attributes combined with his knowledge of the industry made him a natural salesman. In early 1903, the business was relocated from his drawing room and into a small warehouse where it remained until 1913 before moving again to larger premises.

By this time, Gaskell & Co were merchanting a variety of products including underfelts, stair pads and mattress pads.

As the business continued to expand, Thomas was joined by R. H. Hartley who was appointed a director in **1913** and remained with the company until his retirement in 1958 and who assumed responsibility for all of the administration work within the business. Throughout the 1914/18 war Gaskell & Co supplied various government ministries and enlarged their circle of contacts.

The business progressed rapidly and in **1920**Thomas was joined by the elder of his two sons,
Eric Gaskell, followed by his second son Douglas
who joined in **1923** and went on to become
Chairman of the company right through into the
1960's.

Early in **1923**. Gaskell's old mill had been burnt out and they moved into new premises of around 25,000ft² at Lee Mill in Bacup. By the 1960's Gaskell mills had expanded to occupy over 500,000ft² of warehousing and production space.

In 1946 Thomas Gaskell, the founder, died but by now the company was firmly established and the family interest was maintained in the hands of his two sons. After the Second World War, Gaskell & Co continued to grow and in 1948 became a public company, Gaskell Plc, at which time owned Lee, Britannia and Peel Mills, adding Wheatfield Mill, Rishton in 1949 into which they installed Broadloom Carpets Limited their first foray into carpet manufacturing. Also in 1949, they purchased the Truefleece factory in Glasgow, followed in 1953 by British Needlefelt and 1955 by Feltings Limited in Dublin.

Partial disaster struck in November 1956 when Peel Mills completely burnt out. Later that year, they purchased Wycombe Fillings Ltd at Todmorden and in 1957 Rhoden Mill in Oswaldtwistle. Production of Foamalux, Foamafelt and Velvetread underlays were moved to the 90,000ft² facility.

On 7th July 1958, Mr T. Duncan Gaskell was made a director becoming the third generation of the family to do so joining a business which, since its beginnings, had been one of constant expansion and continual growth.

During the 1950's and 60's, Gaskell expanded their carpet manufacturing facilities. Initially in partnership with Tranter Carpet Manufacturers of Kidderminster producers of broadloom axminsters for the residential market. Gaskell became one of the first manufacturers of narrow width axminster designed to match over a 12 foot width. The business experienced significant growth over the years, becoming involved in the production of woven rugs which were marketed worldwide particularly long pile rugs supplied to IKEA in Sweden. In addition to this, Gaskell also became a market leading supplier of narrow width axminsters to the UK leisure industry for use in pubs and clubs.

1973 saw Gaskell's further expansion in carpet with the purchase of Hothfield Mill at Carlton where it began production of tufted carpet for the first time. At Carlton the residential range named Rusticana was developed. This was a unique product based on natural yarns and became a best seller in the residential market throughout the 1970's and 80's.

By this time the axminster manufacturing plant at Rishton was entirely focused on the contract market and was joined in 1976 by Andrew Gaskell. The fourth generation of the family to be involved with the business. He had gained valuable experience of the contract market through his own business interests outside of the group. Gaskell worked hard over the next 10 years to establish axminster qualities within the wider leisure market in the UK which until then had been dominated by Wilton Products.

The other side of the Gaskell business remained true to Thomas Gaskell's roots in the felt industry, producing needlefelt carpets and underfelts. This business grew with the contract market evolving via the production of needlefelt tiles into tufted tile manufacturing. In the early 1980's, the Gaskell businesses were restructured with the Broadloom business becoming Gaskell Mackay and the felt and tile businesses Gaskell Textiles Limited.

By **1985** Gaskell Mackay had strengthened their position within the UK leisure sector and were now producing one third of all the carpets supplied to pubs and clubs, largely narrow width and broadloom products going into the hotel sector.

In **1999** Gaskell Plc had become one of the most successful listed companies in textile manufacturing turning over in the region of £50 million whilst having experienced an almost constant growth throughout its 97 year history.

HUGH MACKAY HISTORY

Central Scotland, Kidderminster and Yorkshire are recognised as the traditional carpet producing centres of the British Isles. Yet it is known that a cottage carpet making industry existed in Durham in the 18th century, and that around 1815 a factory was in production alongside the River Wear in the city. In 1903 this factory ceased production and most of its equipment and goodwill were sold. It's former manager, together with 20 redundant weavers, set to work to ensure that the art and craft of carpet making would not be lost to Durham. The manager's name was Hugh Mackay.

Eleven looms were installed in one of the sheds on the existing Durham site and work began. He produced Wilton carpeting of a quality he called Yakcam (Mackay backwards), which is still in production today.

In 1906, Hugh Mackay was joined by his son L. H. Mackay and a partnership was eventually formed. In 1921 Mackay's of Durham became a private limited company. The business grew fast and ranges of Wilton patterns were soon on display at furnishing stores from Hull to Berwick. It was not long before any newly married couple's home in north east England was considered incomplete without at least one 'Durham' carpet.

A turning point in the history of Hugh Mackay's came in 1929 when they installed a five-frame Wilton loom at the successful North East Coast Exhibition. This loom was operated by the then Prince of Wales, the beginning of a long and successful relationship with the Royal family that still exists to this day. Awareness of 'Durham' carpets increased, demand followed suit, and showrooms opened in Glasgow, London, Leeds, Manchester and Birmingham. In 1935 the production of Axminster quality carpets was added to the Hugh Mackay range and a new building built to house the facility. With the outbreak of war in 1939, Mackay's had in 36 years achieved recognition as one of the world's great carpet makers.

In 1953, under the guidance of L. H. Mackay and his son John, Mackay's became a public company, quoted on the Stock Exchange of Newcastle upon Tyne, and six years later the London Stock Exchange granted them a quotation.

1969 the great fire of Durham struck. On Monday 5th May fire ravaged Mackay's factory and brought Wilton production to a virtual standstill. Buildings were destroyed, component parts were lost, and looms were severely damaged. Local businesses and trades gave immediate assistance, carrying out work and fabricating temporary structures, and nine days after the fire, seven Wilton looms were back in operation again. In August of the same year, the majority of Wilton patterns were once again being produced. Customers - who also gave their support generously during this time - were sent special binders and then monthly mailings of patterns as they became available. This crisis had proved one thing: whilst Mackay's have been making good carpets they've made some good friends too.

In 1970 a 140,000 sq ft factory at nearby Dragonville, on a site which the company had owned since 1957, was completed and allWilton production, including additional looms, was moved to this new facility. This left space on the Durham site to increase and improve the Axminster production; the two factories together being amongst the best equipped and organised of their kind in the world at that time.

The company continued to prosper with ever growing prestige and in 1972 Hugh Mackay was awarded the Royal Warrant. This prestigious accolade undoubtedly helped to seal further orders for specialist carpets both from within the UK and abroad.

By **1976** the Dragonville site was re-organised and expanded in order to house the entire production and associated processes from both sites. In addition to this UK base, Hugh Mackay also opened showrooms and offices in Hamburg.

In 1999 work began on a new state-of-theart 170,000ft² manufacturing facility on green land on the outskirts of Durham city. This was essential to maintaining the company's stance in the face of ever increasing competition. By the spring of 2000 the new facility was fully occupied and launched Hugh Mackay into the new millennium and into the company's second century.



GASKELL MACKAY

The dawn of a new millennium brought with it new challenges for the entire British manufacturing industry and carpet was no exception. Competition from low cost overseas manufacturers, the increased popularity of other types of floor finishes and improved global communication ensured that traditional manufacturers including both Gaskell and Hugh Mackay needed to re-evaluate the principals that had served them well for the previous century.

From 2000 to 2005 both companies experienced significant change. The break up of Gaskell Plc saw their operating divisions becoming private limited companies and refocusing on their specialist areas of operation. Hugh Mackay similarly rationalised their business to focus on core markets and specific strengths. Both companies used their experience in manufacturing to innovate via new production programmes to focus on flexibility and design excellence aimed at satisfying the ever increasing demands of today's contract environment.

These changes saw both Gaskell Carpets and Hugh Mackay Carpets brought together and subsequently purchased by Whitestone Weavers to become Gaskell Mackay Carpets in April 2006.

Whitestone have their roots in sourcing and supplying both contract and residential floor coverings under both the Whitestone name and their distribution business Carpet Line Direct. Trading since the early 1990's the Whitestone Group have built an enviable reputation for

the sourcing and supply of all types of floor coverings from across the globe focusing on flexibility and a strong ethos of customer service.

The purchase of Gaskell Mackay was a significant step in the planned growth of the Whitestone Group bringing together two highly regarded British carpet companies and investing in their future to ensure that the traditions of both companies are allowed to flourish in today's ever changing market. Since their inception Gaskell Mackay have gone from strength to strength in product development, design innovation and diversification into new markets. In April 2008 the business was relocated to Whitestone's new state of the art warehousing and distribution centre in Hartlepool, capable of supporting the groups planned activities for many years to come.

So, from humble beginnings Gaskell Mackay can trace their roots back well over 100 years, a history of which they are rightly proud. Equally the company can look forward to a bright future where their traditional values complemented by design flair, product innovation and future investment will mean that the names of Thomas Gaskell and Hugh Mackay will remain synonymous with quality British carpets for future generations to enjoy...

