



# Clouds on EARTH

A lifelong love of fine textiles—and of her native Peru—led Sandra Jordan to create a business sourcing and selling the alpaca once known as the Gold of the Andes



Clockwise from above left: Since founding her company, Sandra Jordan has embraced the products and people of her native Peru. A bed features her Prima Alpaca Lago, including a lumbar pillow and throw in Prima Alpaca Azulejo, a two-sided blanket in Prima Alpaca Cuadros and Prima Alpaca Cobalt Black. The hanging sheers (left to right) are Prima Alpaca Cabana, Prima Alpaca Destino, Prima Alpaca Frontera, and Prima Alpaca Ikat Tinto. Alpaca roam a field in the Peruvian Andes.

As a young girl, Sandra Jordan loved accompanying her aunts to the textile markets in her native Peru. “We always had an in-house seamstress who made our draperies,” says Jordan, “so we would buy these beautiful fabrics and keep them in big trunks. Then, whenever we needed something sewn, we had the fabrics.”

Her love of textiles grew as she traveled around the world with her mother and American-diplomat stepfather. “India was wonderful for me because of the silks and the vibrant colors,” she recalls, “and in the Philippines, we were exposed to the best fabrics that had been left over in

Paris and New York and pushed into the local market. It was a wonderful education.”

Jordan’s passion for fine fabrics remained avocational while she earned degrees in international relations and education and taught literature in a private girls’ school in Massachusetts. In 1993, she became the creative director at Jordan Vineyard & Wineries, owned by her then-husband Tom Jordan. When she took on the challenge of redecorating the property’s hospitality suites and public areas, she wanted to use alpaca from her native Peru in her designs.



Part of Jordan's plush, sumptuous fabric collection made from rare Suri alpaca, Prima Alpaca Suri Zibelinado in Picante is draped on an outdoor fireplace for effect. The Zibelinado finish, which enhances color and creates a rippling or "sable" effect, takes twelve labor-intensive steps to accomplish. Below: Prima Alpaca Suri Zibelinado in Picante is shown with Prima Alpaca Totorá.



MILIEU-MAG.COM

She found, though, that much of what was on the market as "alpaca" came from animals that had been crossbred with llamas, resulting in fabric with a coarse feel and an inelegant drape. (The alpaca and the llama, both members of the camel family, resemble each other. However, they are of different species, and the alpaca is the smaller of the two animals.) Convinced that there had to be a way to use the most divinely soft fleece once known as "Clouds on Earth," she found a source for fibers made only from the first shearing of purebred animals in the Andes Mountains—more durable than wool, yet softer than cashmere.

When a visitor from San Francisco encouraged Jordan to market her alpaca fabrics, the seed for her business was planted. And in 2006, around the time she changed direction in life and left the winery, her company, Sandra Jordan Prima Alpaca, was born.

Jordan's early lines were comprised mostly of simple weaves in colors inspired by nature. Some shades took their cues from the colors of the earth in California, where she still resides; others, from images still vivid in her mind from her peripatetic childhood. "Traveling made me very sensitive to colors," she says. "I still remember the colors of the sunsets in Hawaii and the Bay of Bombay."

In the years since its founding, Sandra Jordan Prima Alpaca has expanded its offerings to include two different kinds of alpaca fabric—Suri, which has a beautiful sheen, and Huacaya, a fluffier material. The fabrics are available to the trade for use in upholstery, drapery and wallcoverings. This season, the textiles include colors inspired by La Playa Roja, a beach in Peru noted for its mineral-red sand; by good-luck beads found in the Andes; and by an emerald color widely seen in the Amazon Forest.

In addition to inspiring her product line, Jordan's native country is reflected in her concern for its people. From the herdsmen who tend the alpaca flocks to the skilled artisans who spin the fleece into thread and weave the thread into fabric, everyone who has a hand in bringing Sandra Jordan Prima Alpaca from mountain to market is guaranteed a living wage and offered continuing trade education. Additionally, Jordan's program, *La Cabaña del Pastor* (The Herdsman's Cottage), ensures that these workers and their families have clean, sustainable dwellings. To expand the reach of her good works, she is currently building an embroidery school in Ayacucho, a beautiful area that has been devastated by political terrorism. "I want to help bring industry and jobs back to the region," she says, "and to teach women living in rural Peru to continue the local needlework traditions."

Finding ways to incorporate traditional crafts into products for the luxury market is a challenge, Jordan acknowledges, "But I've reached a point in my life where I have the patience for it, and it is so important for me to support the people of Peru." ■



**PENNOYER & NEWMAN**  
DISTINCTIVE GARDEN POTS CAST FROM ESTATE ORIGINALS

200 LEXINGTON AVENUE [AT 32ND STREET] • FOURTH FLOOR, SUITE 416 • NEW YORK, NY 10016  
TO ORDER CALL 212/839-0500 • FAX 212/839-0501 • WWW.PENNOYERNEWMAN.COM