gaske Mackay



TARTANESQUE



TARTANESQUE TARTANESQUE



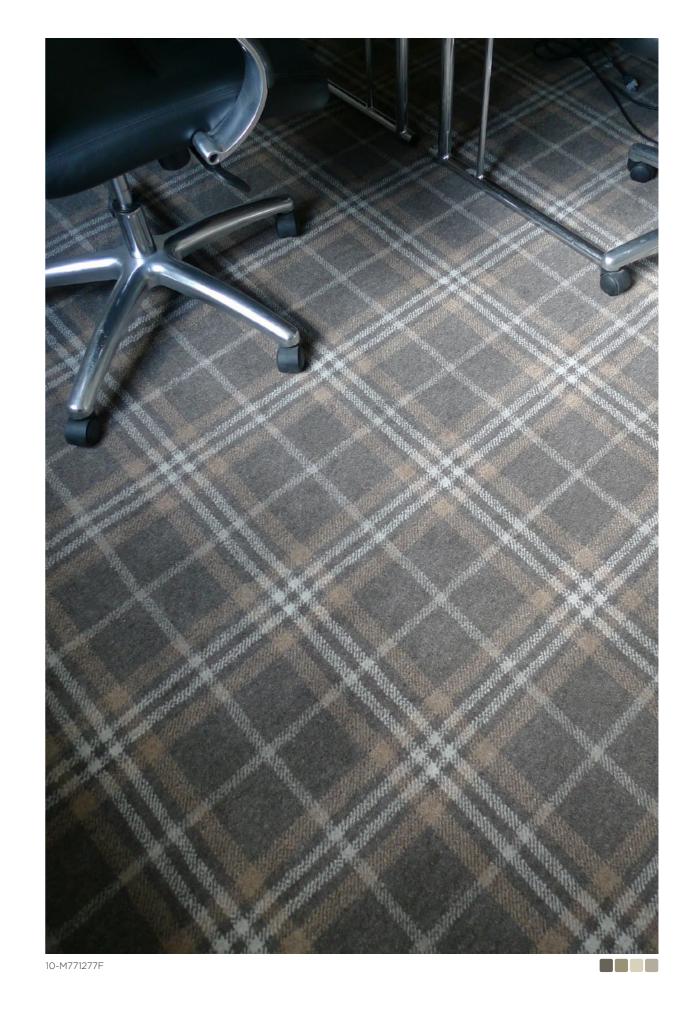










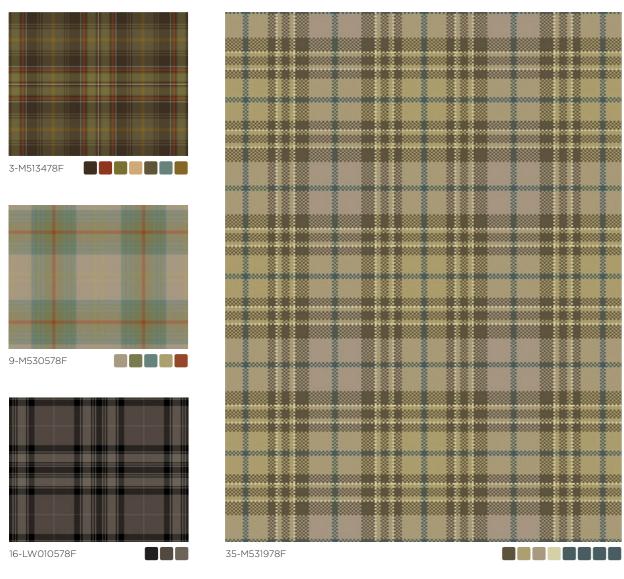


BEN TARTANS



BEN TARTANS

BEN TARTANS

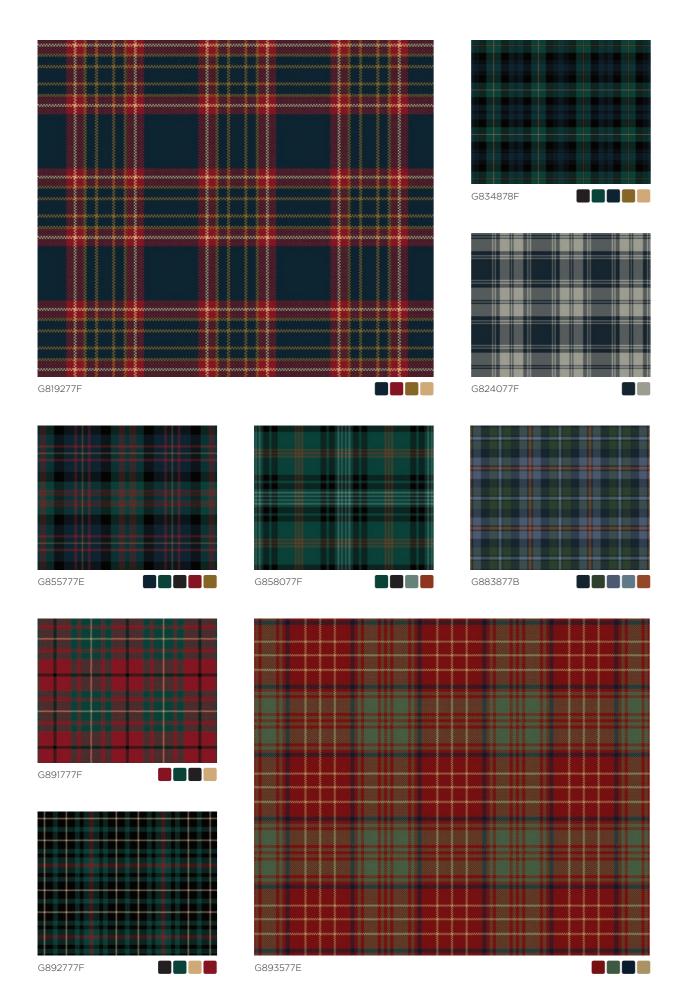


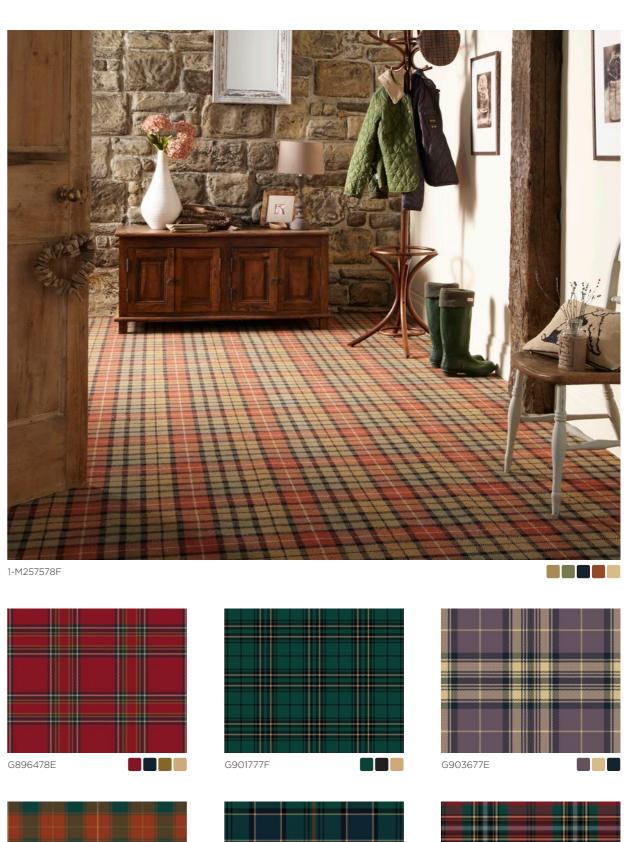




THE TARTAN COLLECTION





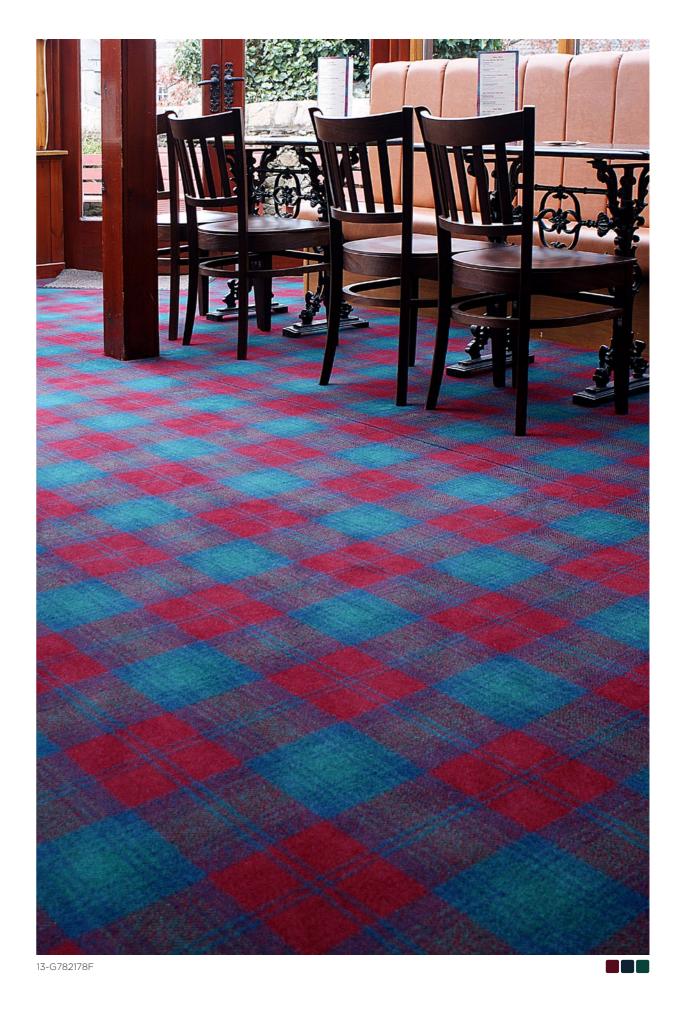


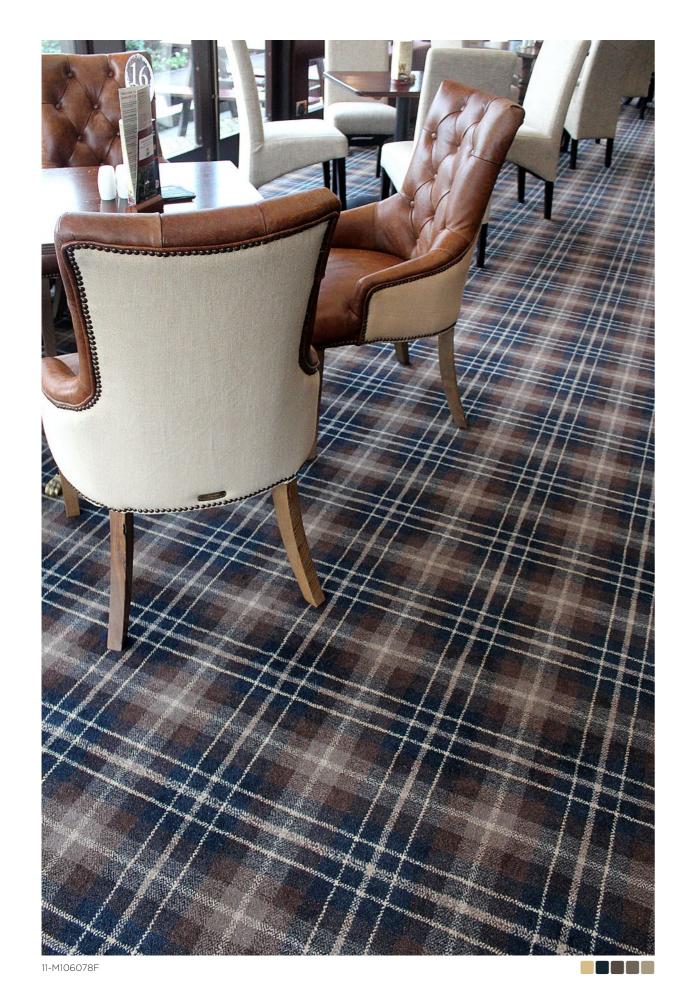


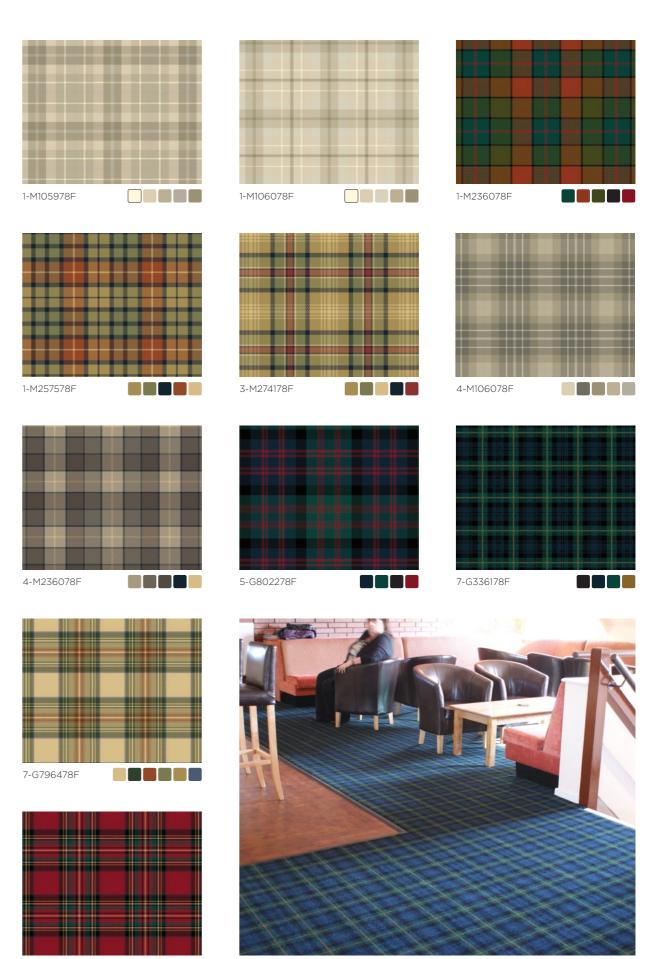






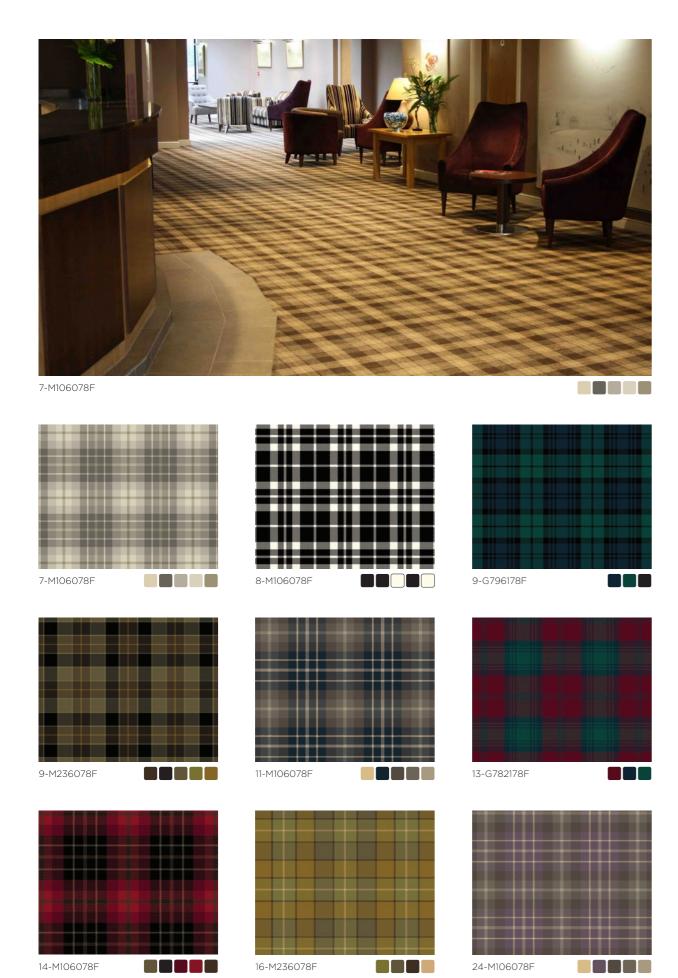


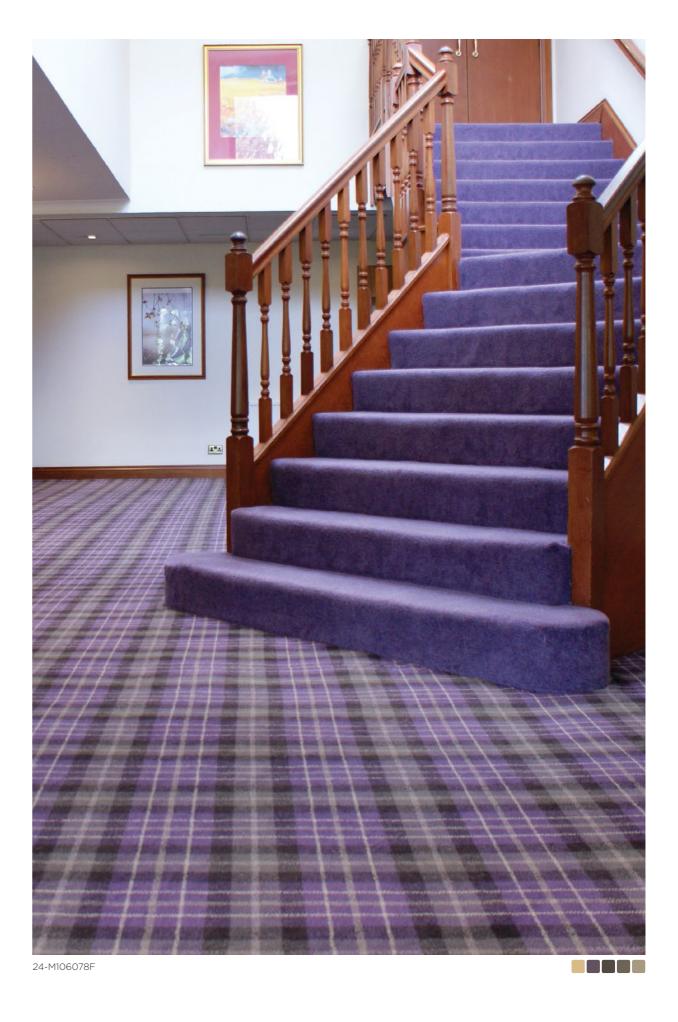




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TONES INN COLLECTION

























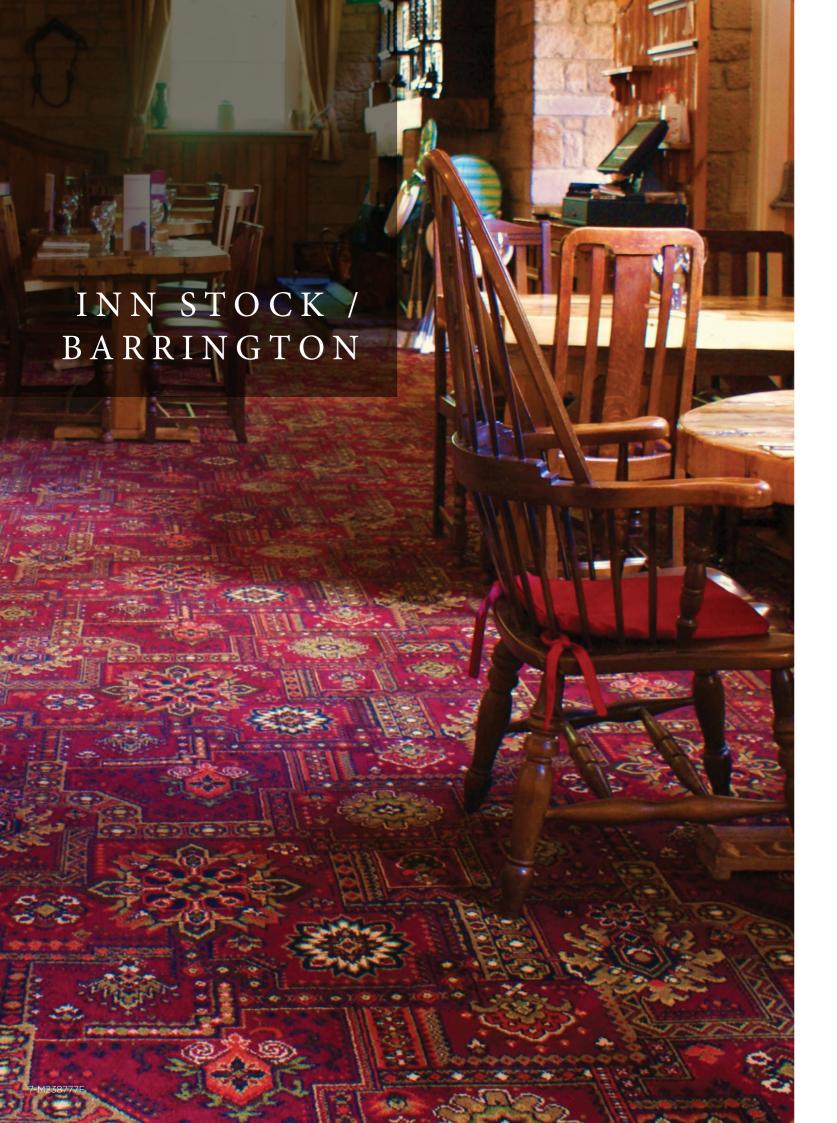


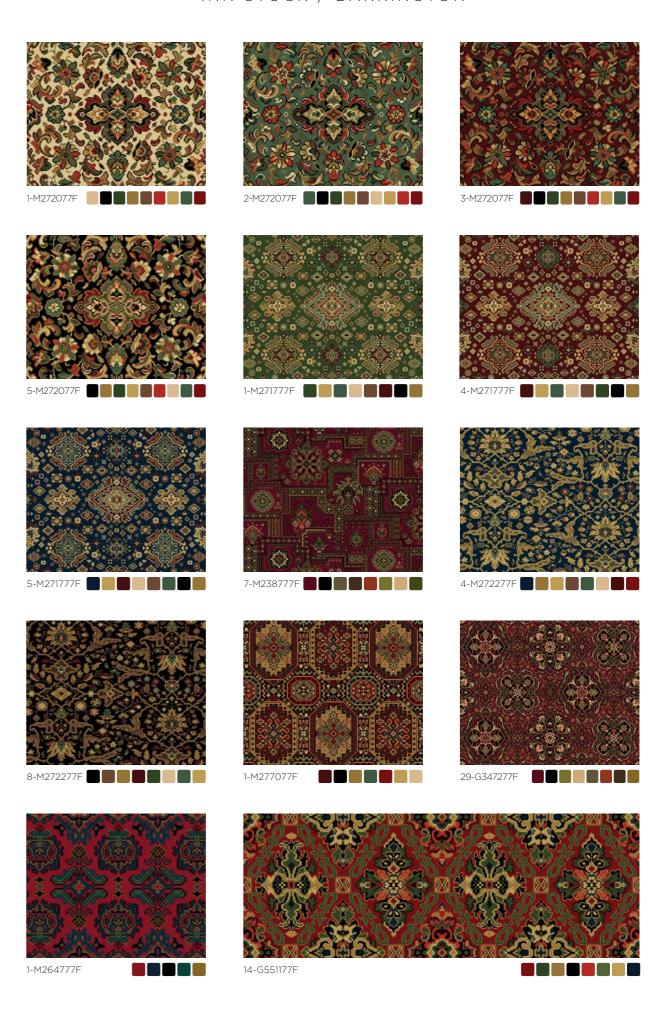




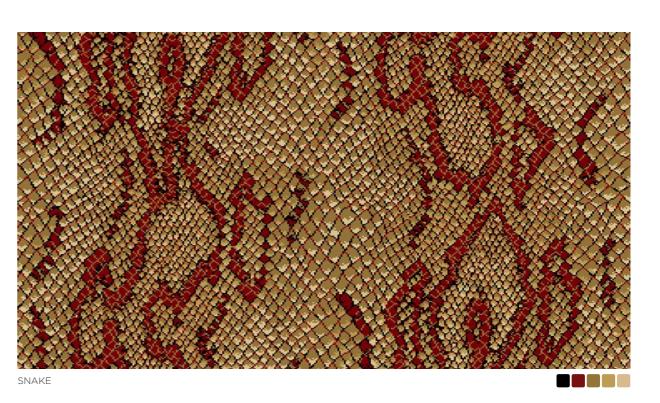




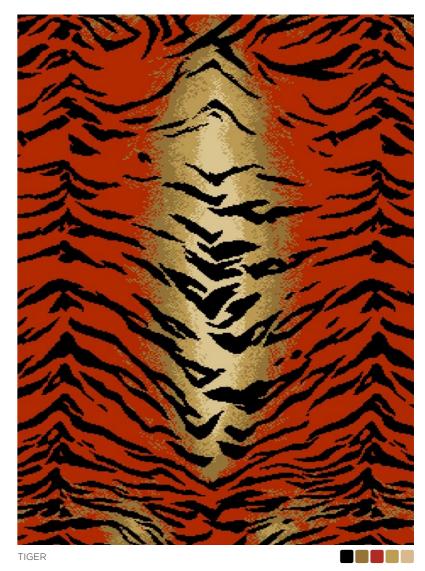




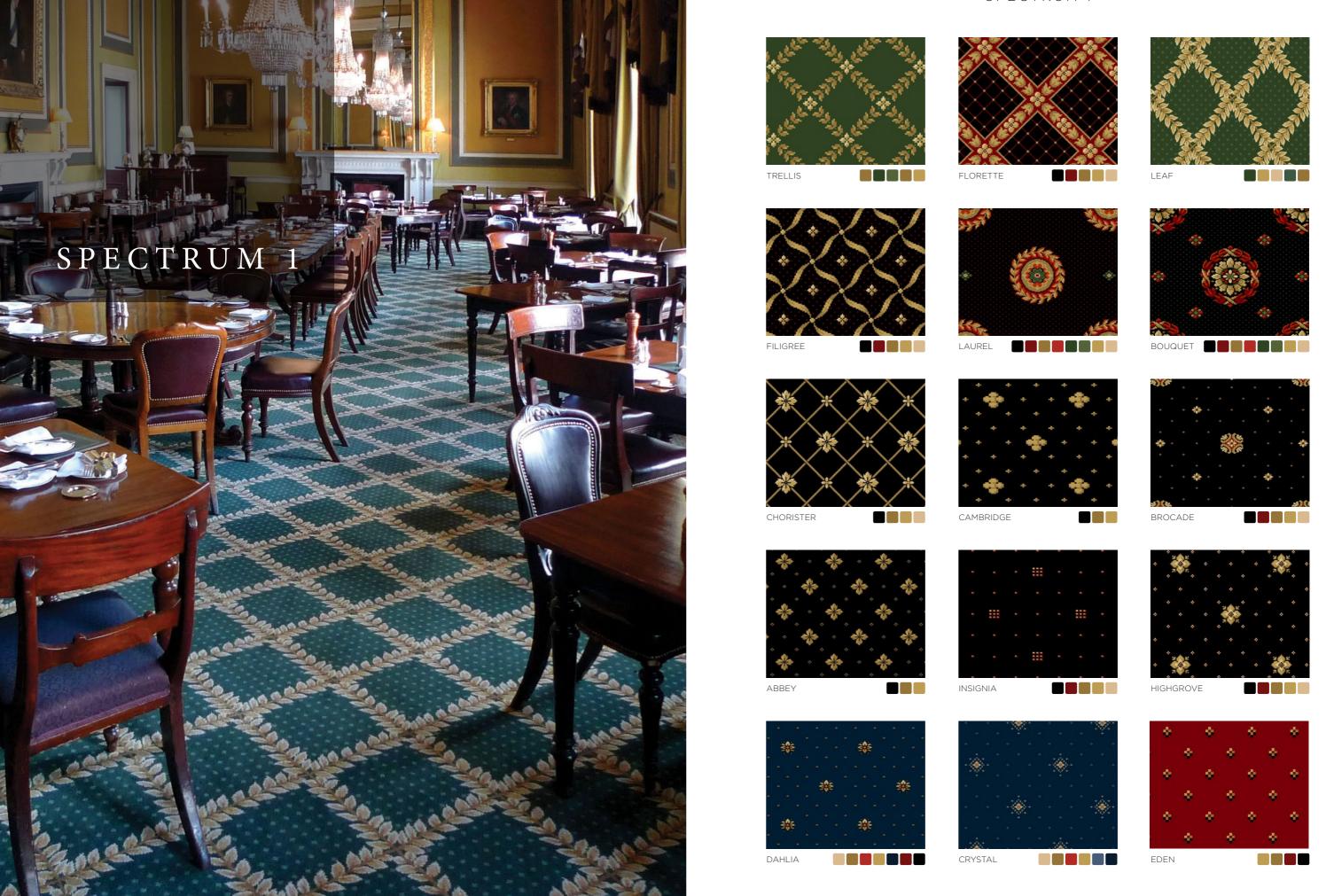




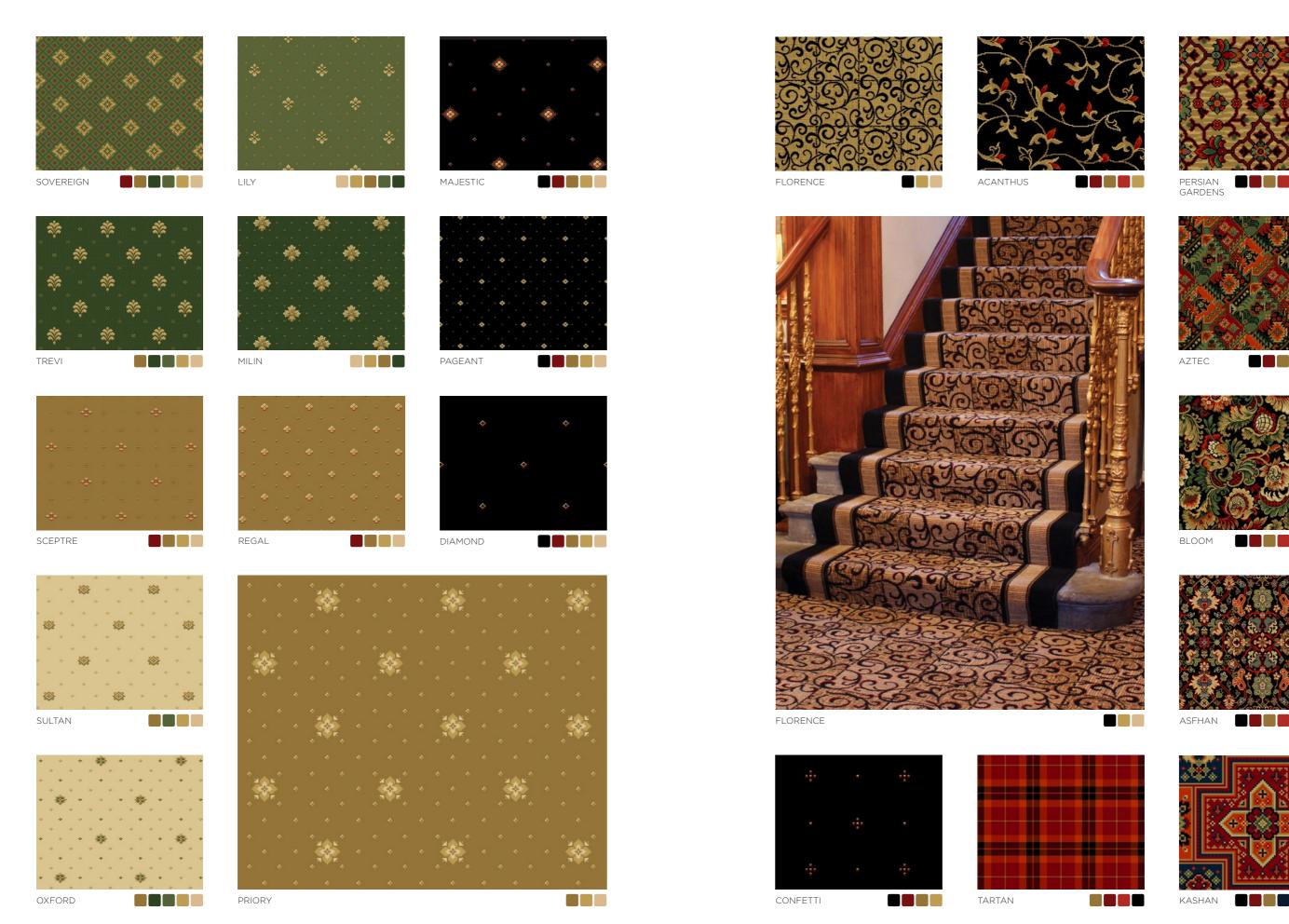




SPECTRUM 1



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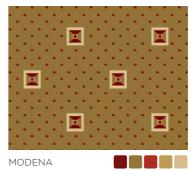


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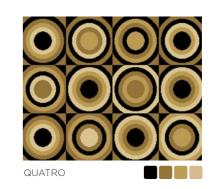


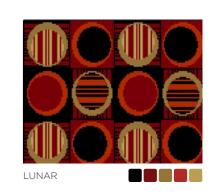








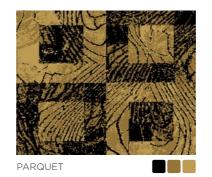


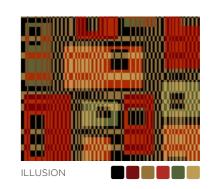






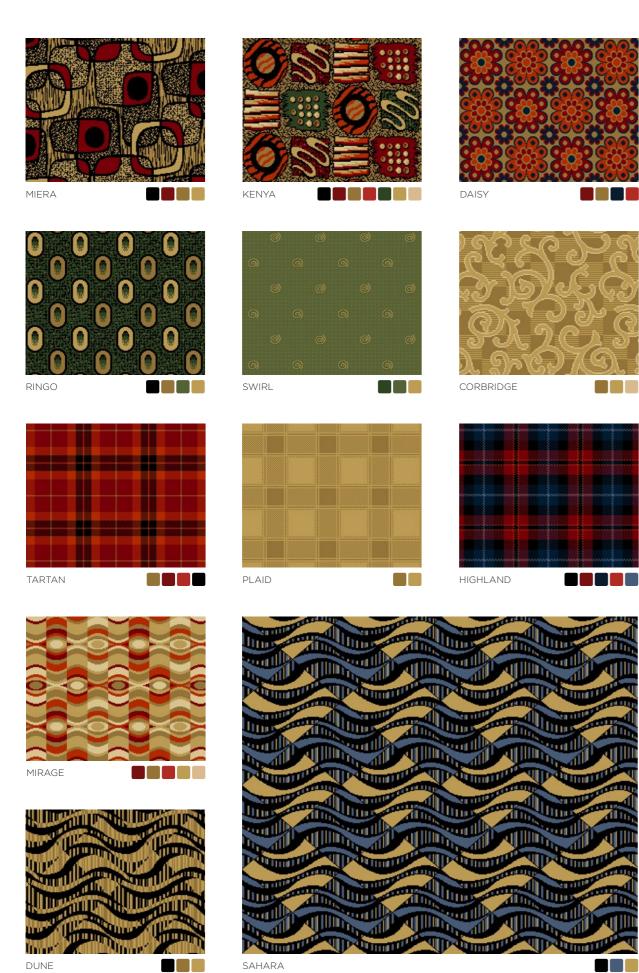


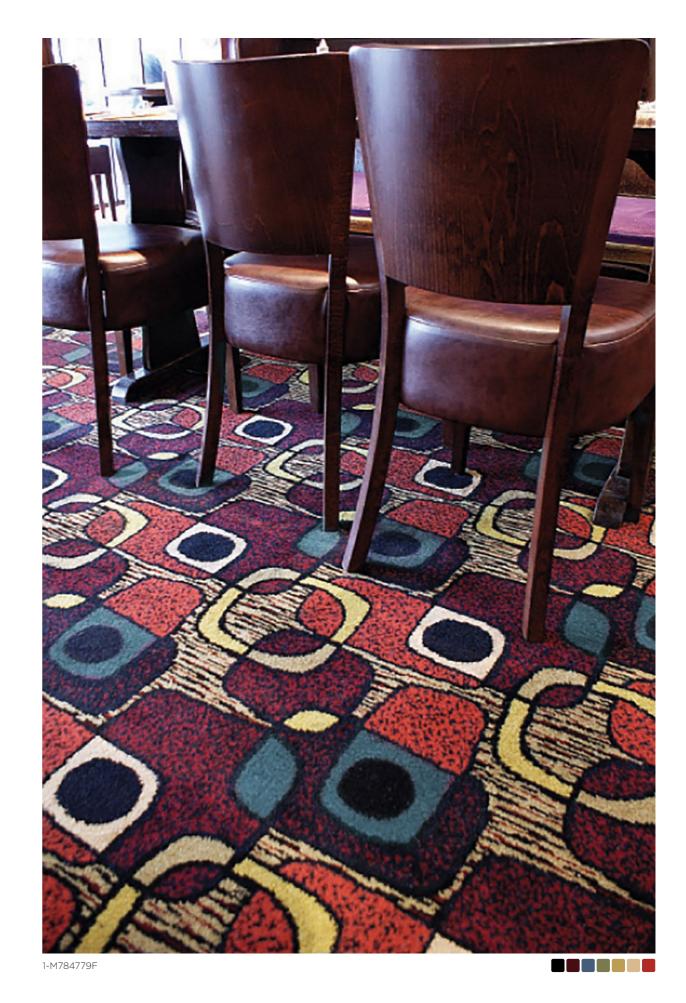




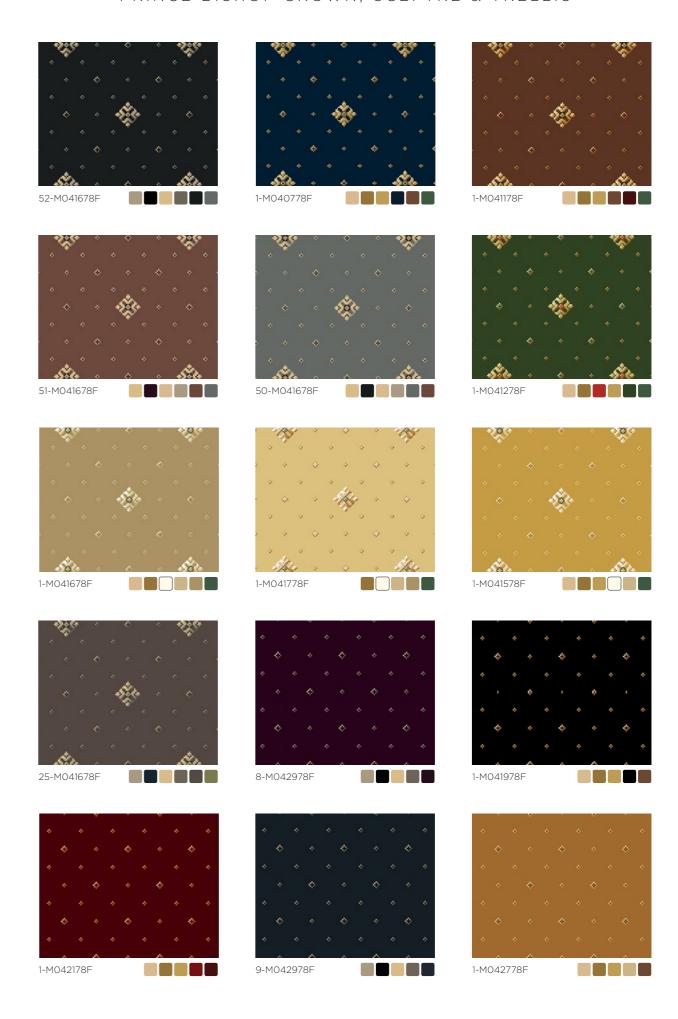


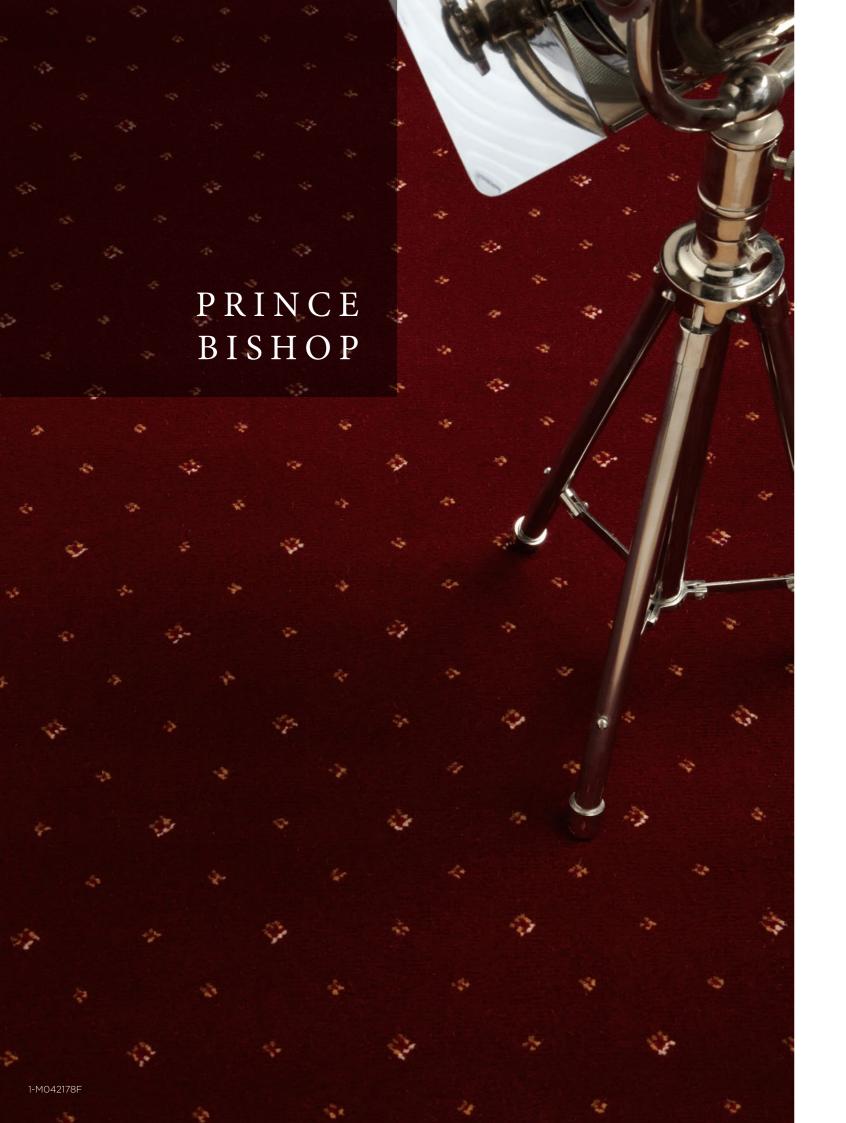
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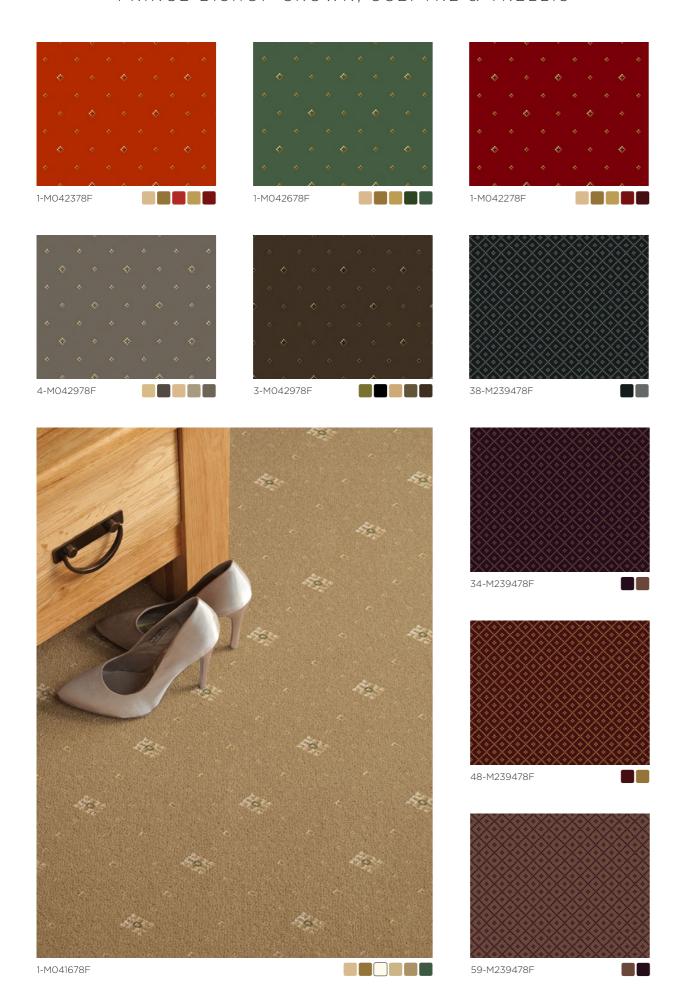


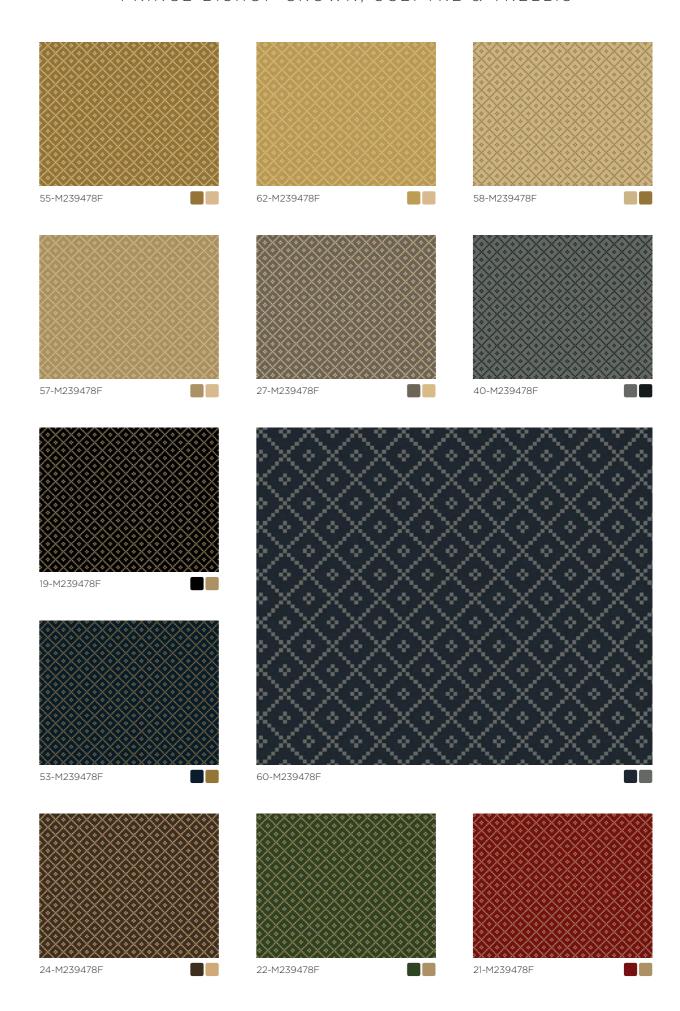


PRINCE BISHOP CROWN, SCEPTRE & TRELLIS





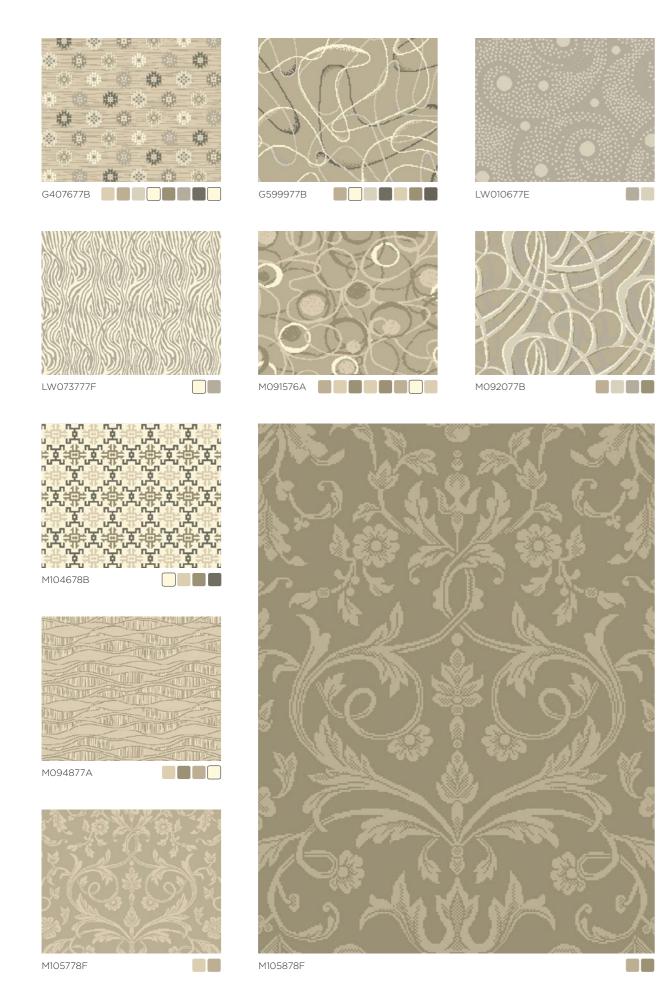


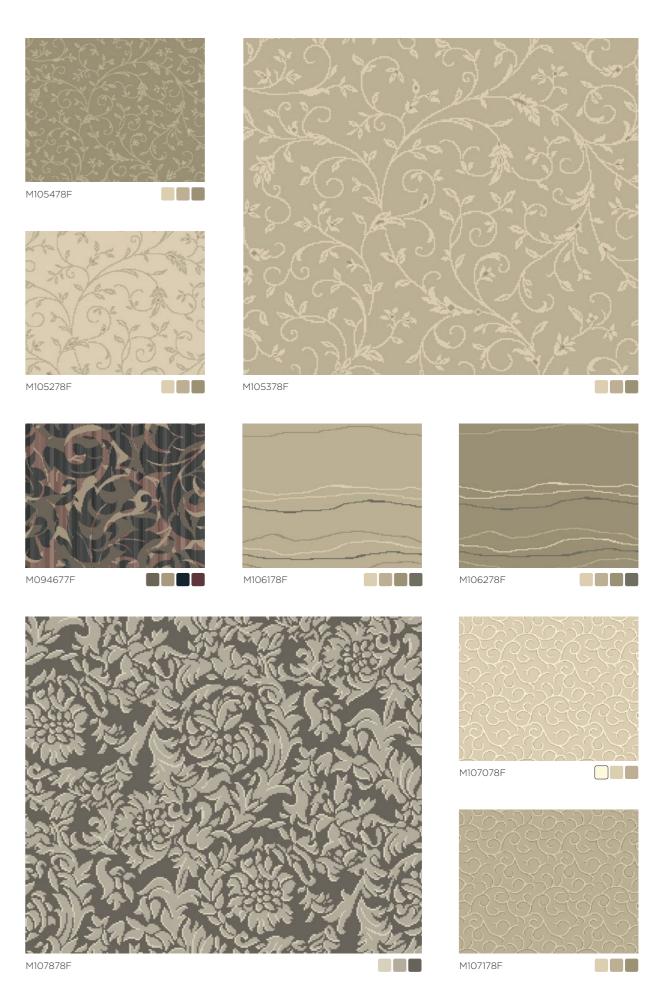


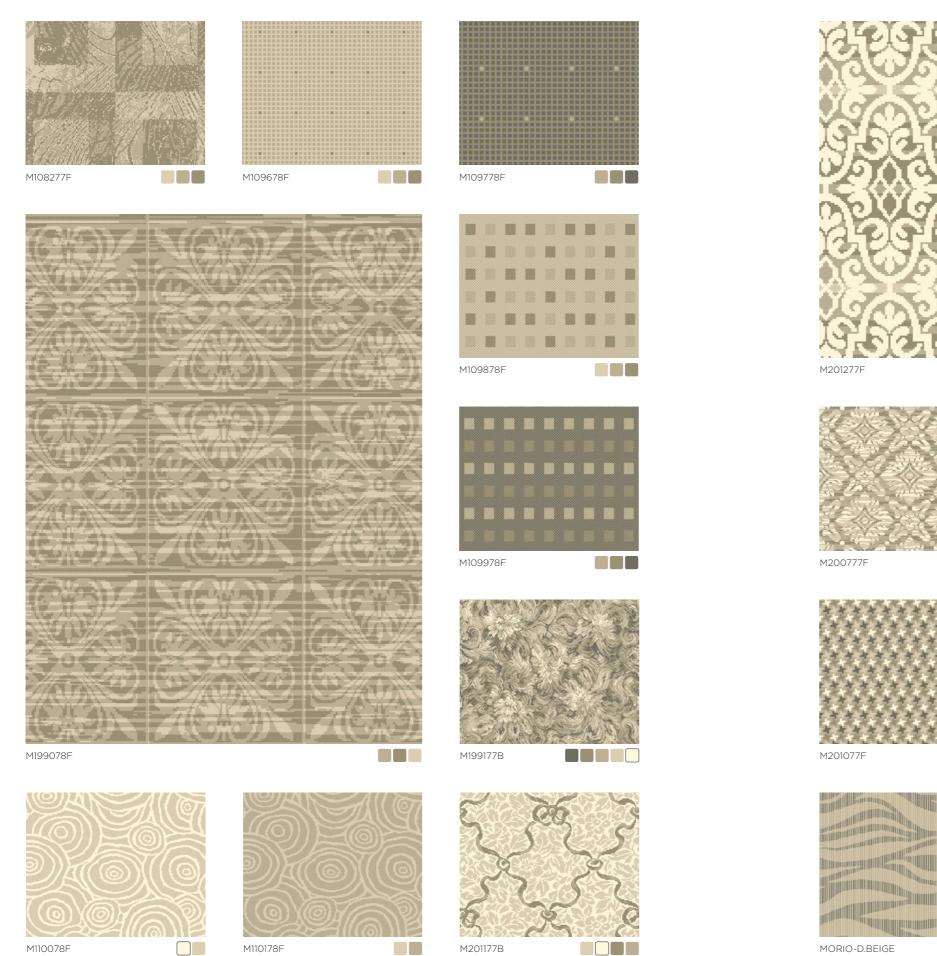






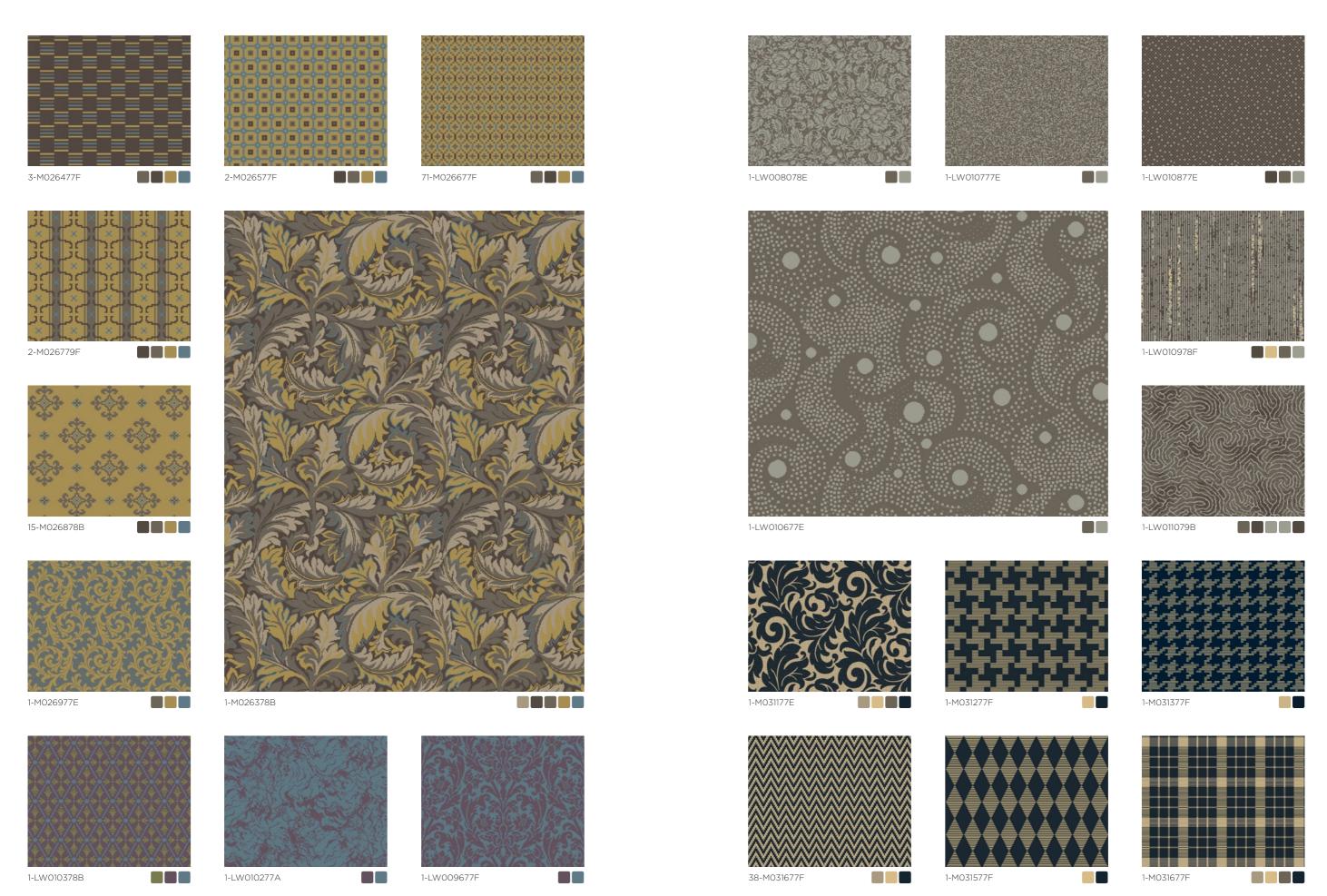


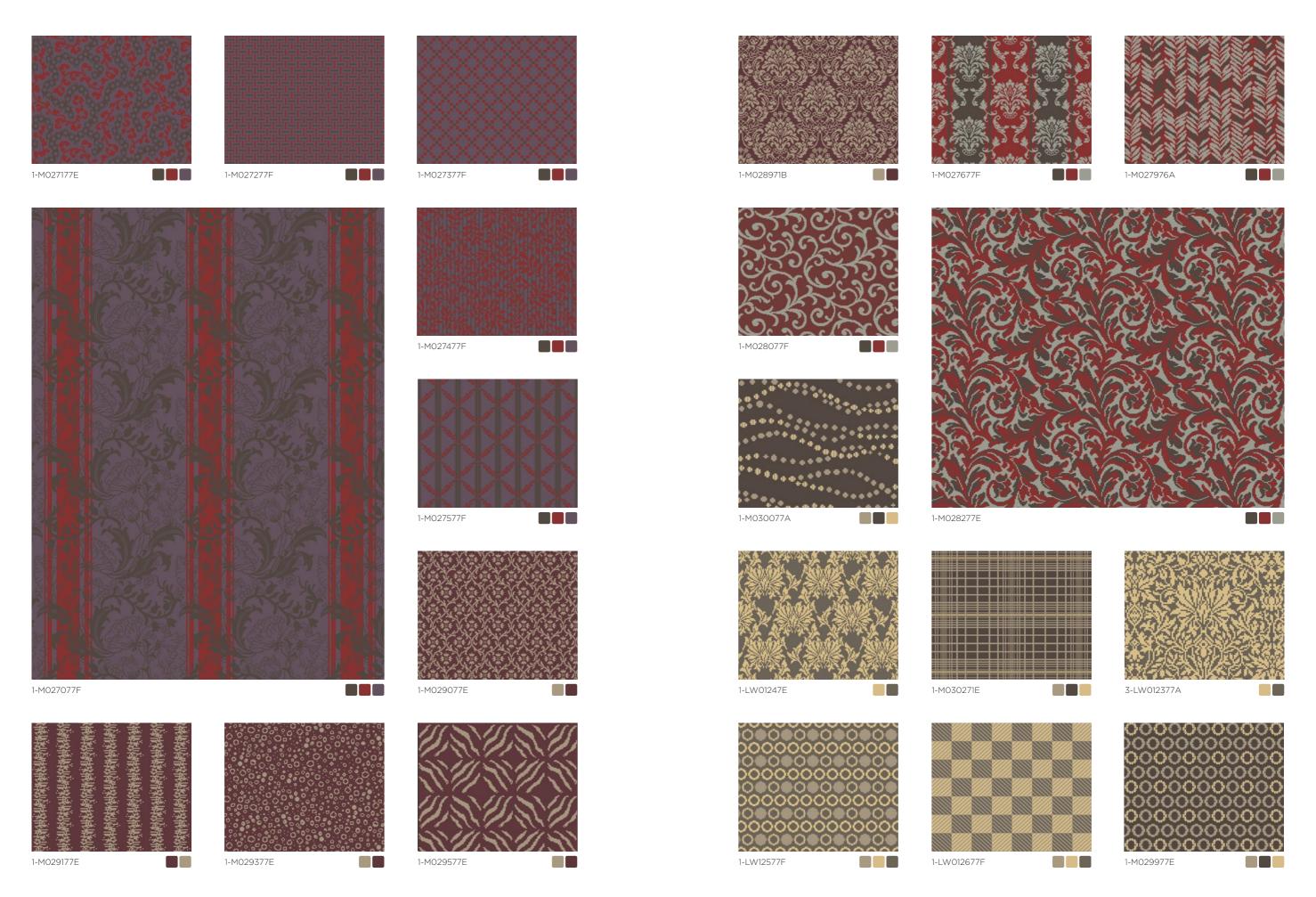


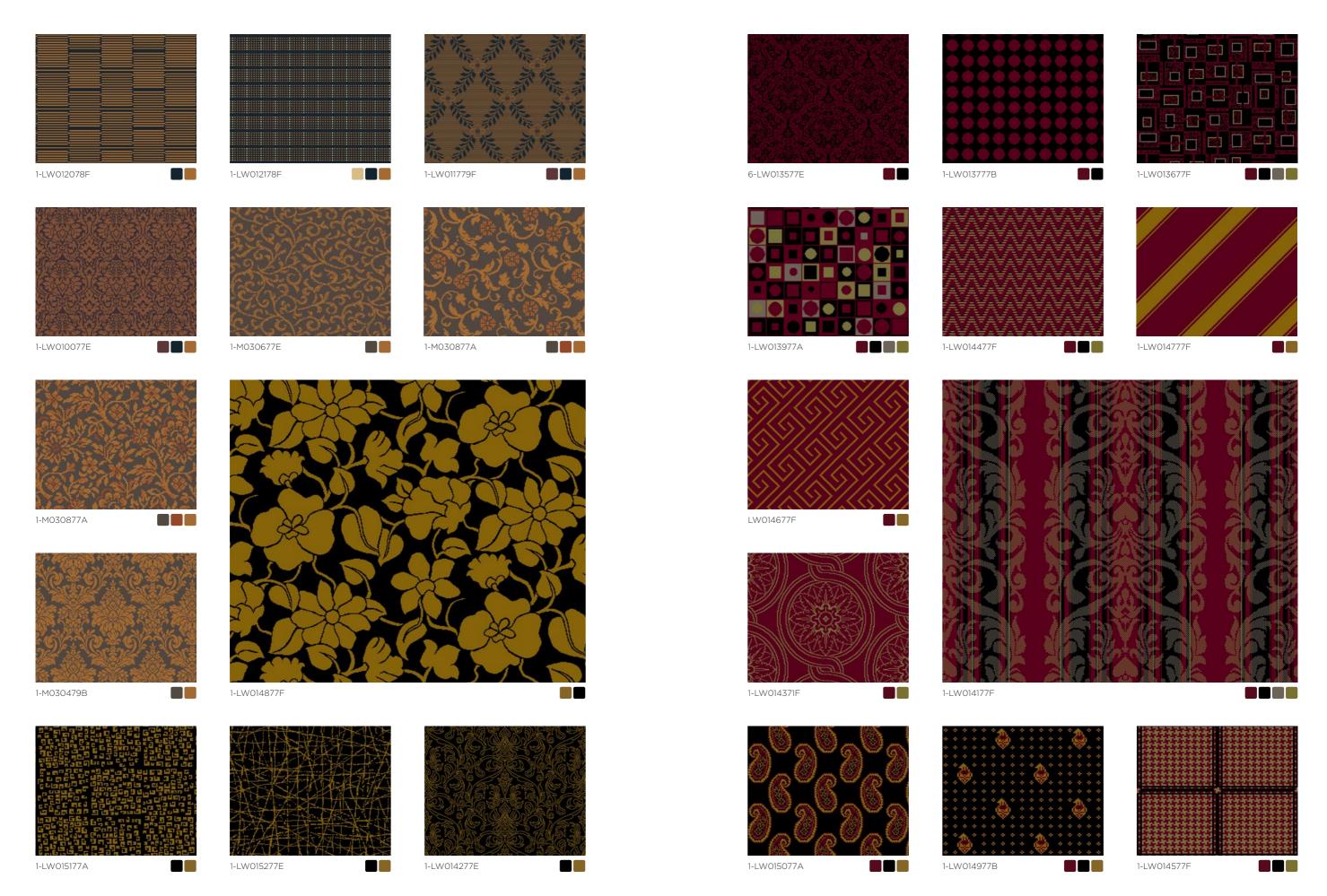












DURHAM CATHEDRAL COLLECTION





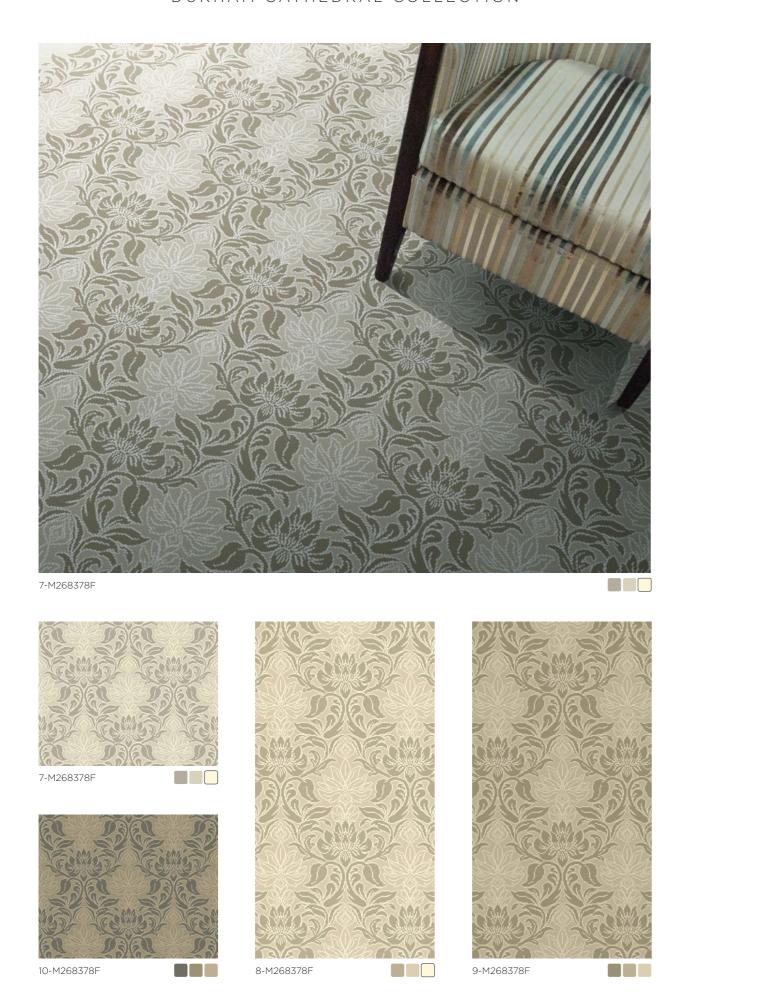




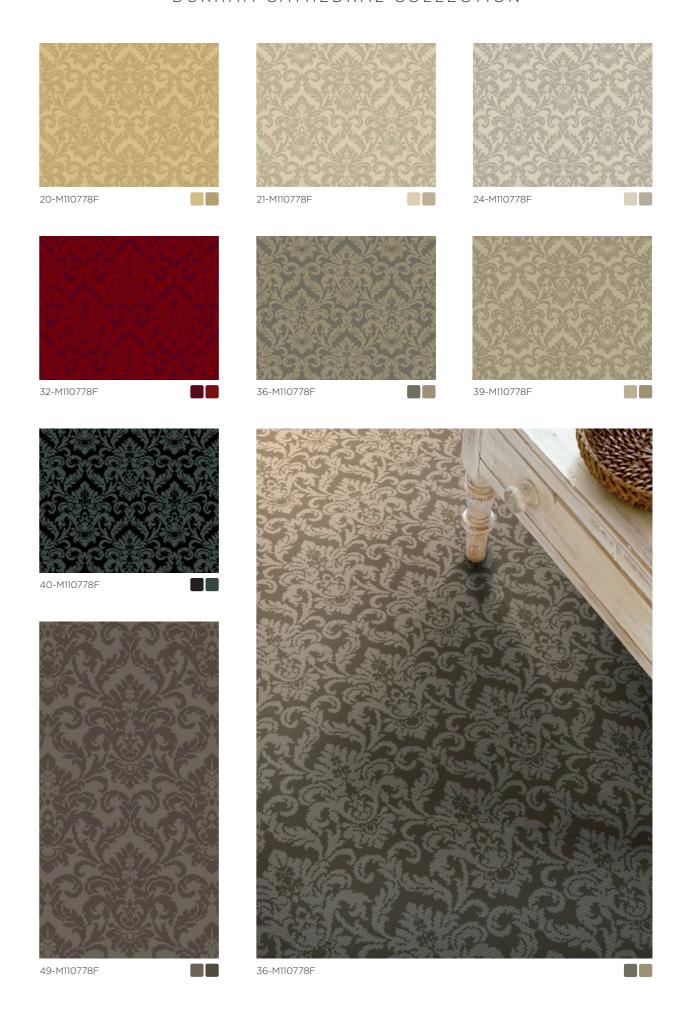




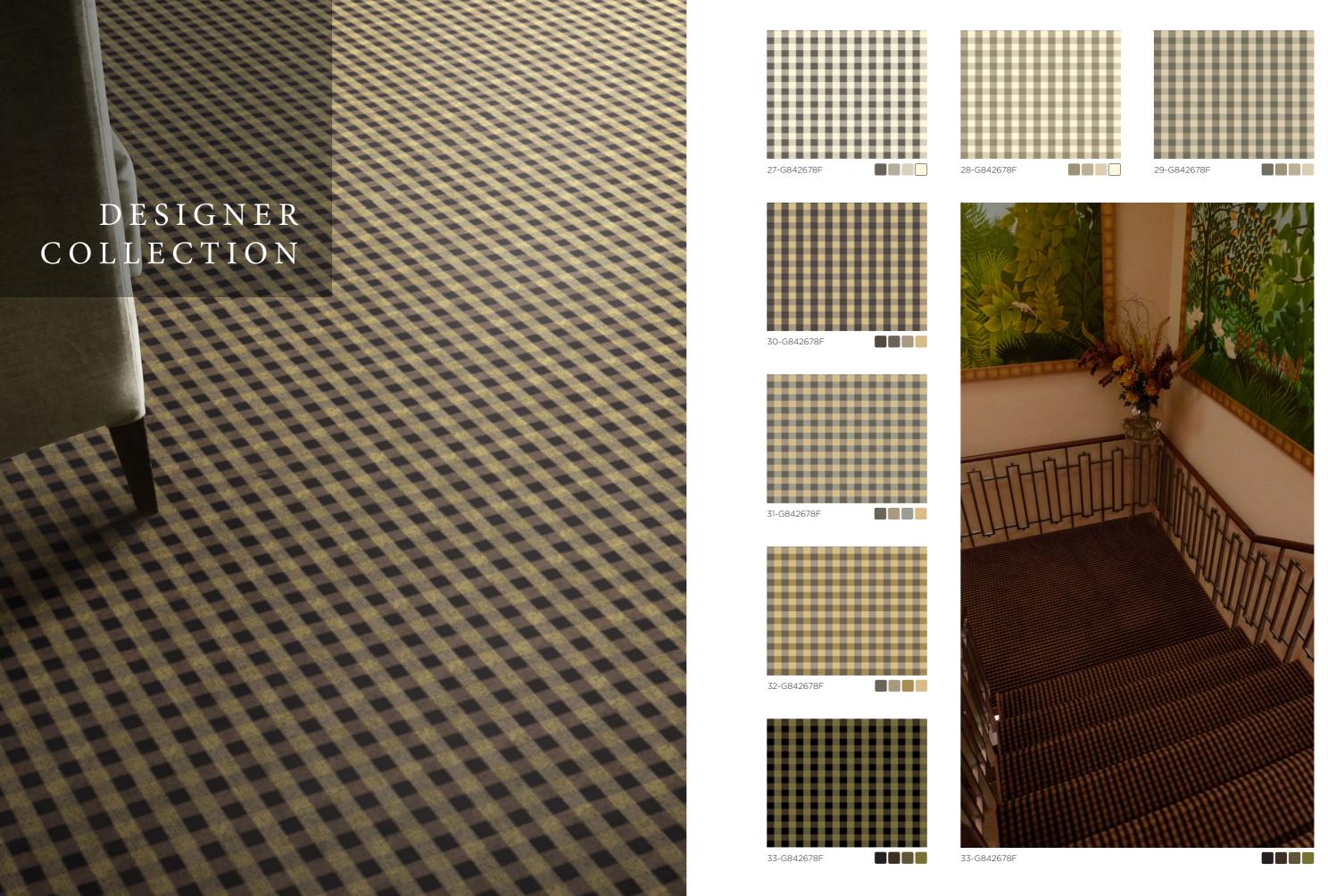




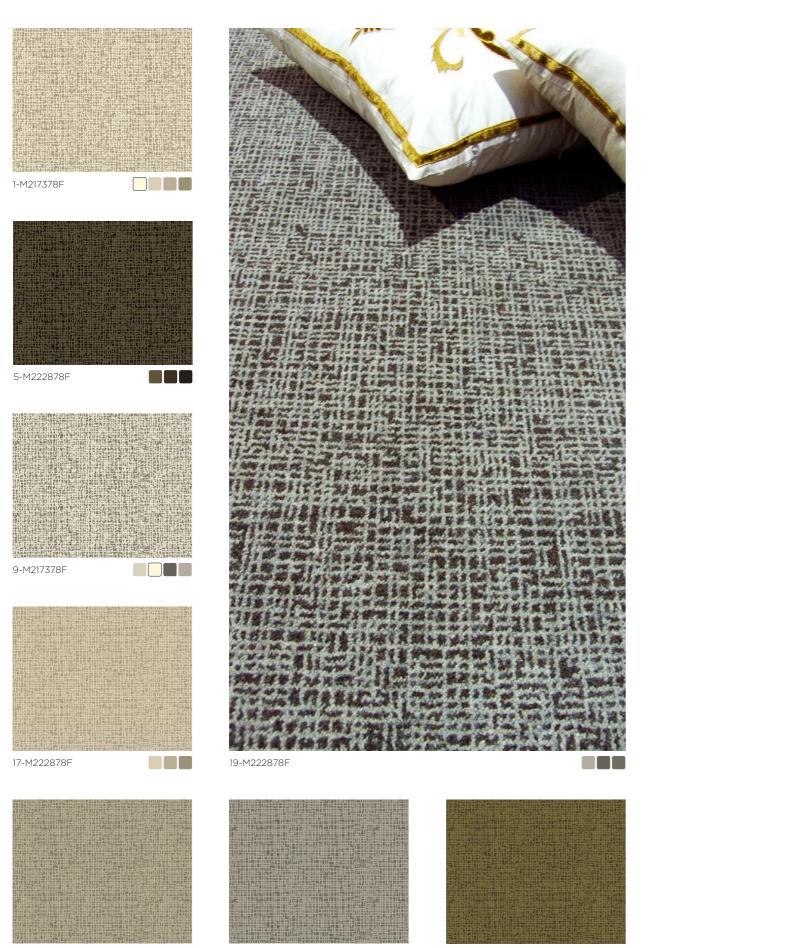
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DESIGNER COLLECTION



DESIGNER COLLECTION DESIGNER COLLECTION



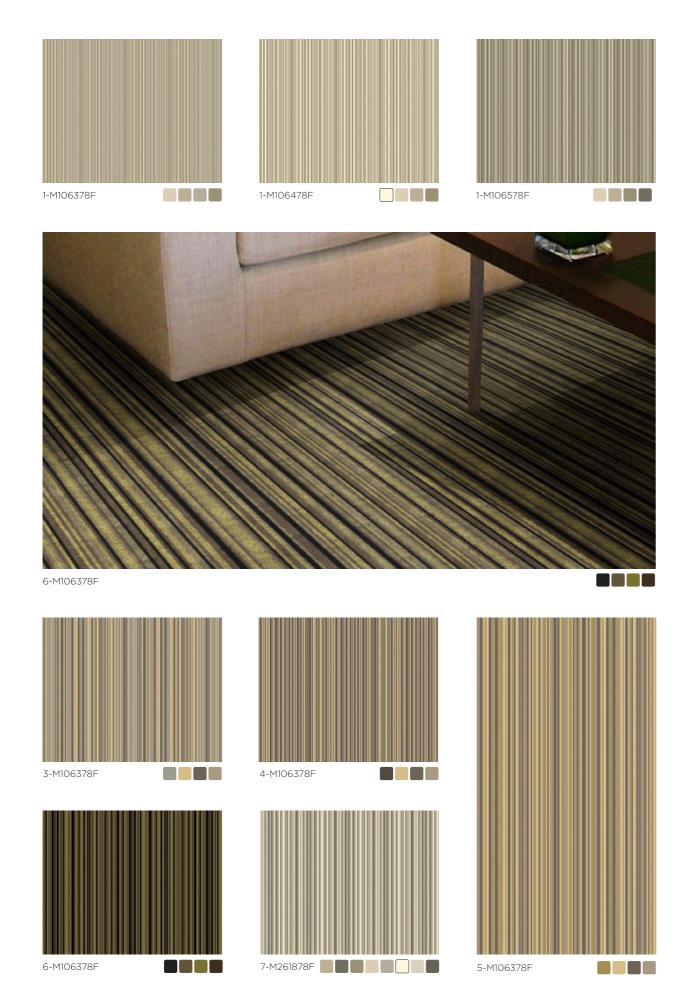
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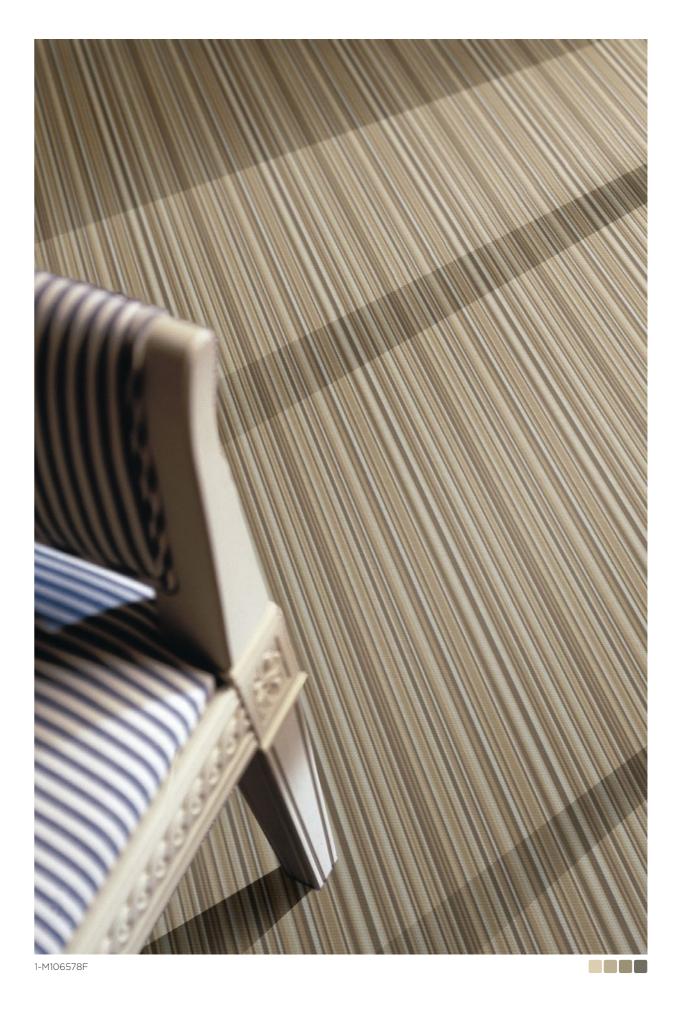
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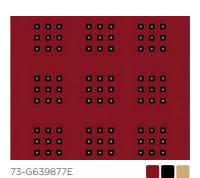
























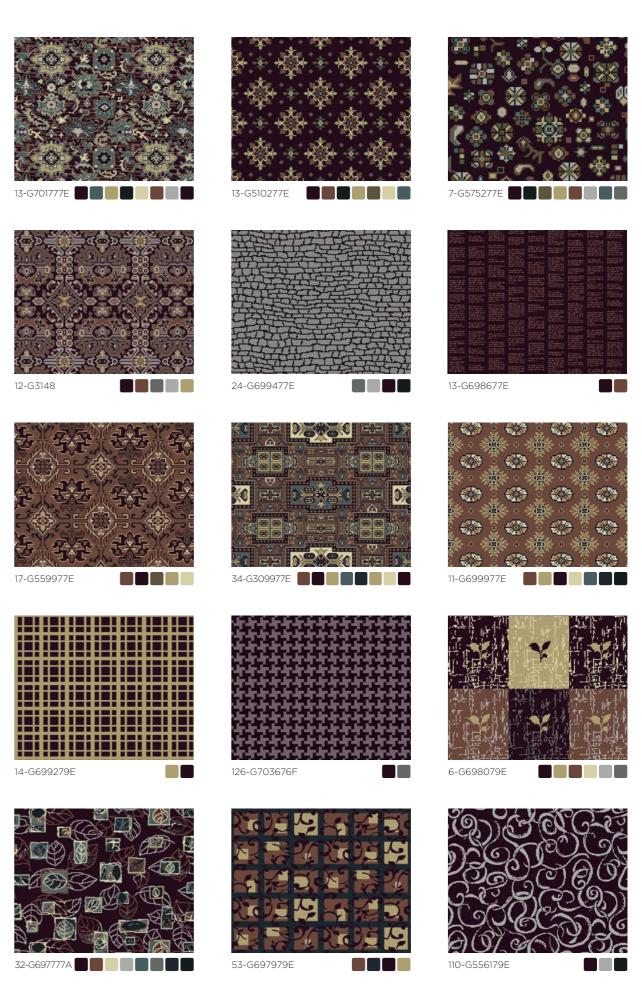


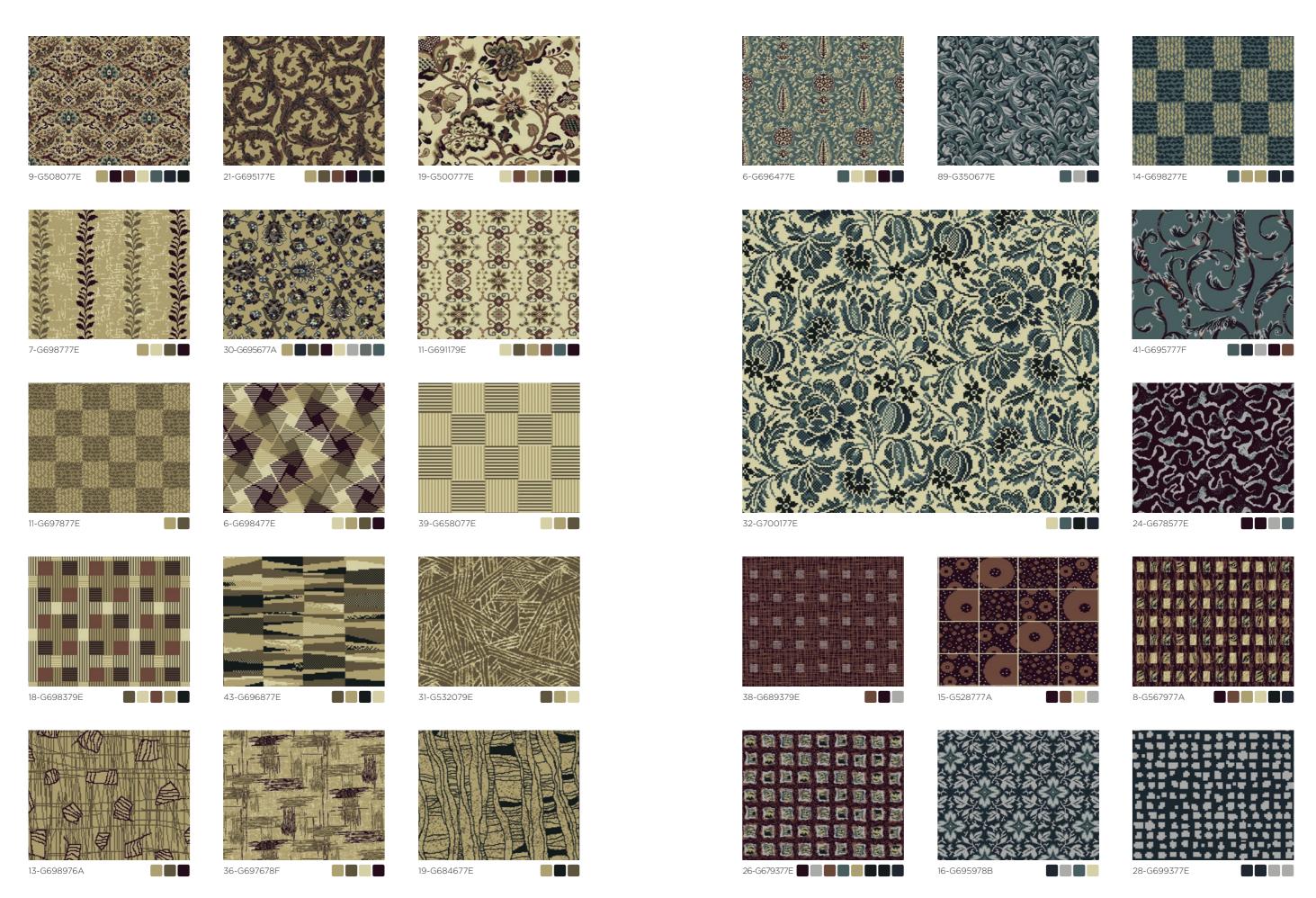


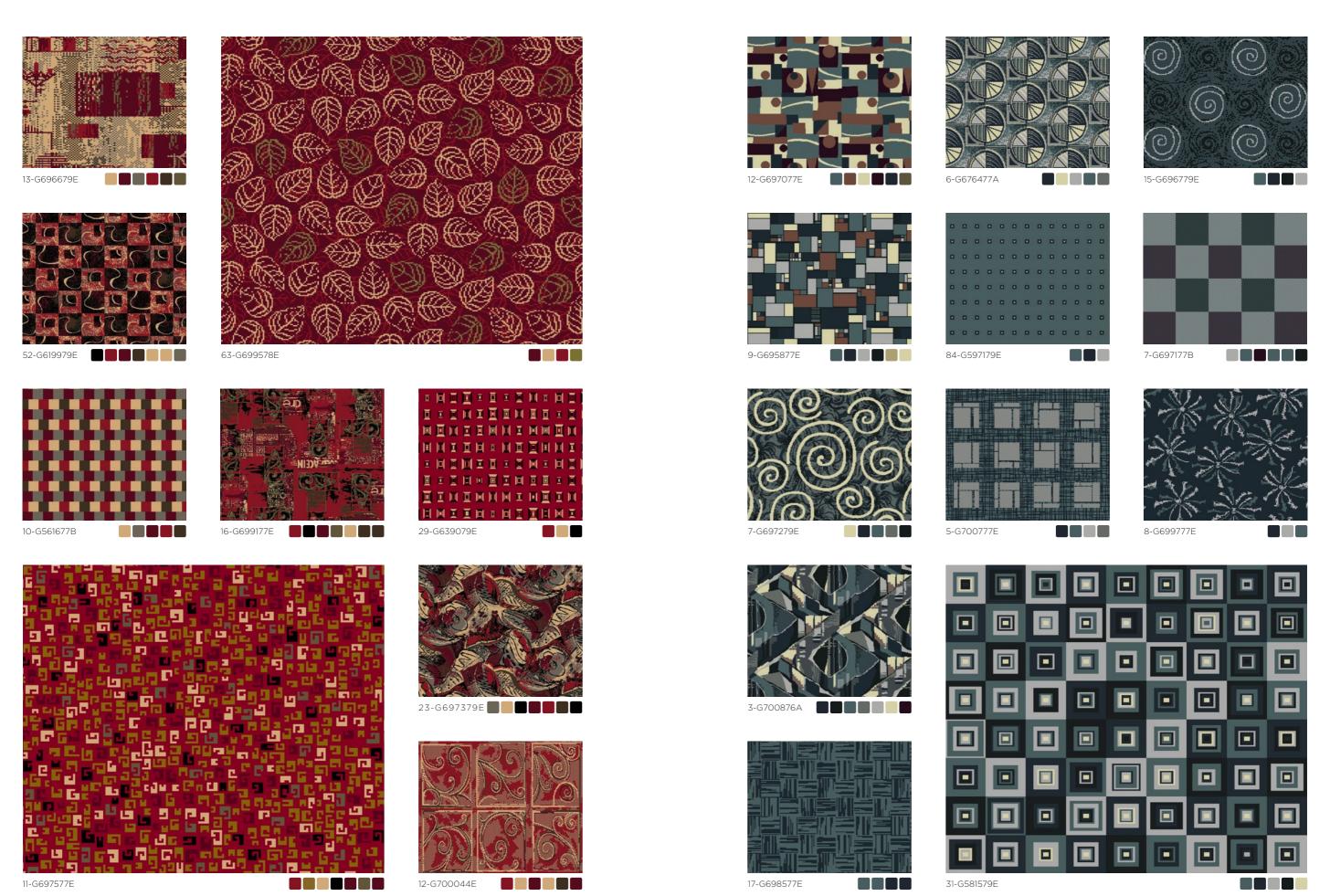


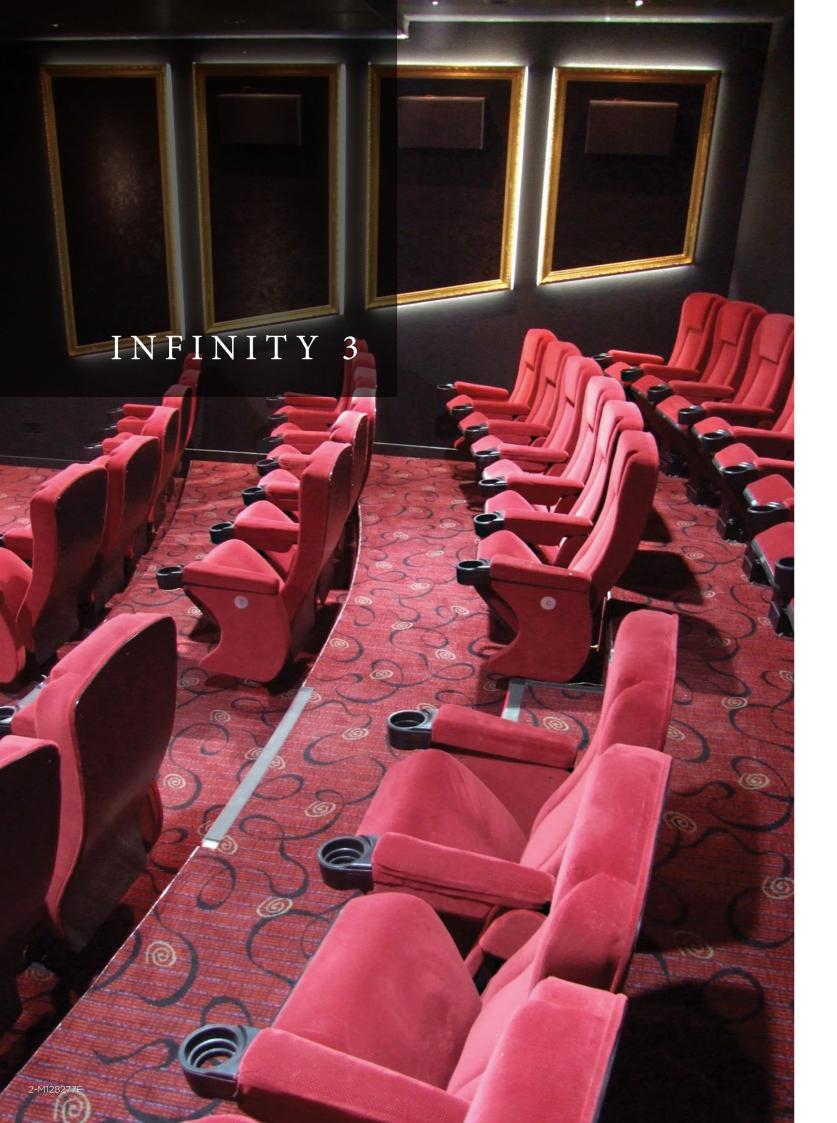


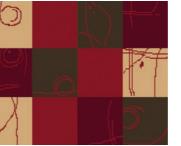












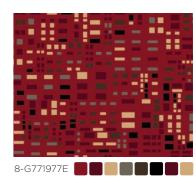




















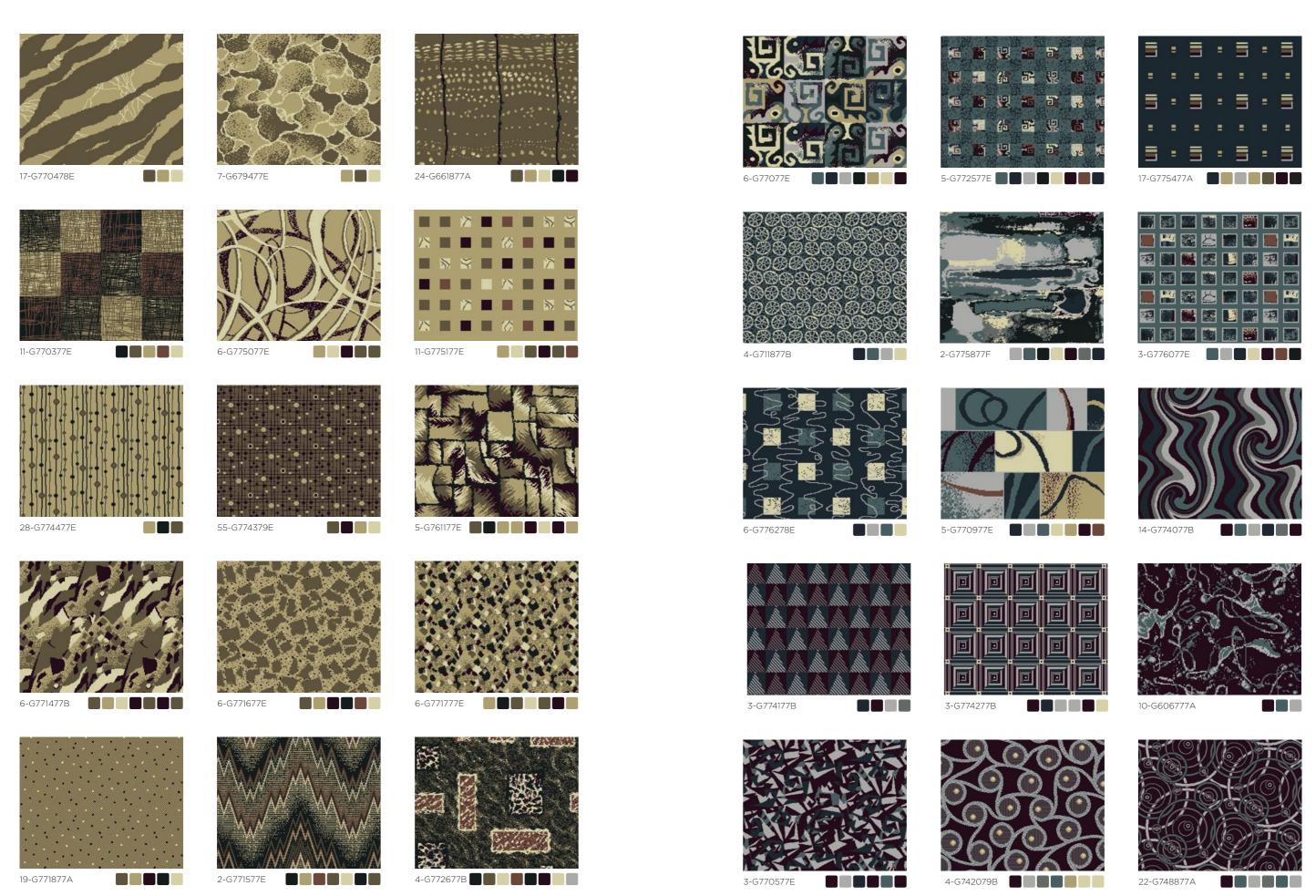


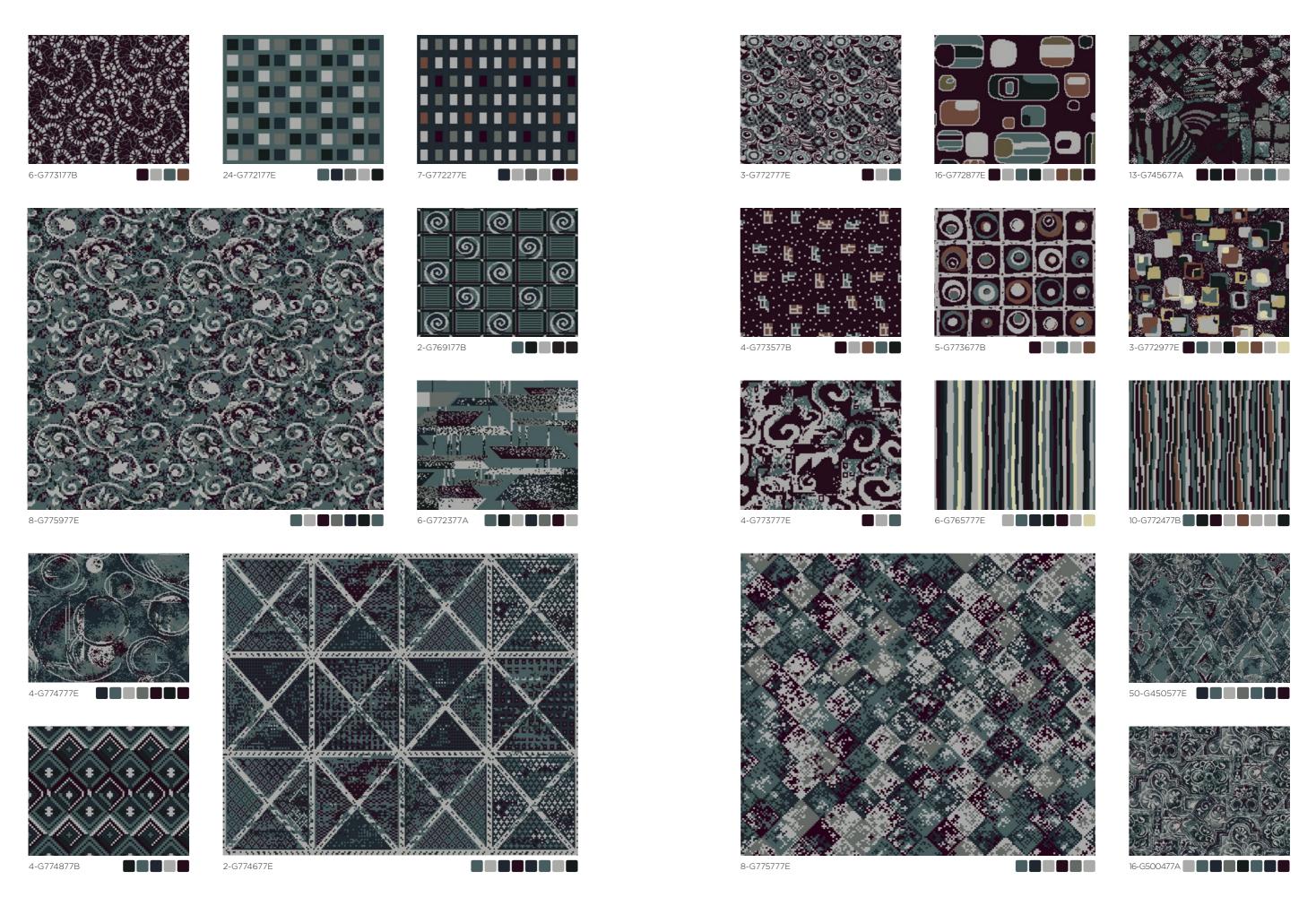


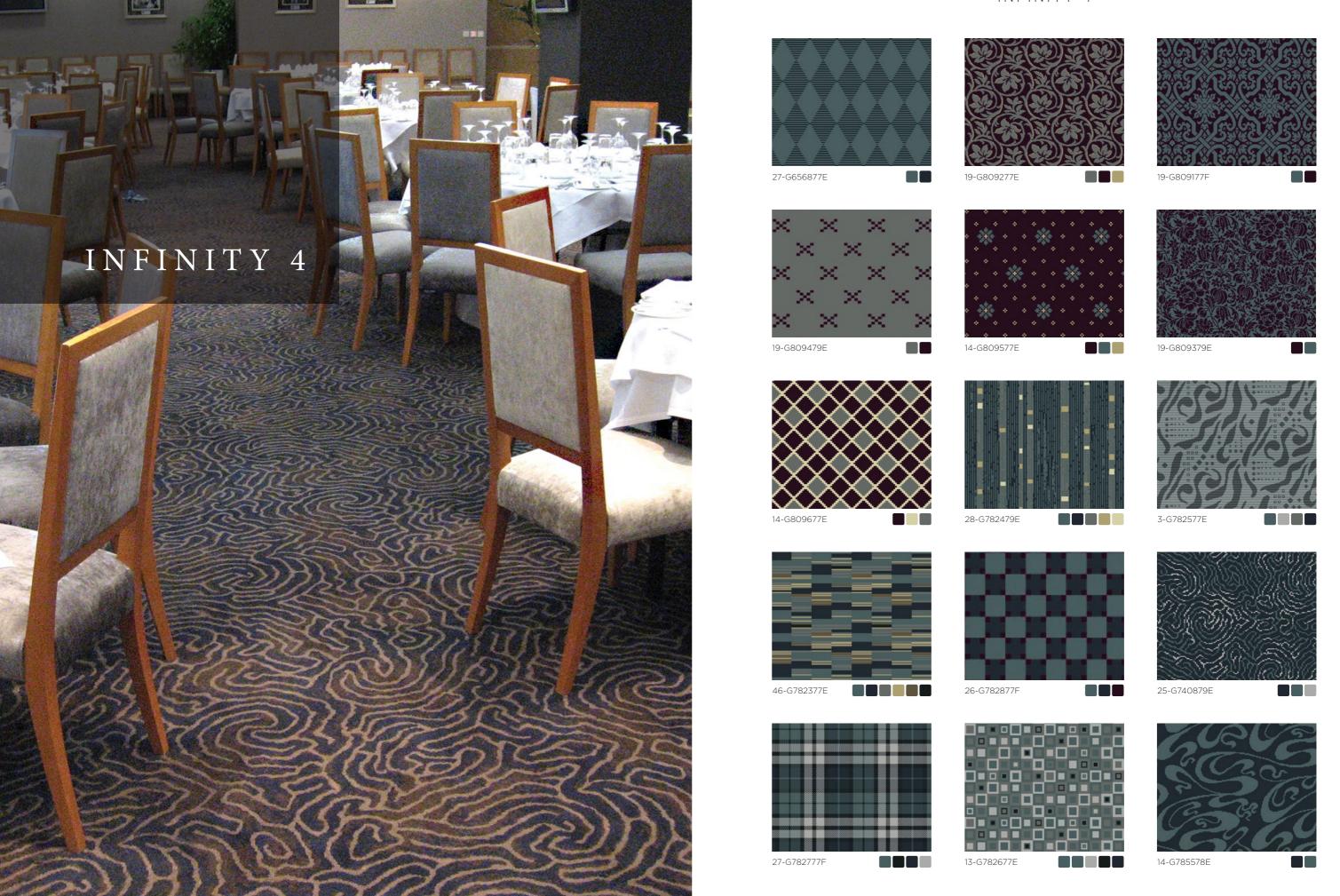


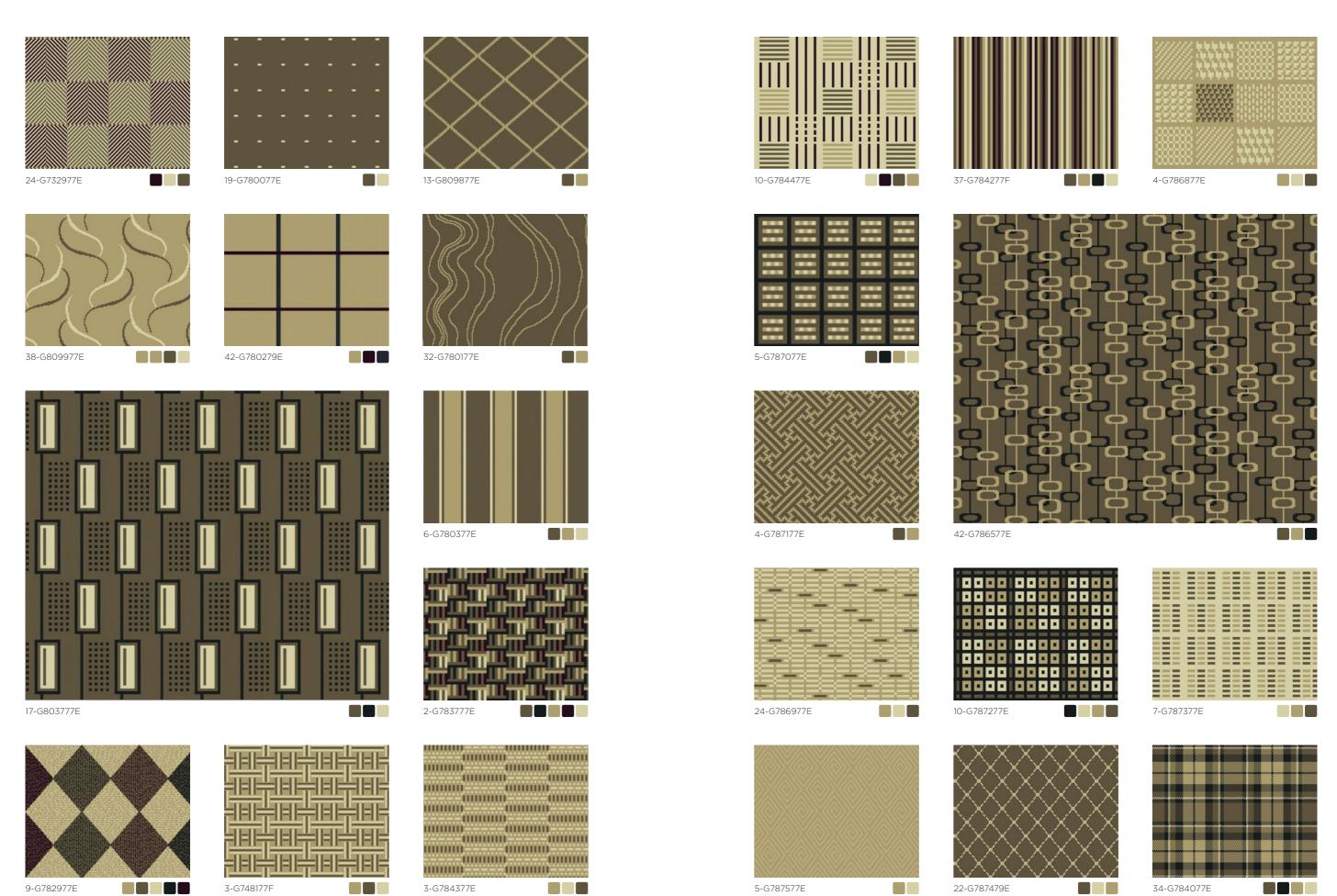


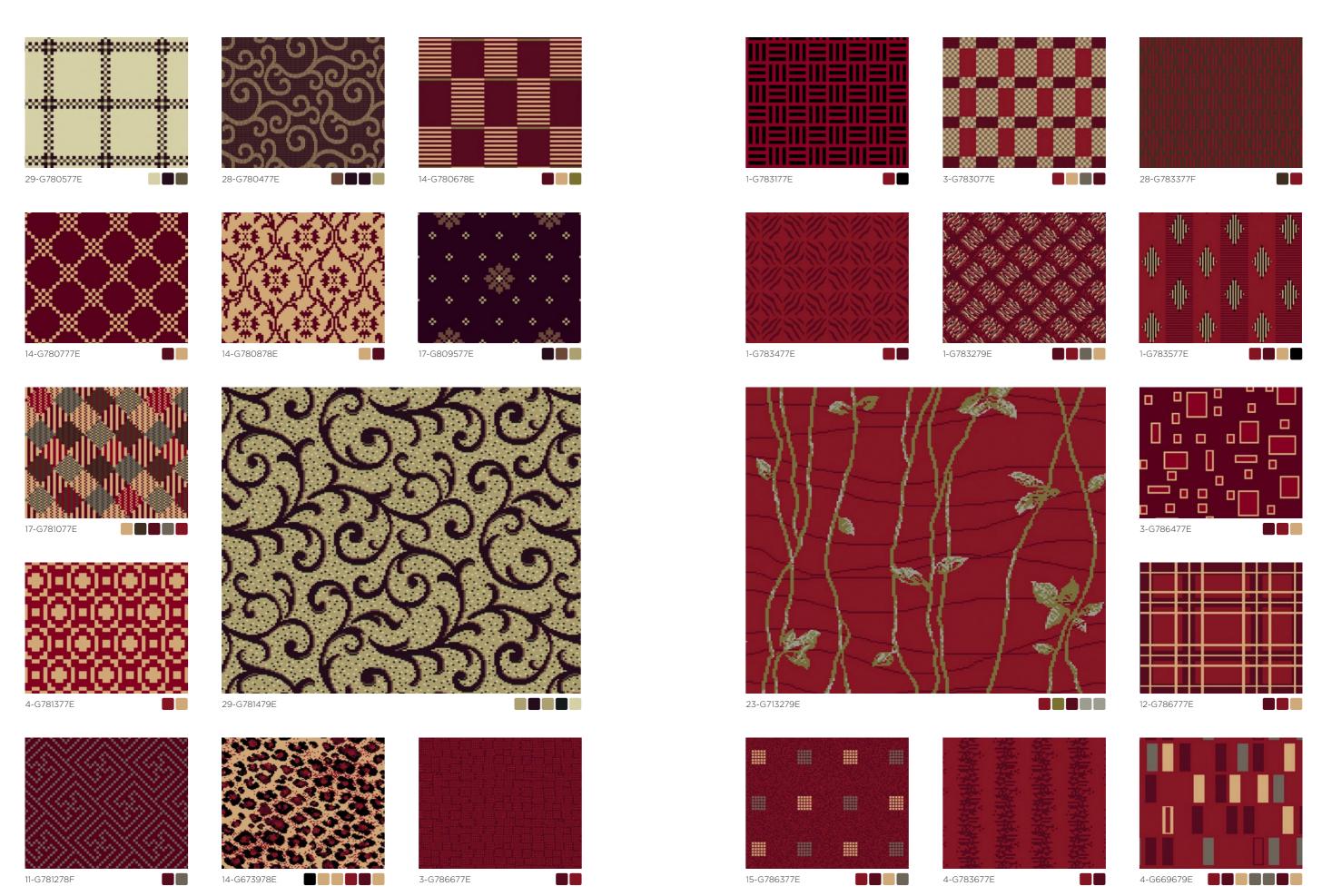


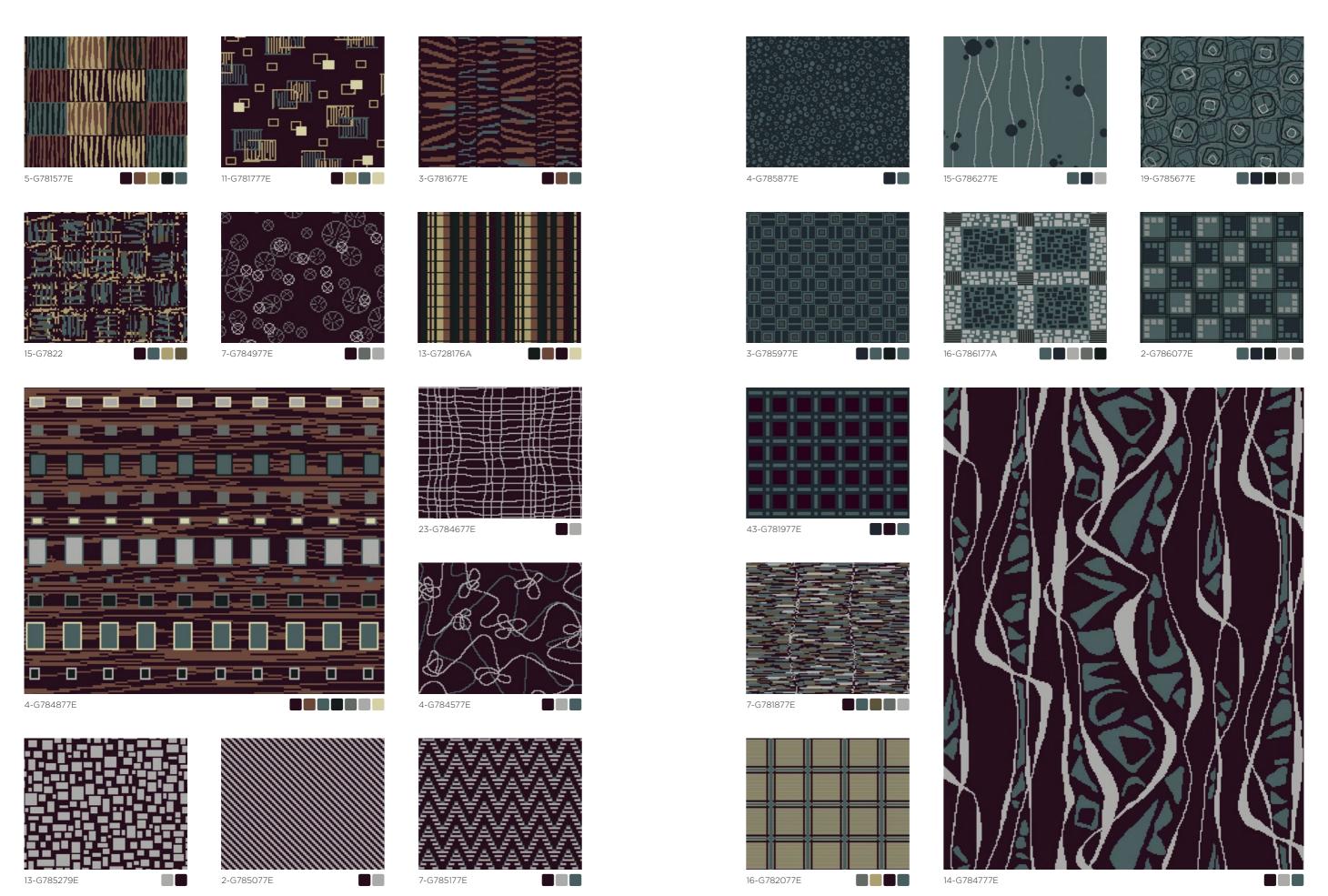








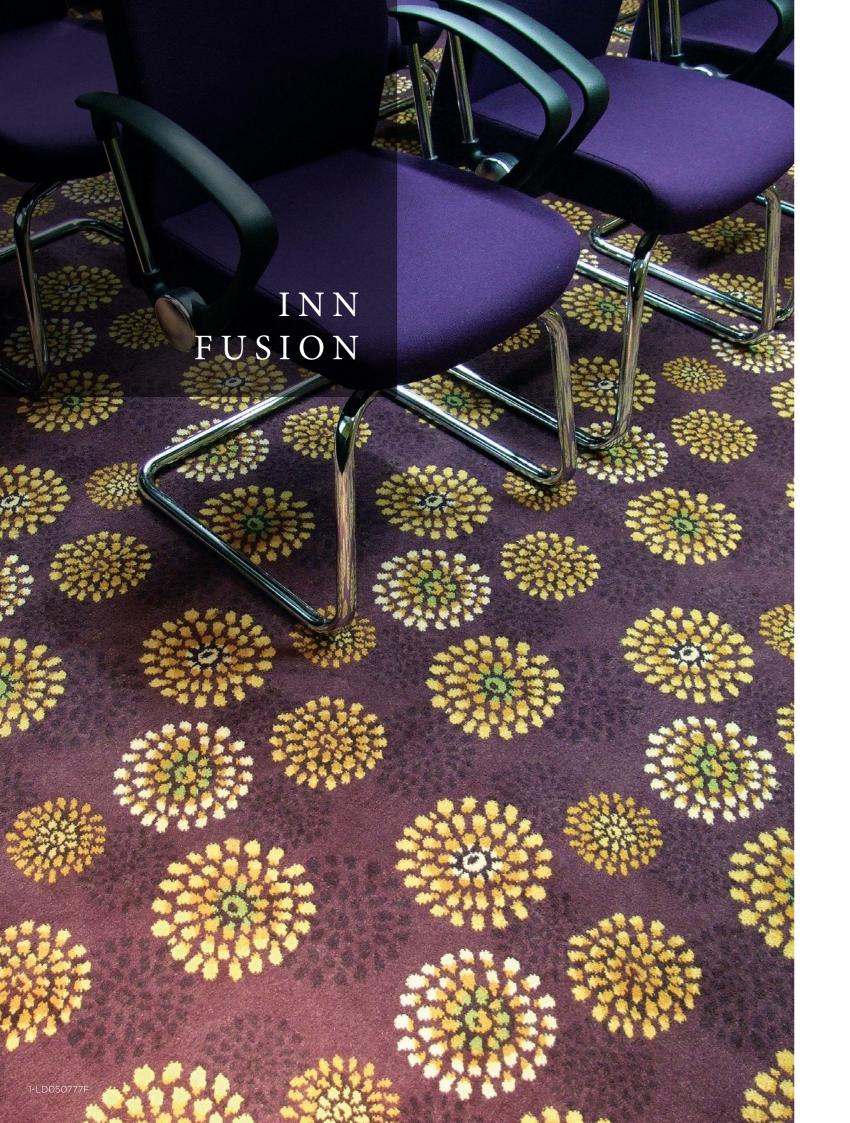




TONES



INN FUSION





1-M176077F PANACHE



1-M173677F CARNABY



1-M094677F CARLTON



1-M187577F MEMPHIS



1-M175277F WHIRLPOOL





1-M193377F CUBUS



1-M158277F SUNBURST



1-M189977F COSMOS



1-M195477F ZEPHYR



1-M175777F CAMELIA



1-M186077F UMBRIA



1-M175677F REGAL



1-M193177F SOHO



1-M175877F ORBIT

STANDARD COLLECTION





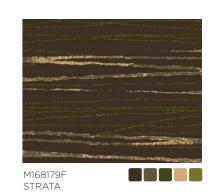










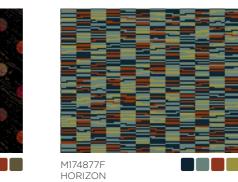












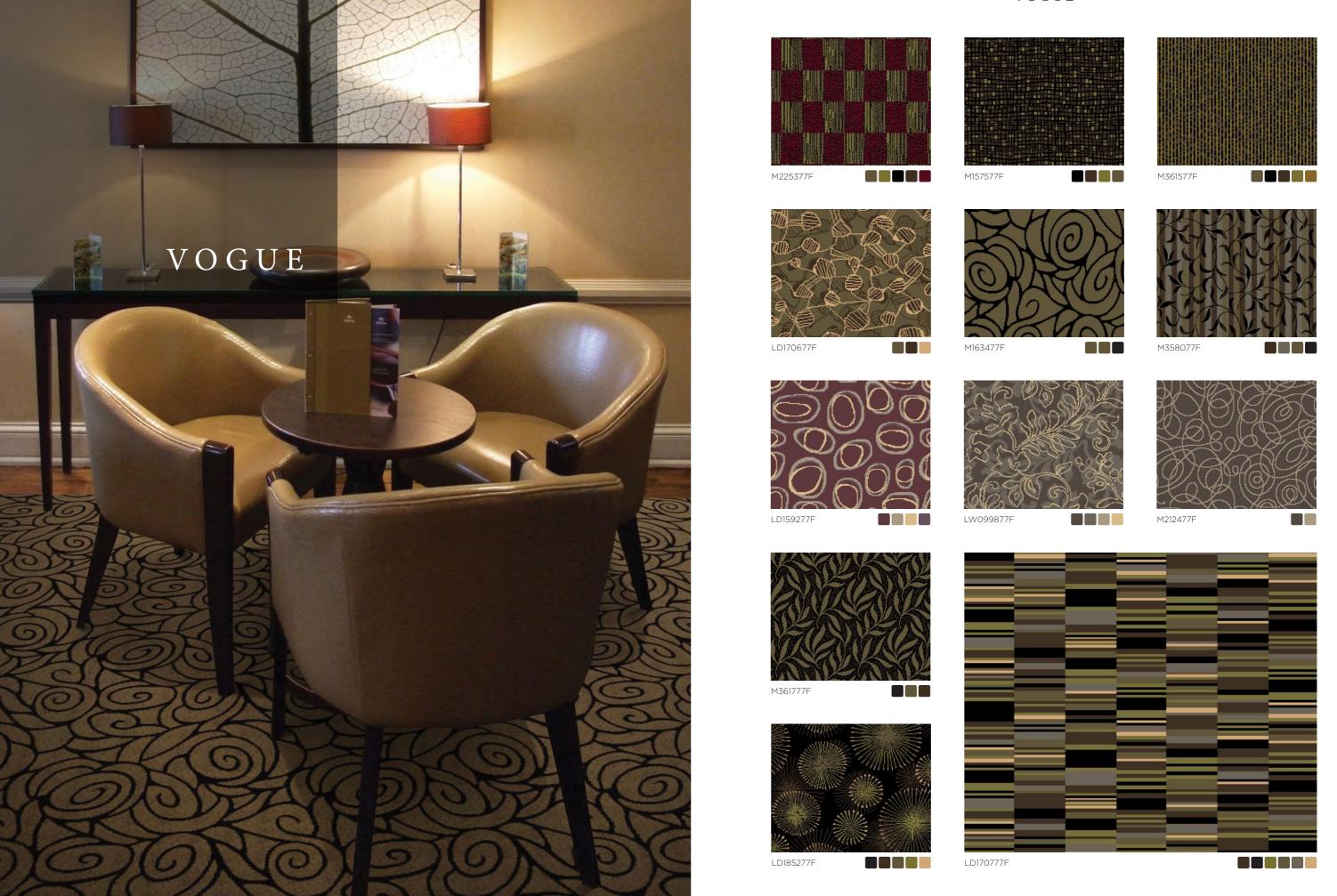




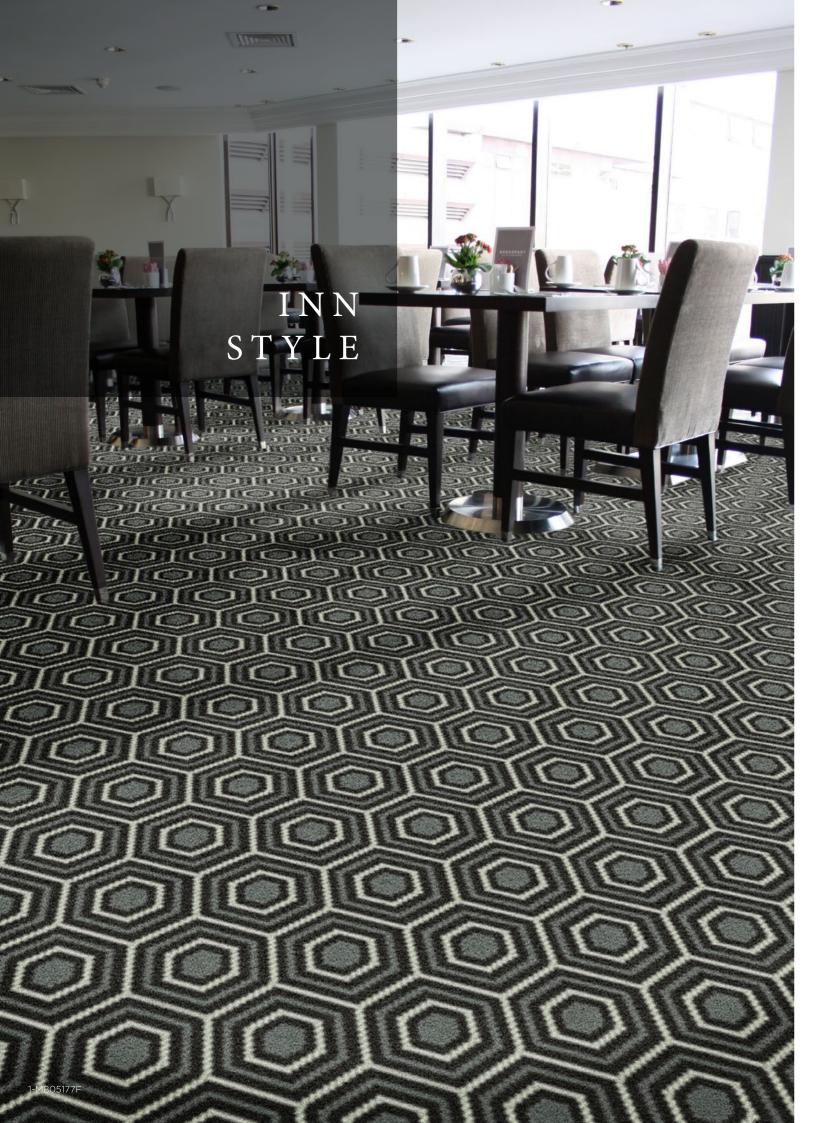




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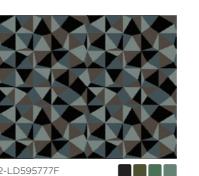
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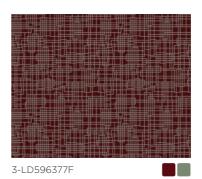








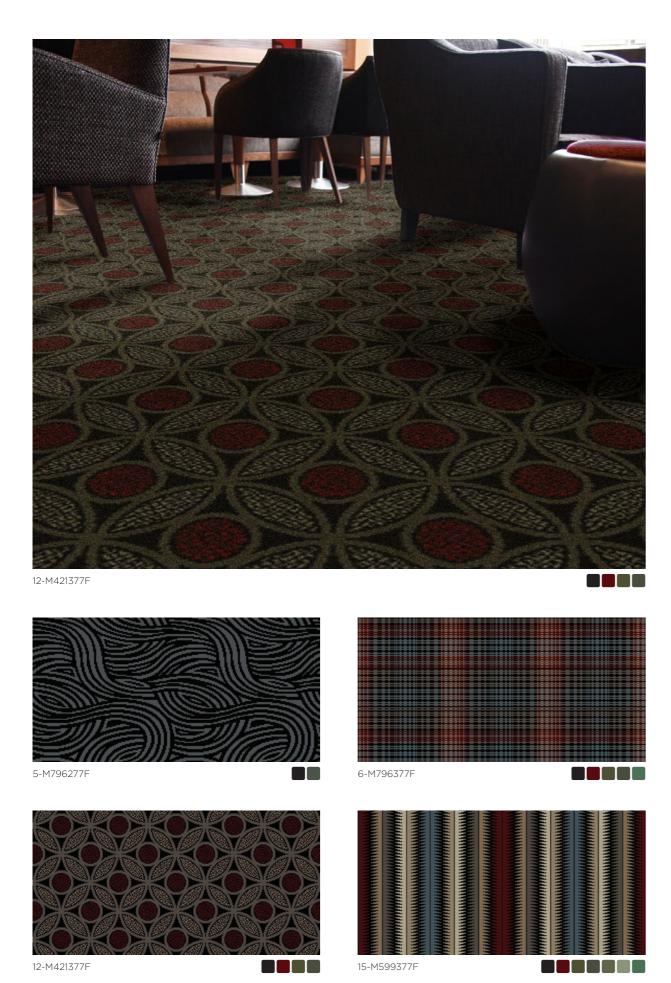


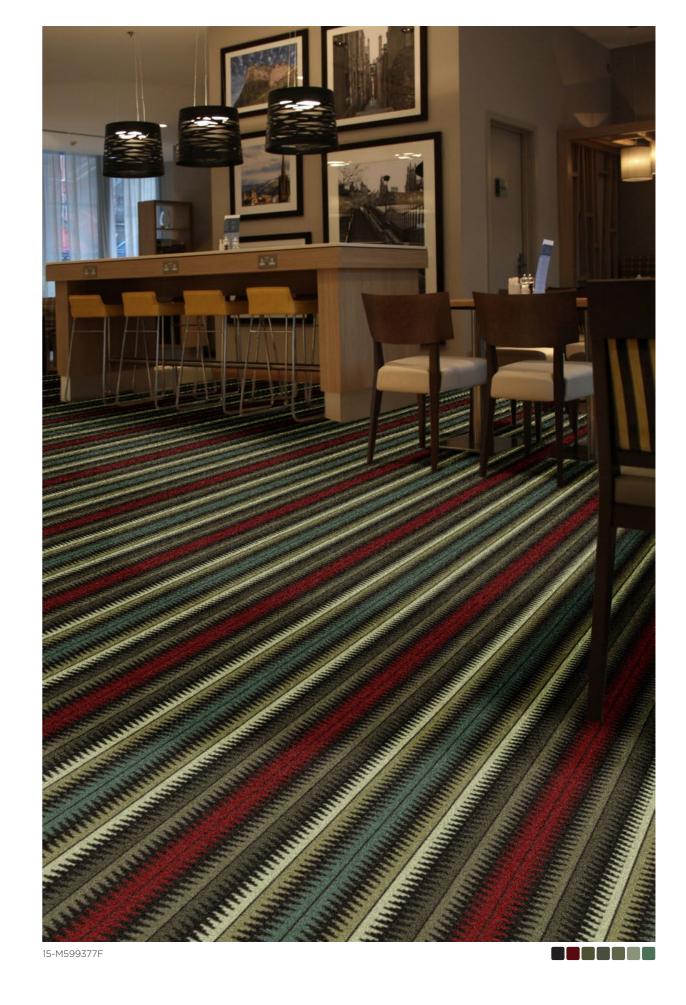






INN STYLE INN STYLE





VISION



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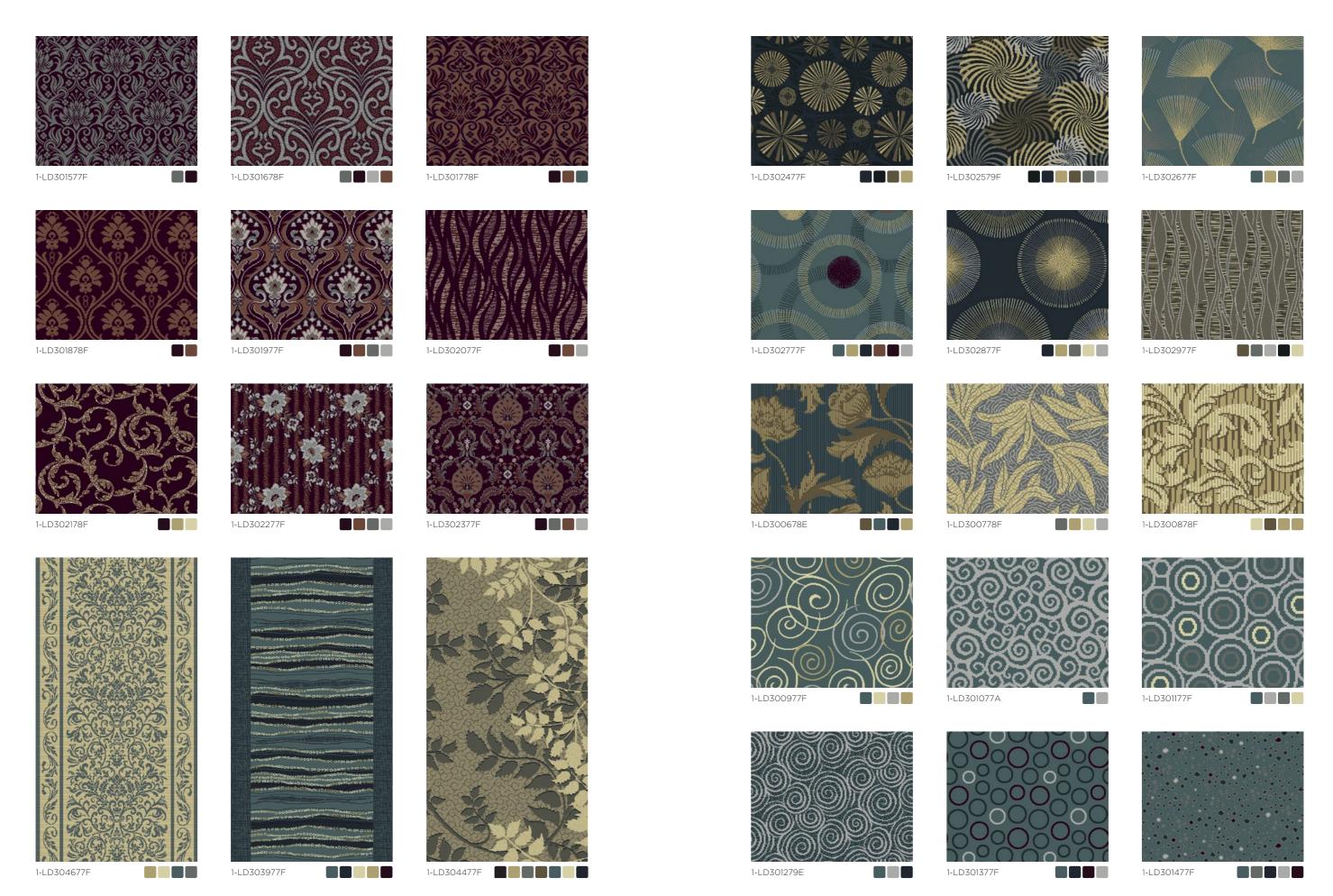








VISION

























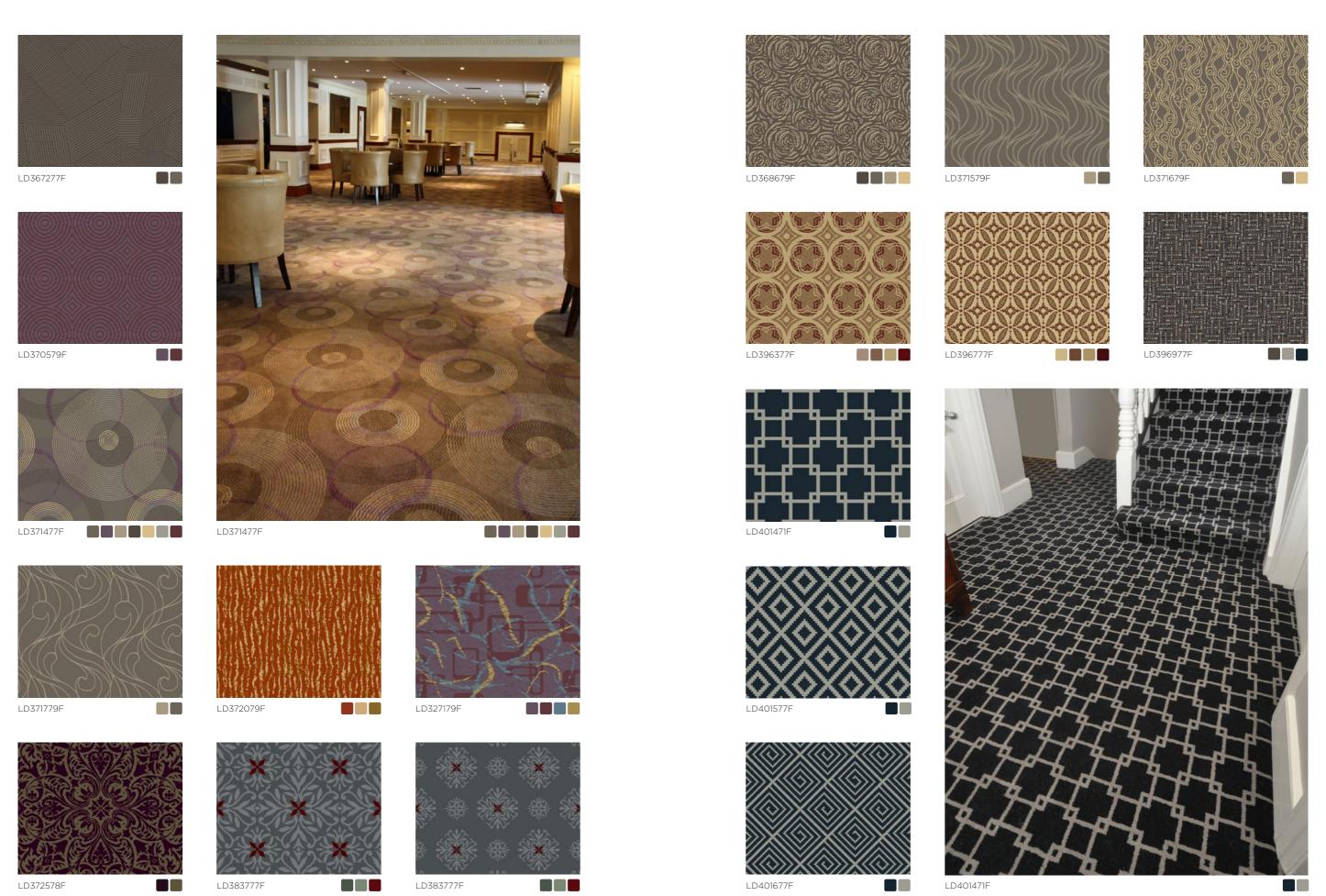
















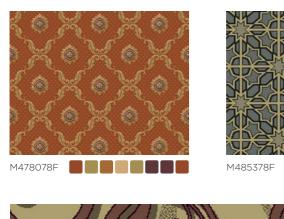
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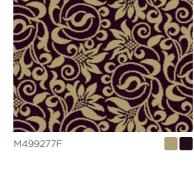
















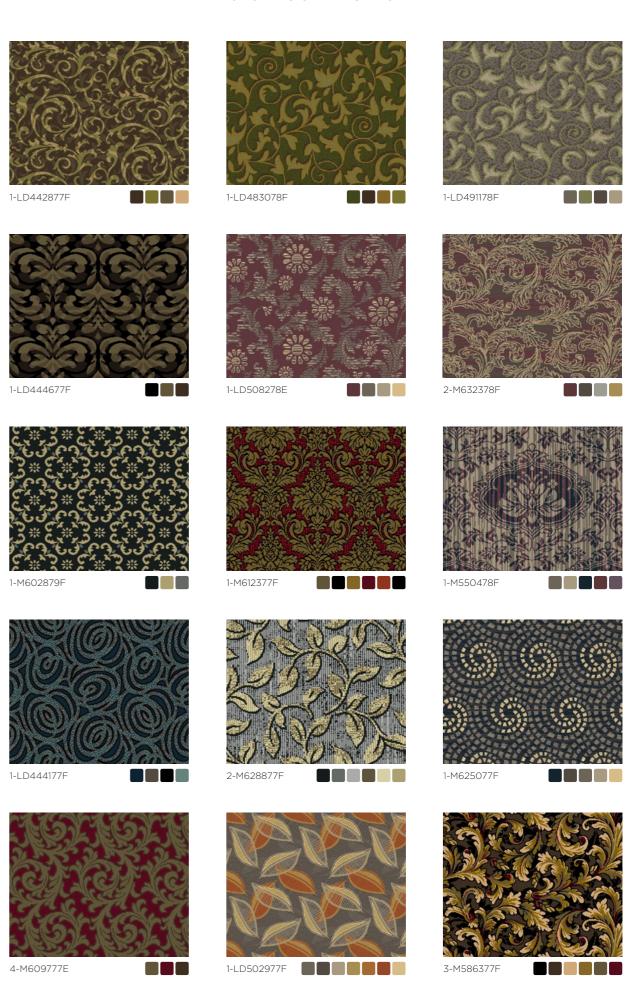


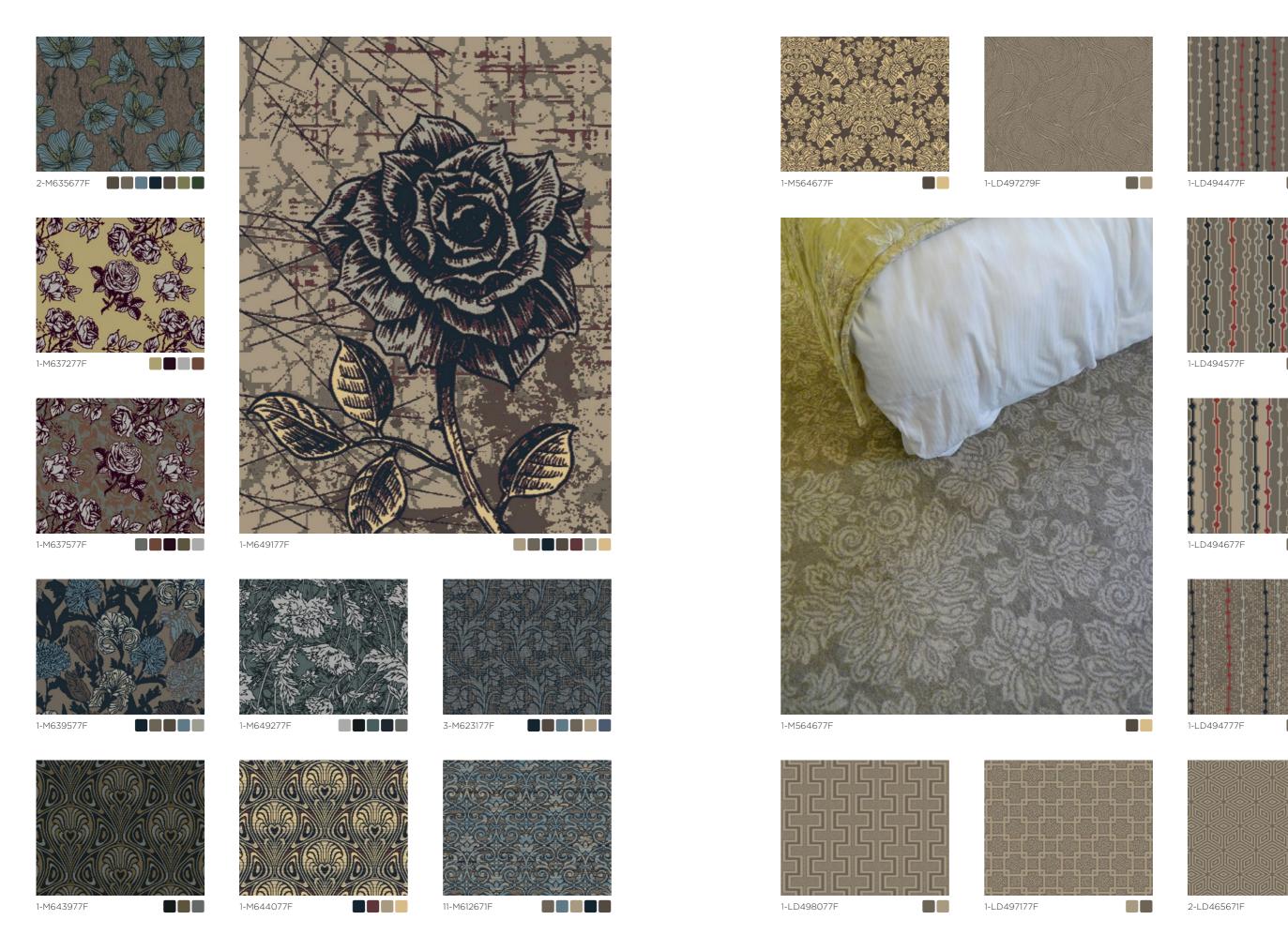
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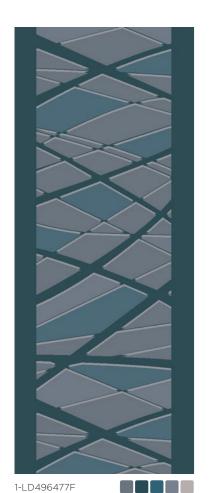


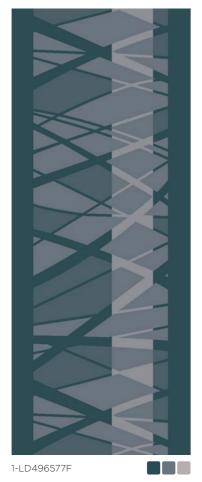


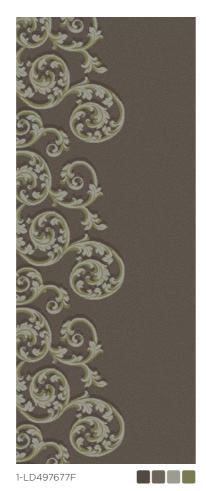






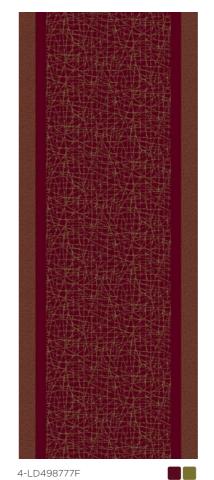


















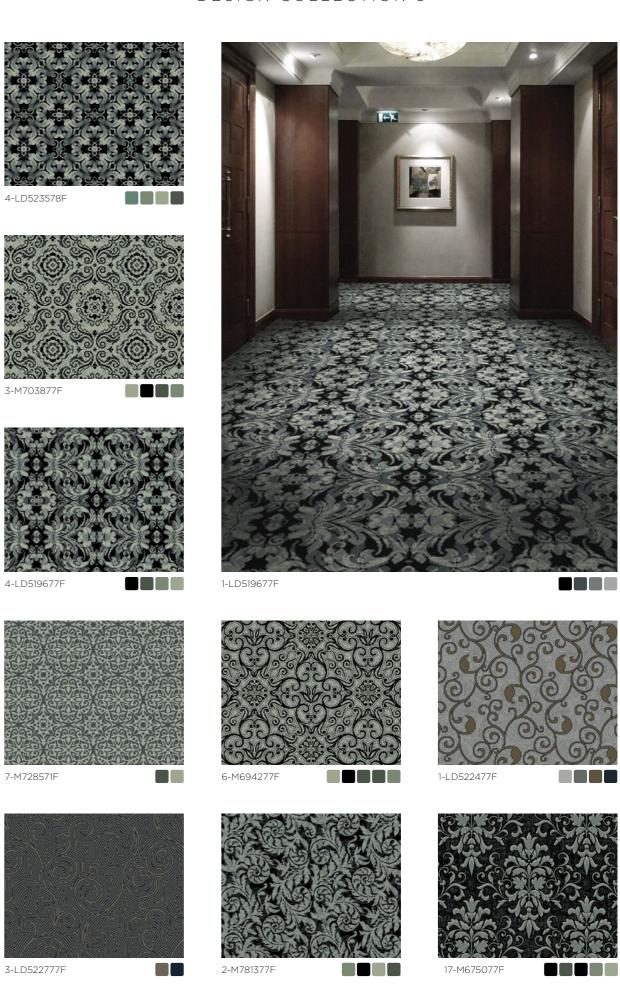


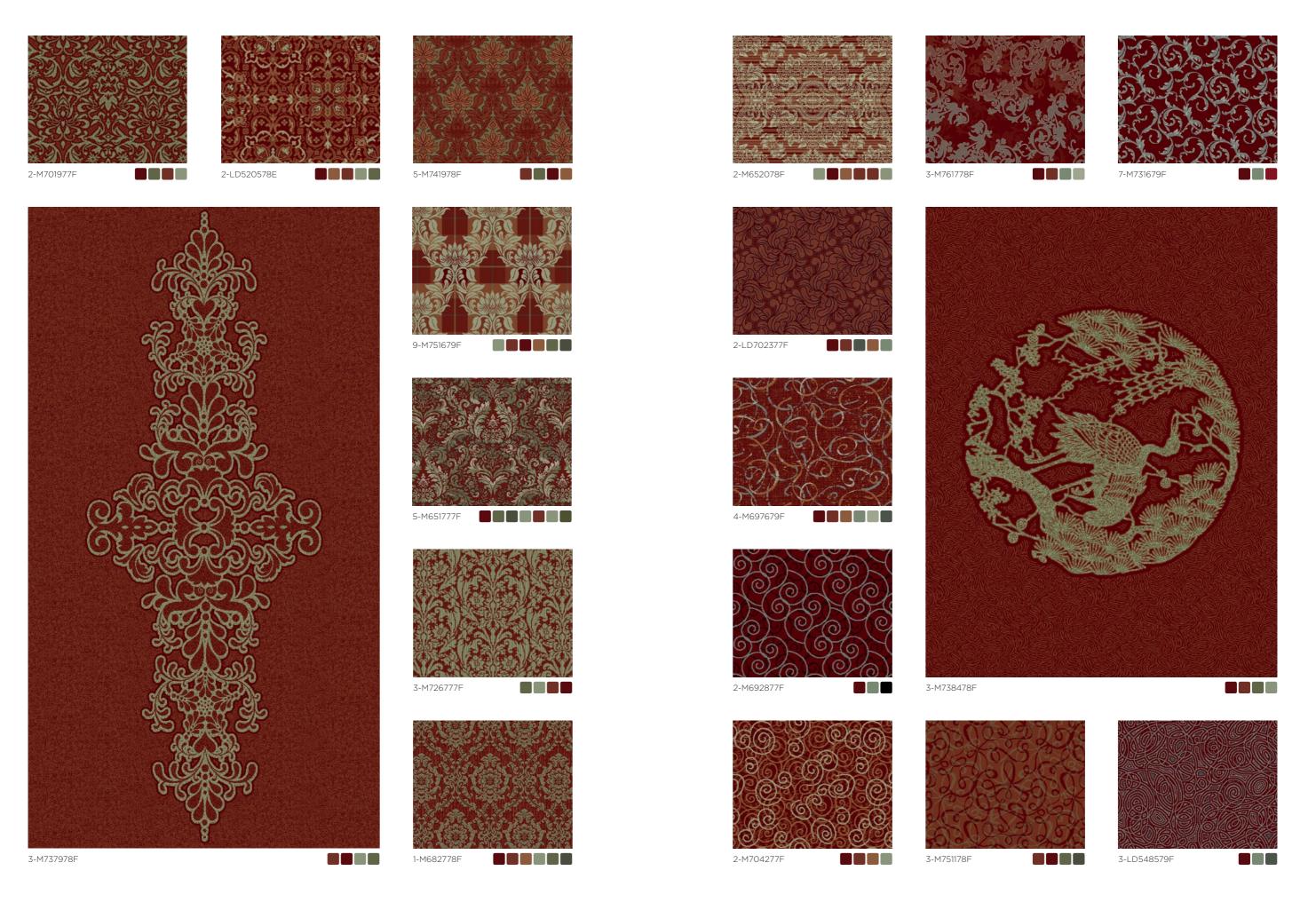


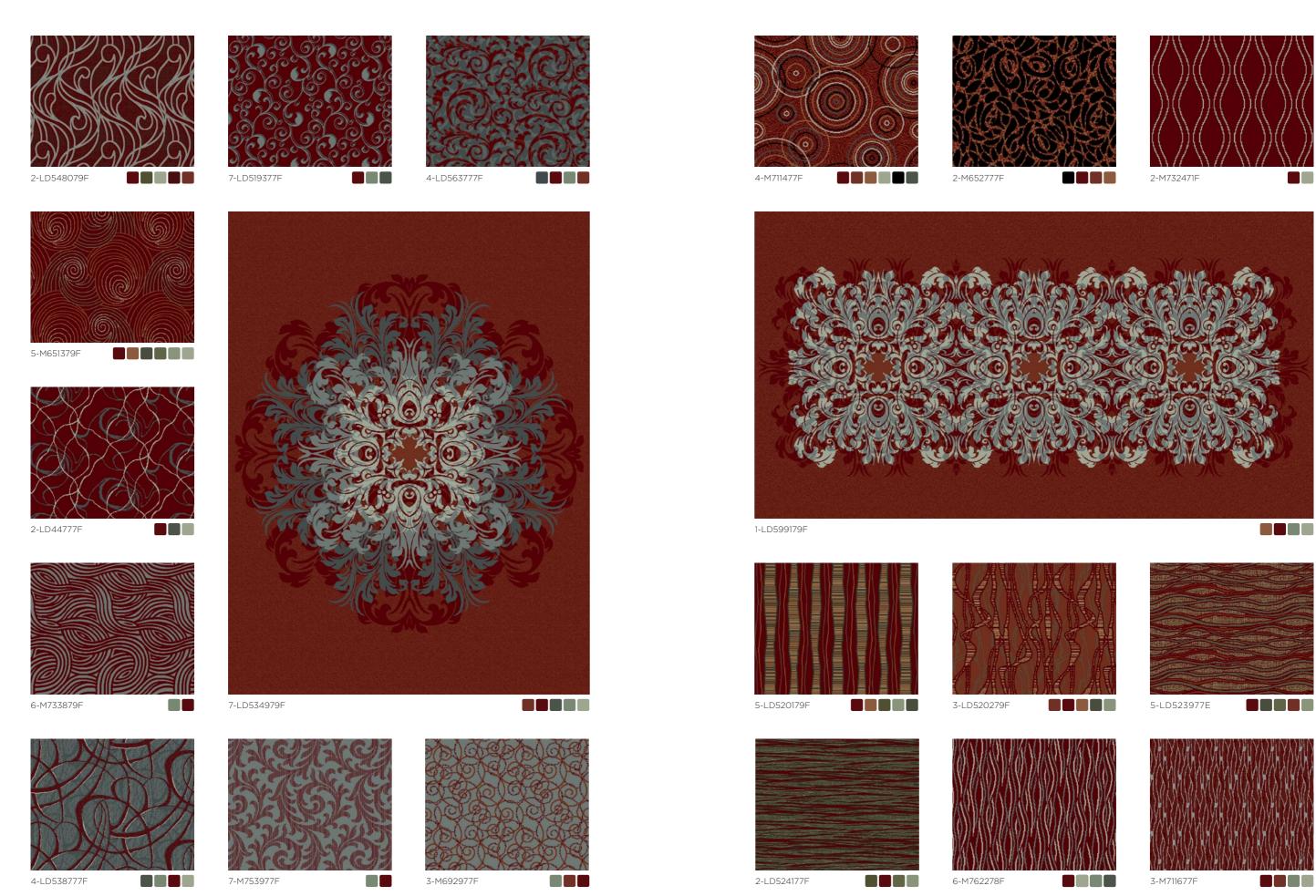


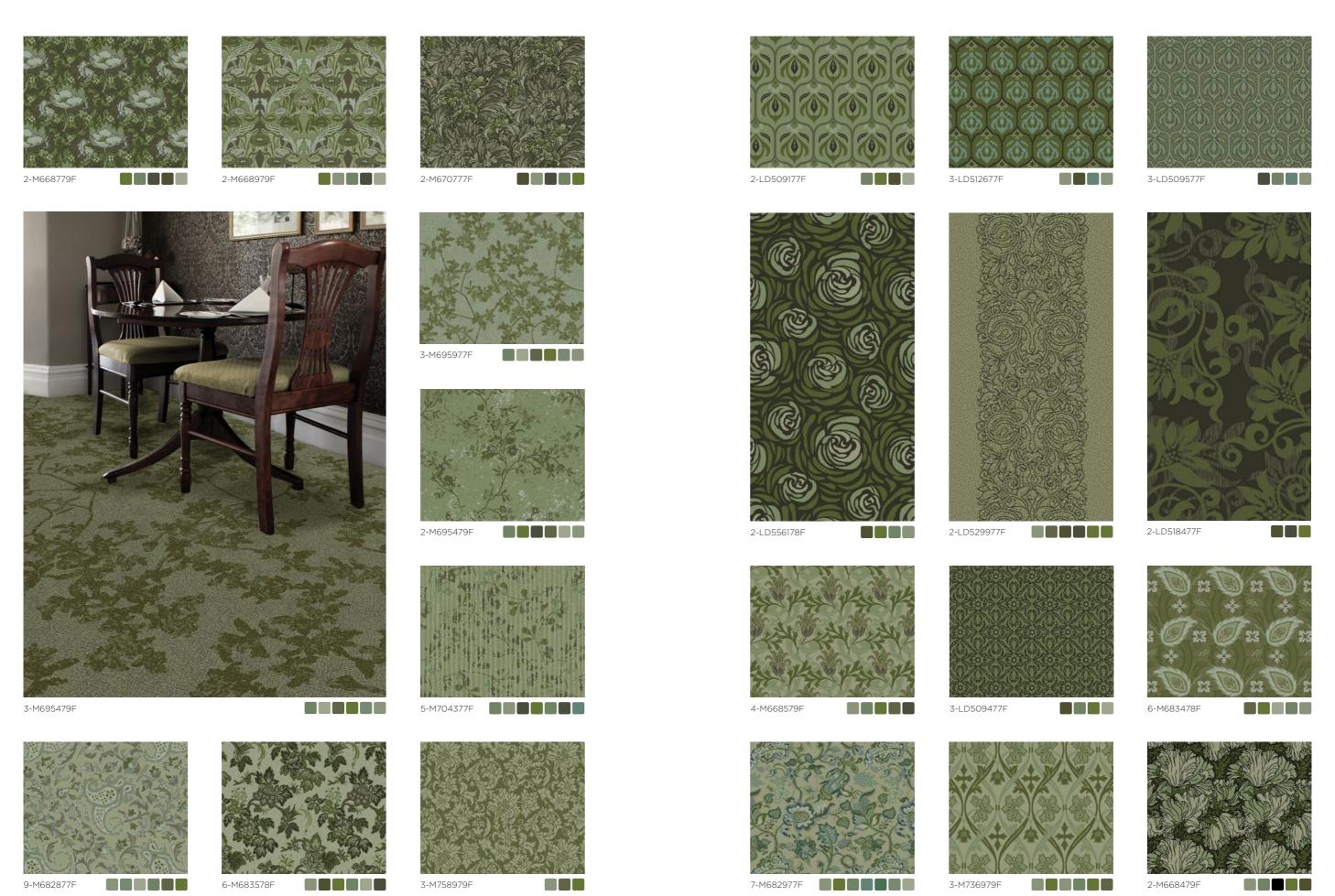




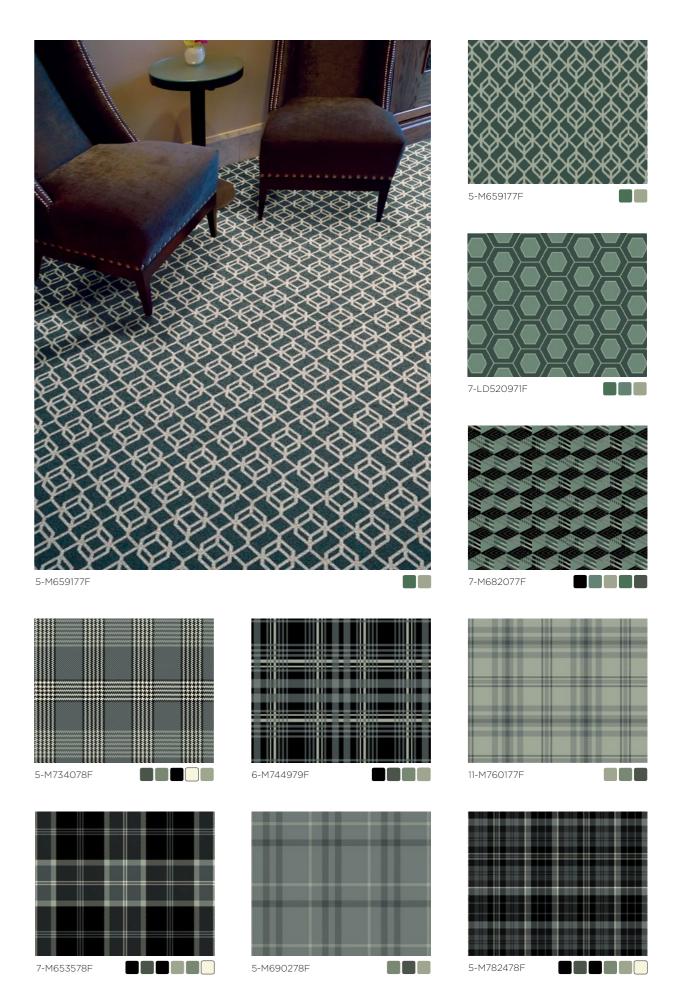












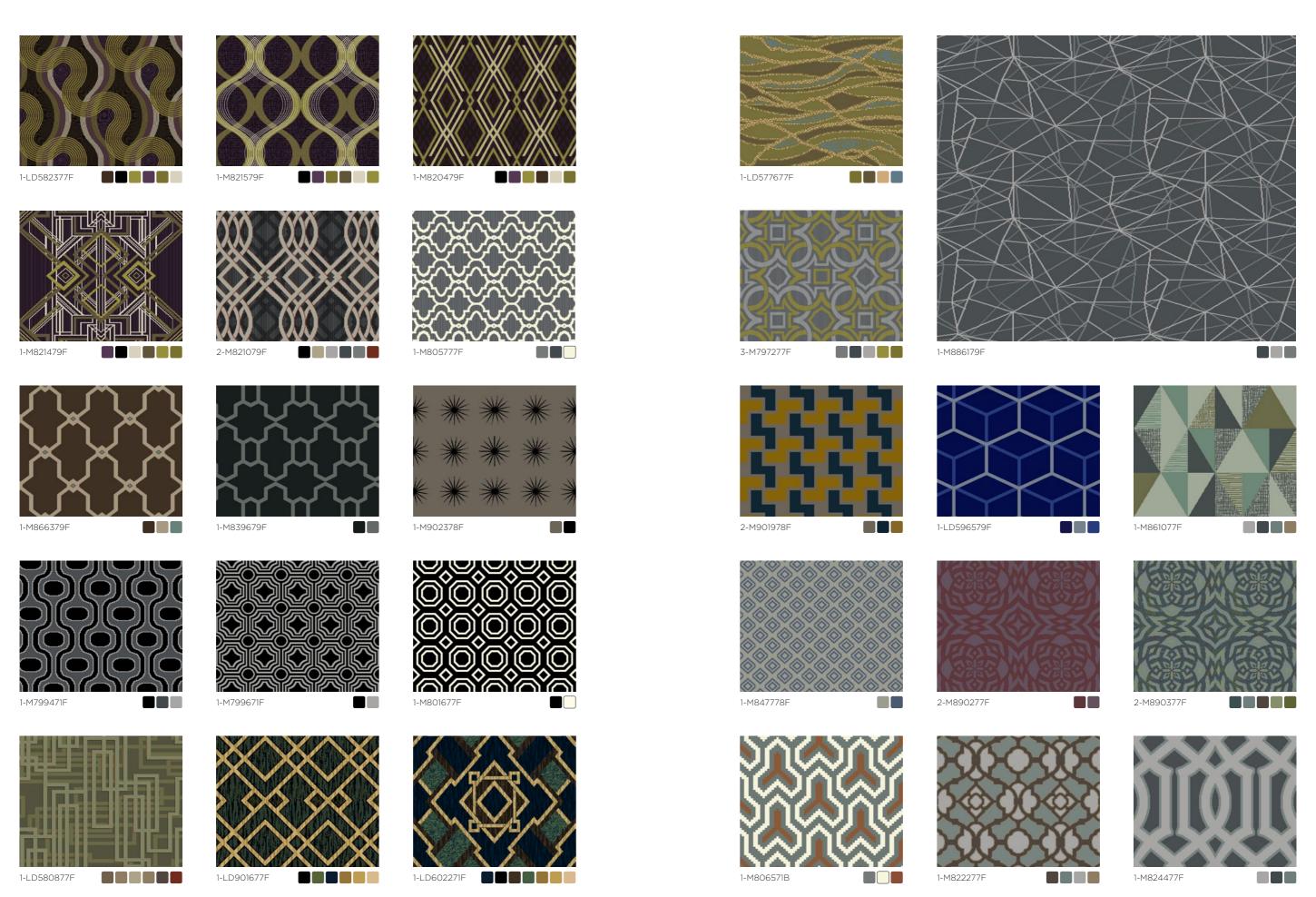




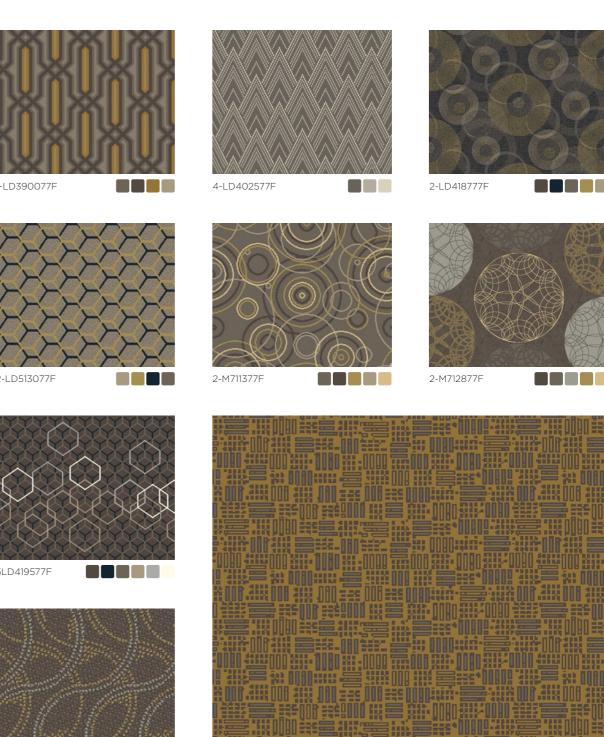
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DESIGN COLLECTION 4 DESIGN COLLECTION 4



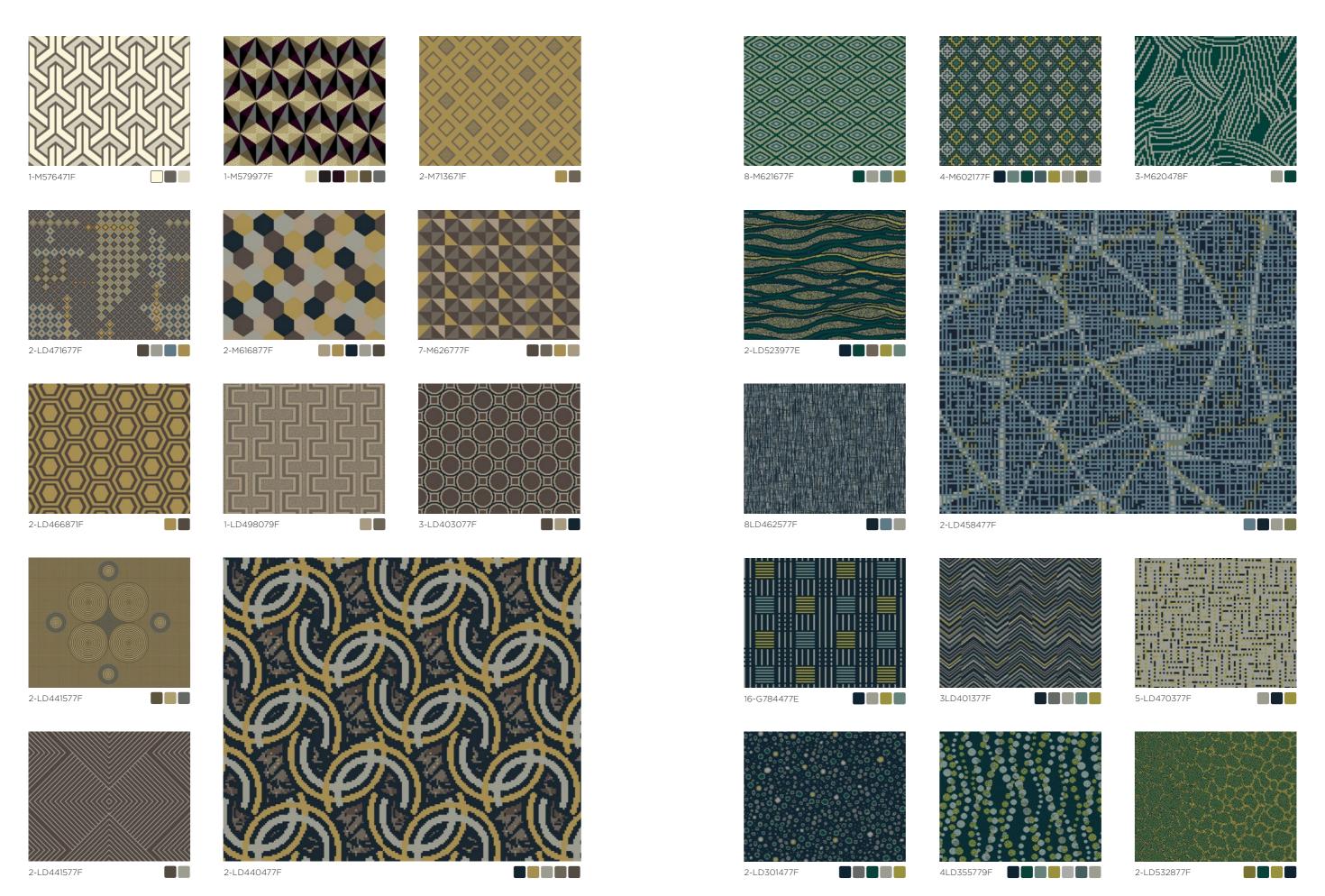


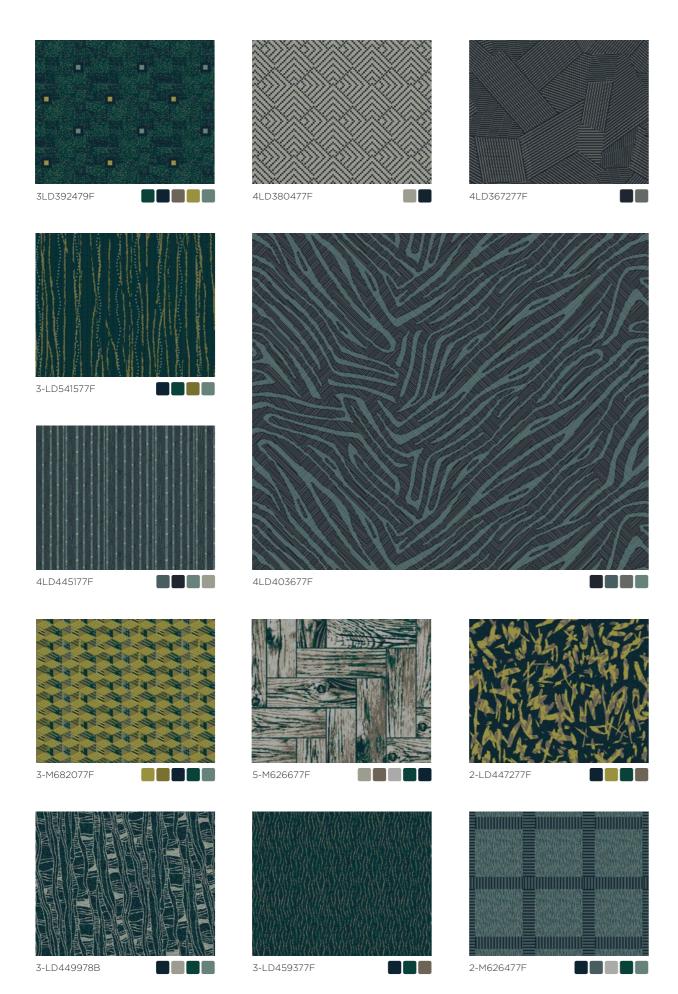


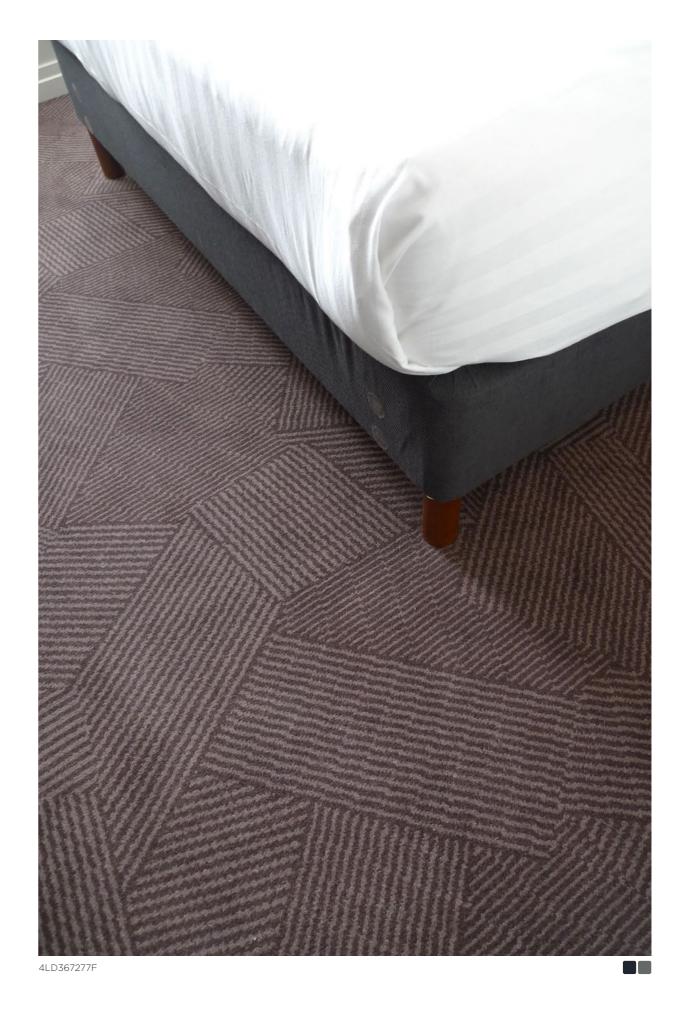
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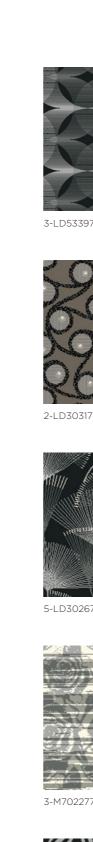
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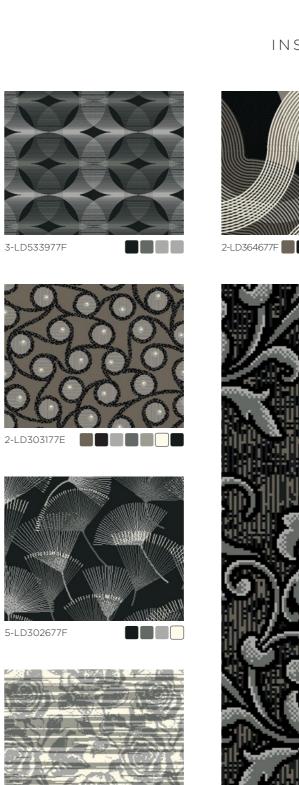


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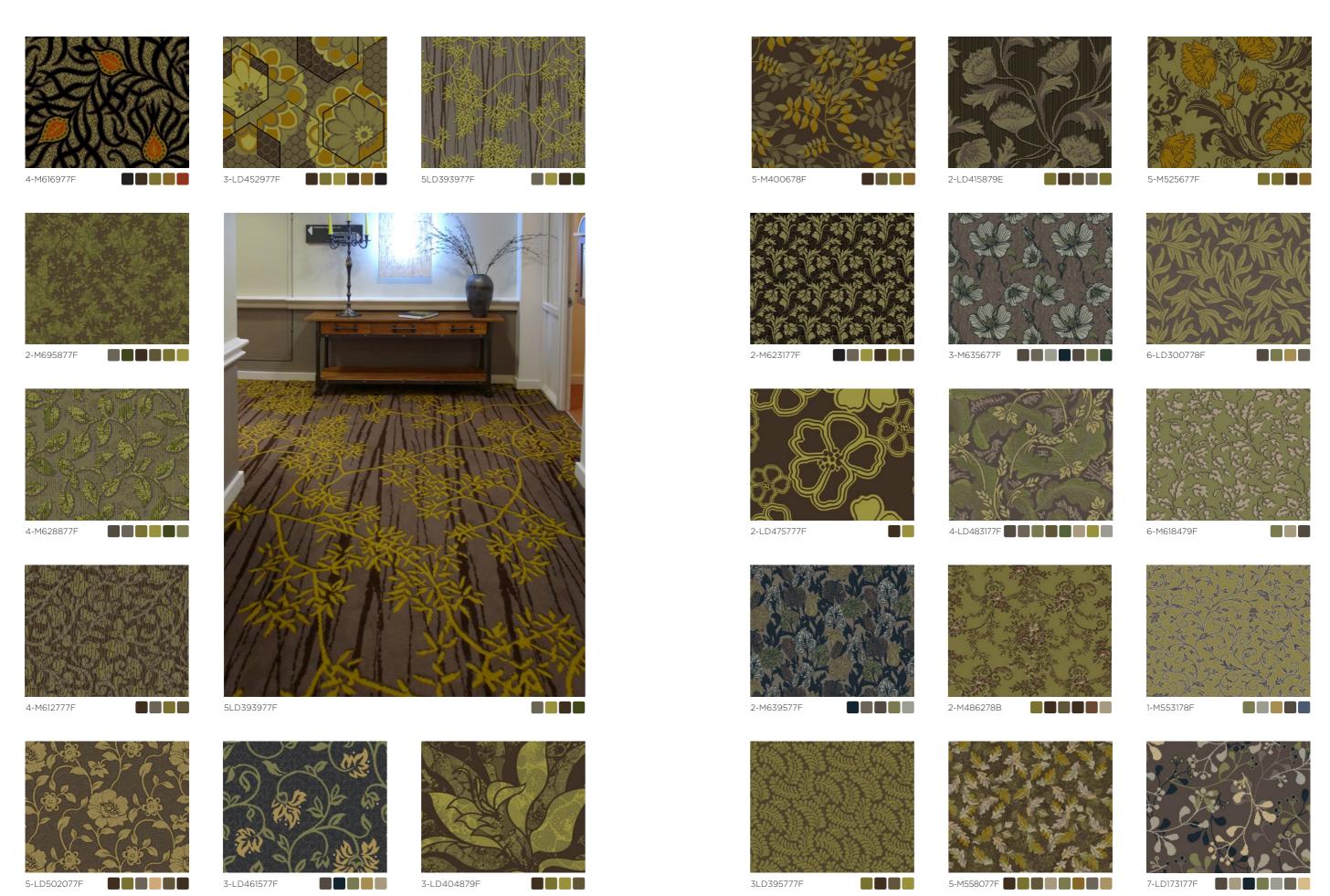


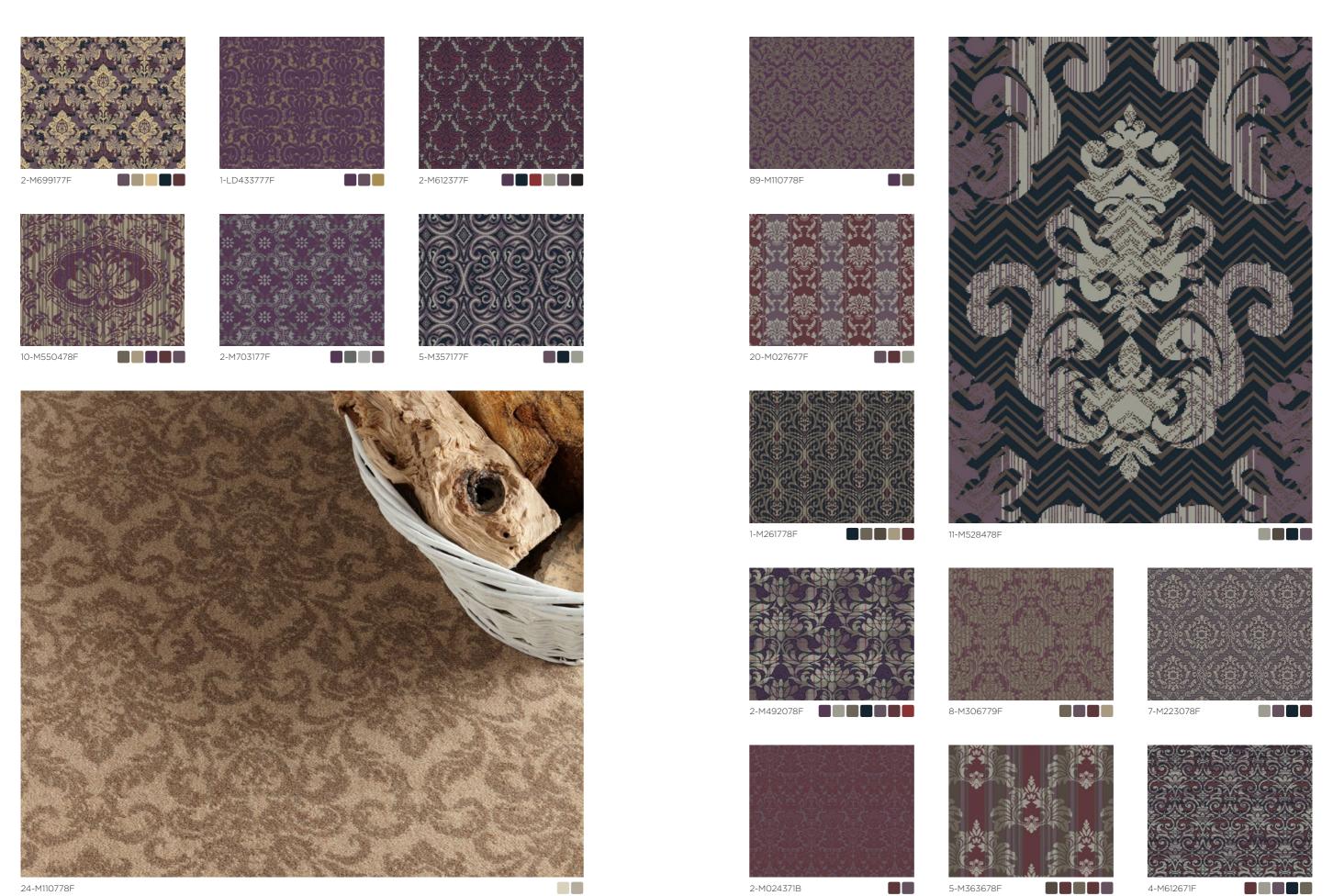


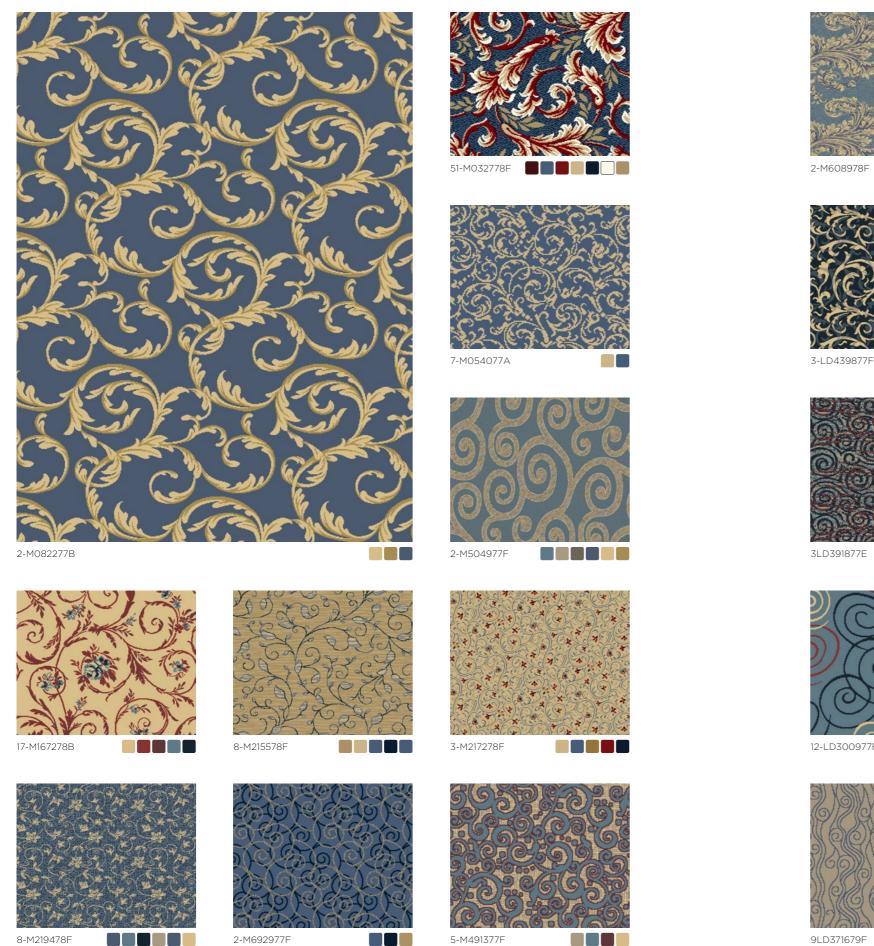


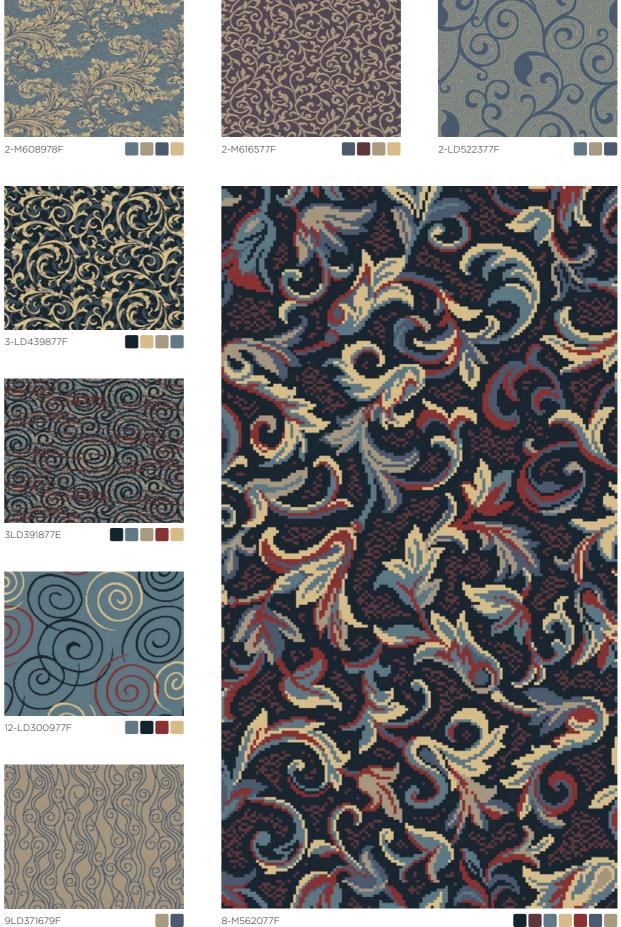




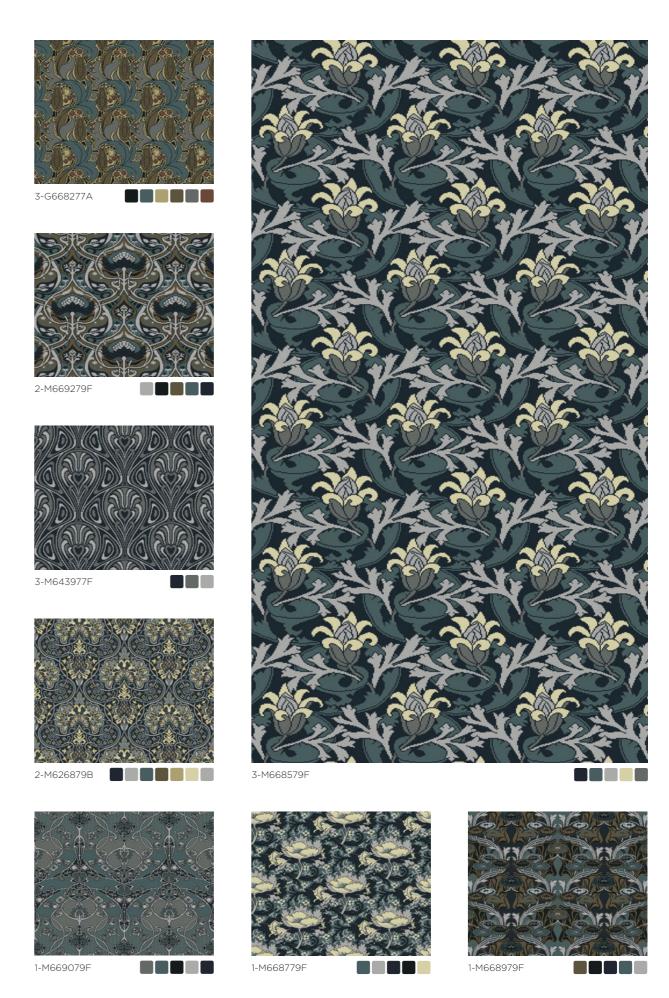












INSIGHT INSIGHT









4-LD385177A



3-LD385077F





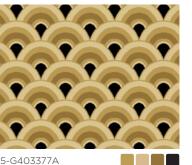








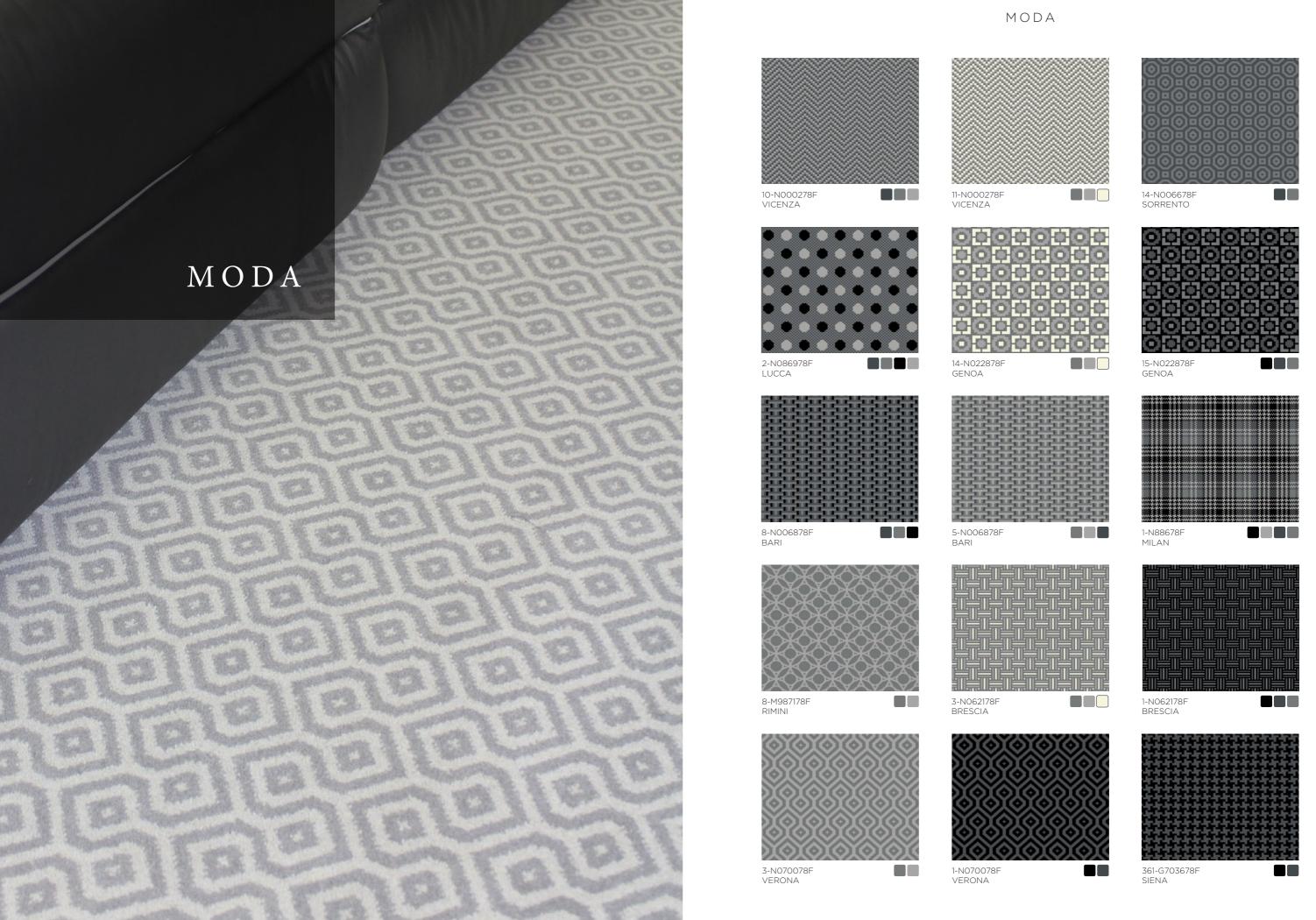
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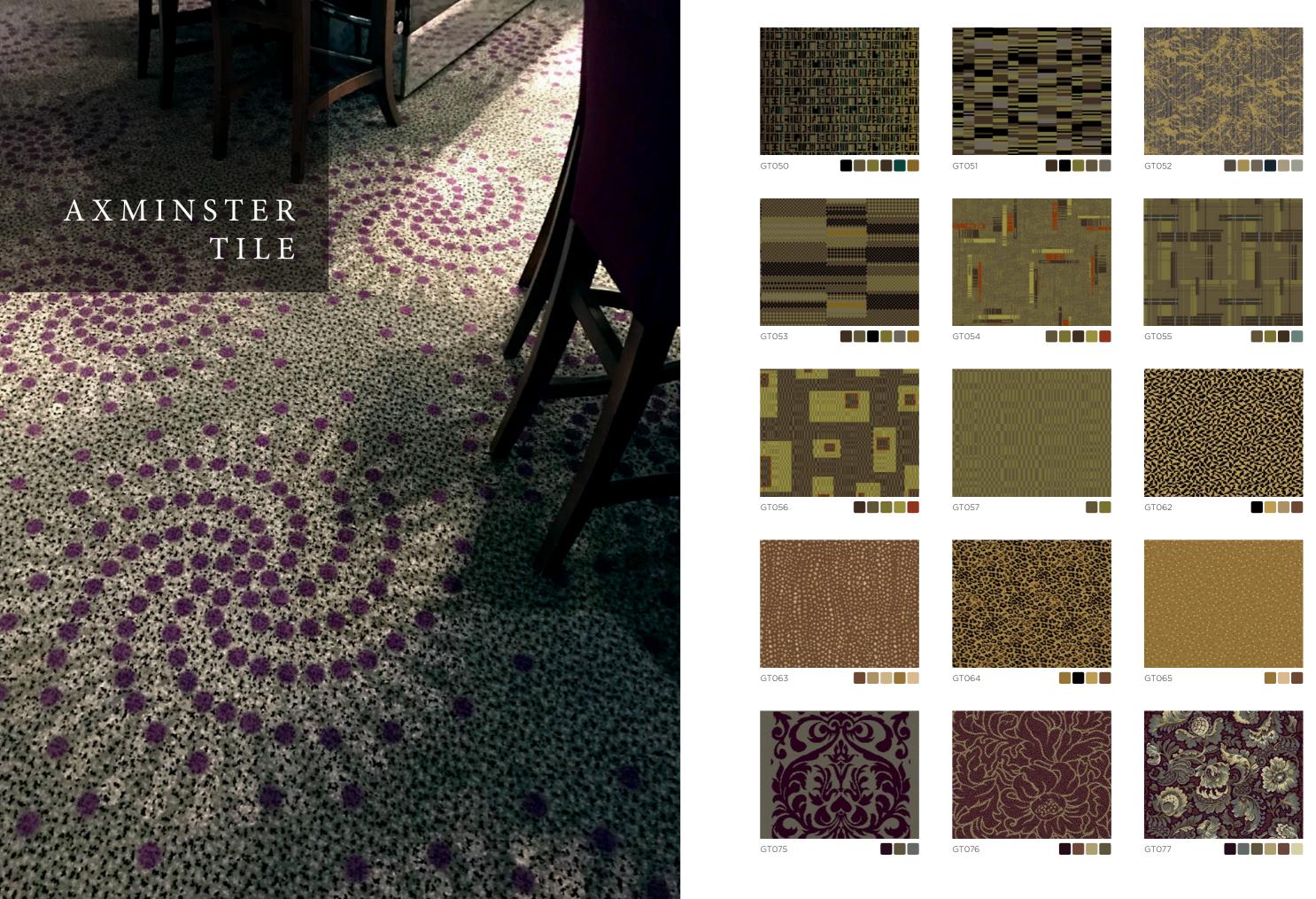




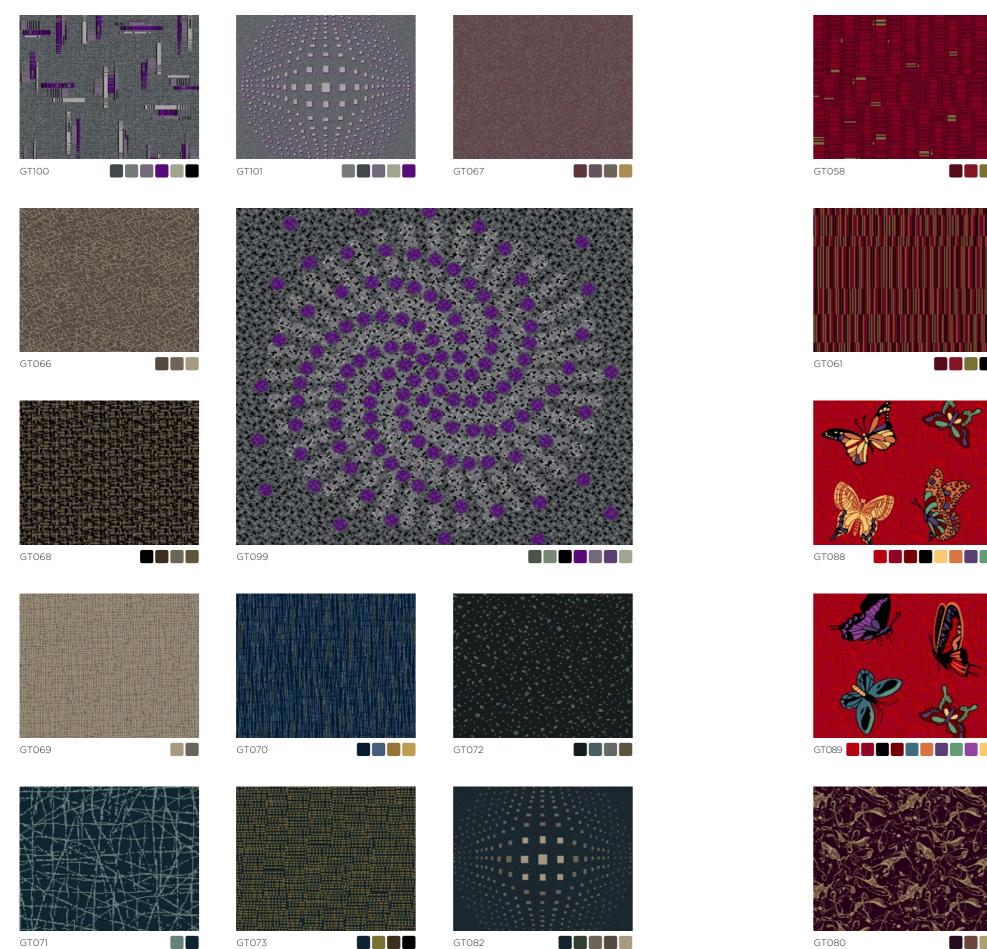


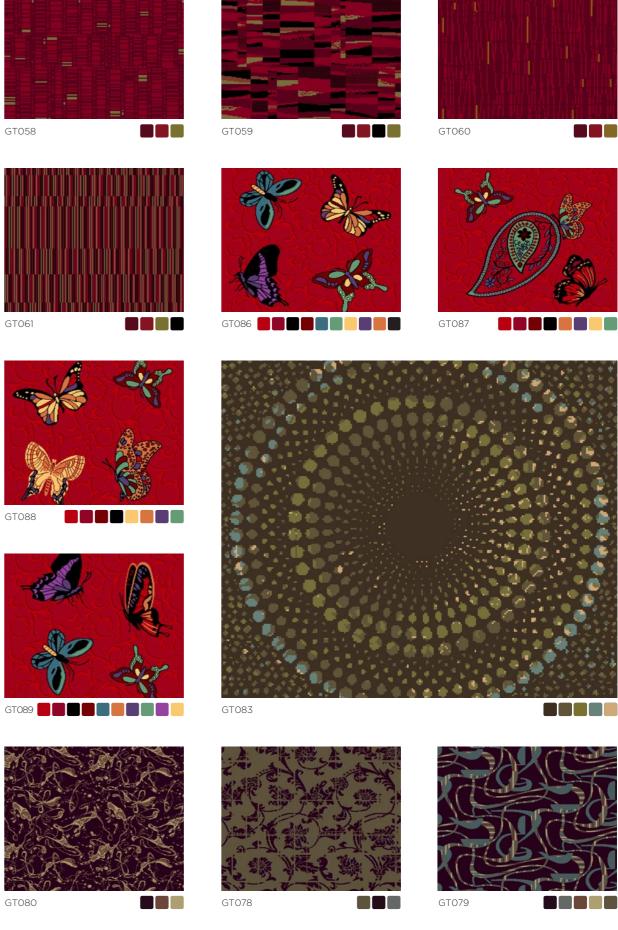


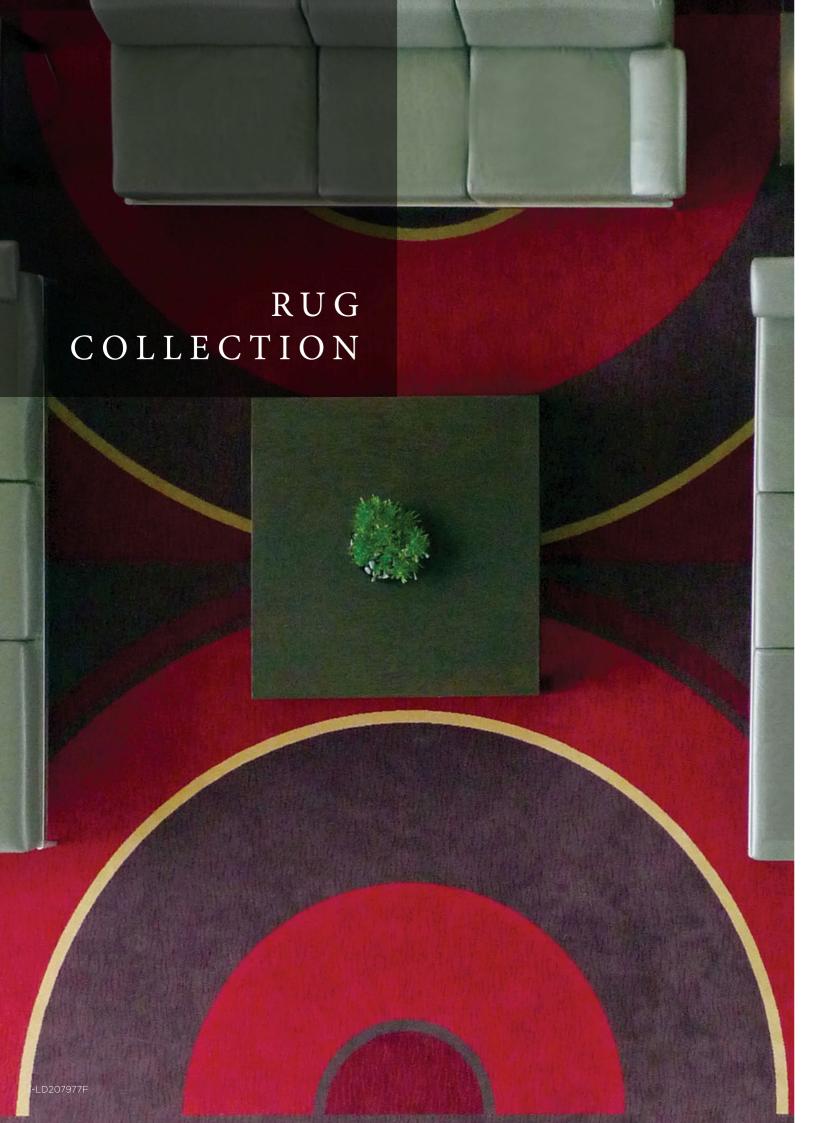
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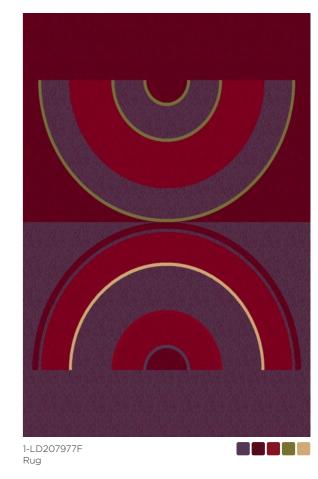
AXMINSTER TILE AXMINSTER TILE

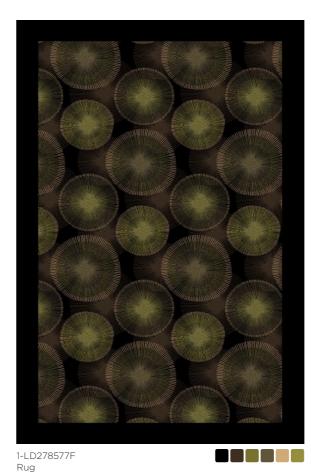


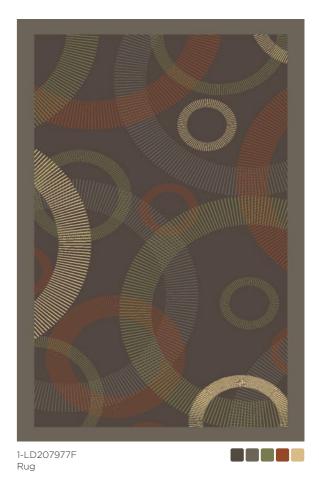


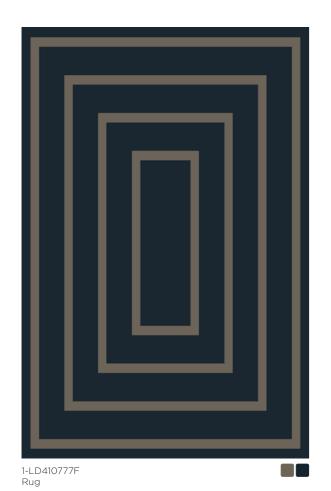




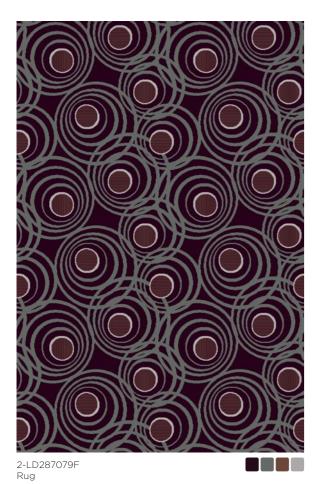




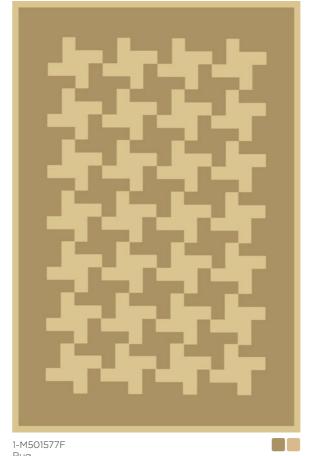


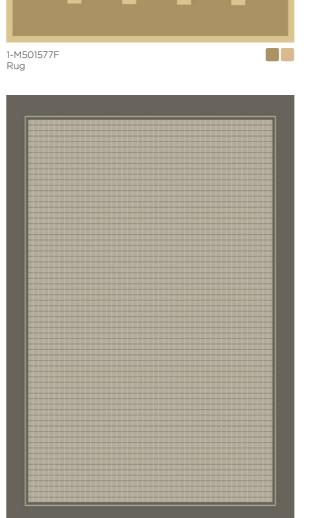


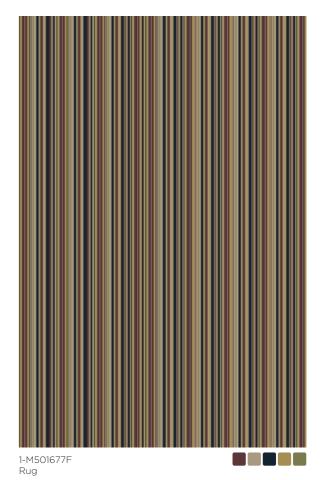








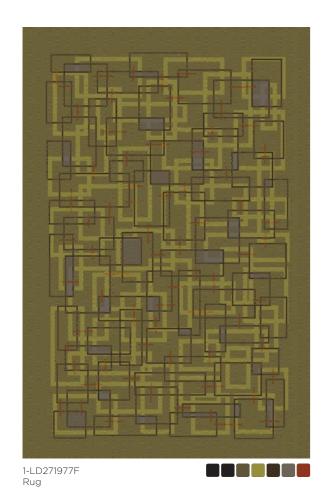






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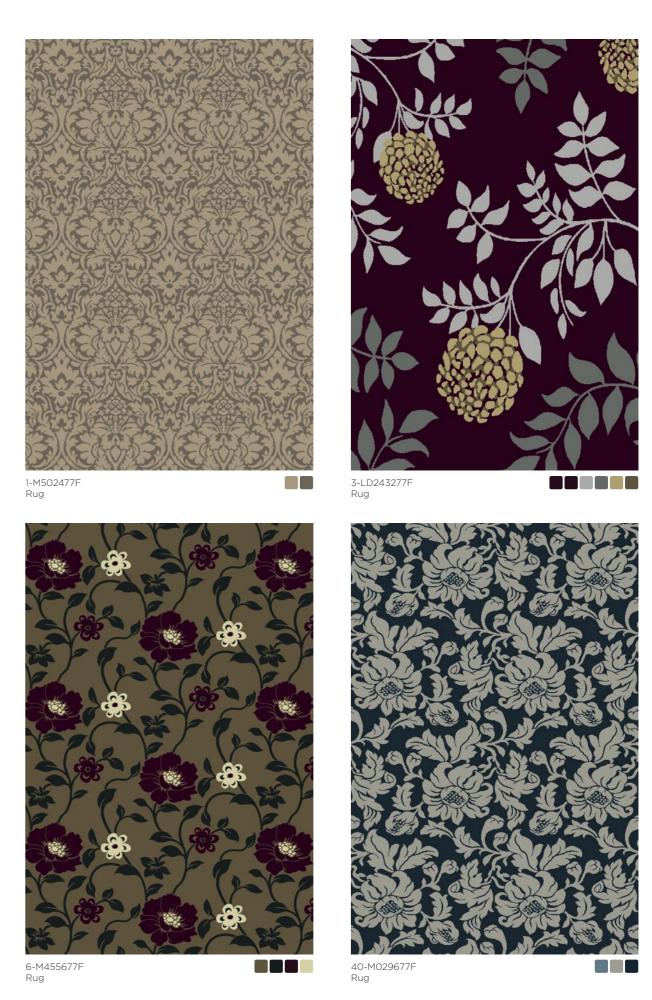
1-LD239777F Rug













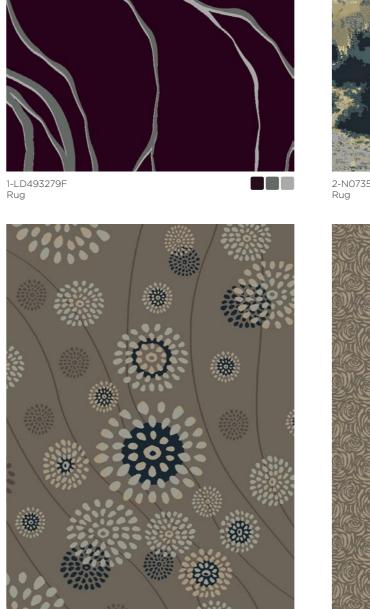












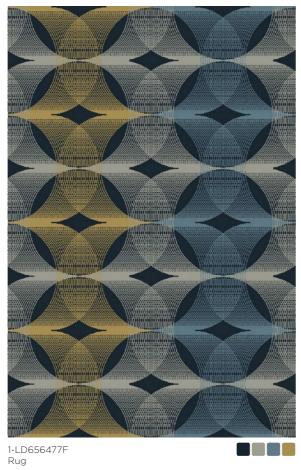




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1-M502577F Rug



















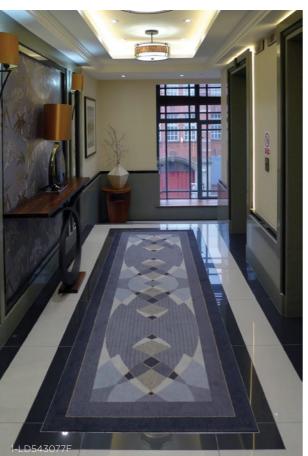


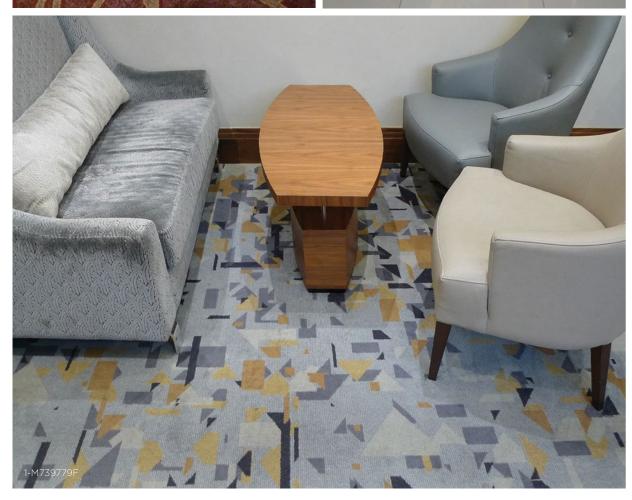


















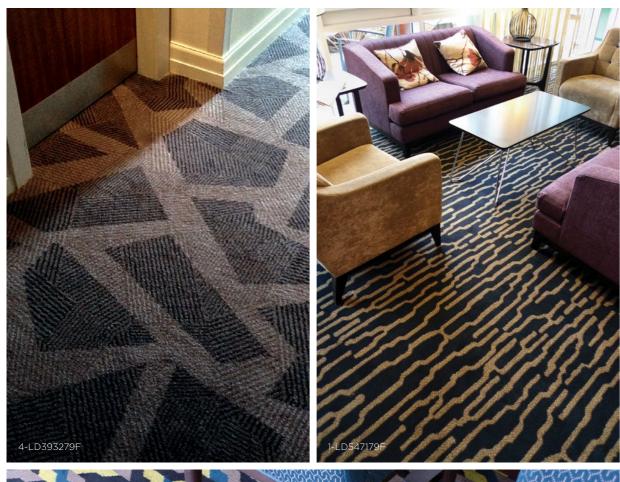






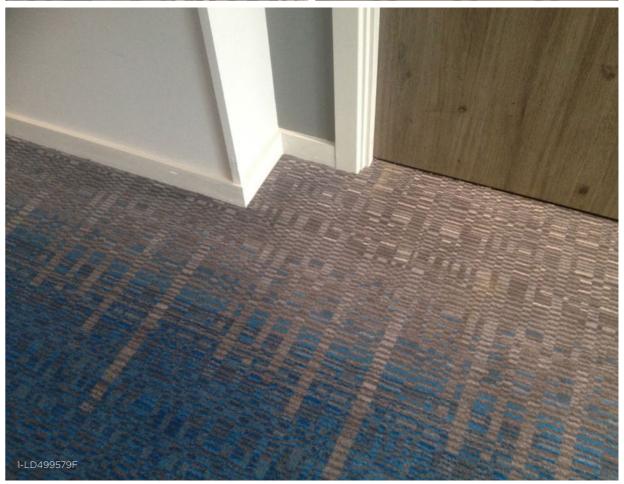














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View Logistics Ltd Park View Road East Hartlepool TS25 1HT

Tel: 01429 892525 Email: sales@gaskell.co.uk www.gaskell.co.uk



Tel: 01429 892555 Email: sales@hughmackay.com www.hughmackay.com