

Is there magic number in regard to thread count?

“Back in the day, T180 Percale (180-thread count sheets) was the buzzword. My grandfather gave my dad and my dad gave to me a little magnifying device where you could put the sheet underneath and count the picks, the vertical 90 and the horizontal 90. You add the two together and its 180 Percale. That’s how the industry started. Now our customers are buying T250, T300, T350 and up.”

Is there a thread count you recommend?

“It can be very confusing. You can go to the store or go online and see 800 or 1,000-thread count. But frankly, in my mind, thread count doesn’t necessarily equate to a nicer sheet. It’s really all in the buyer. We bought some sheets recently from a retail store because it seemed to be a great price. The thread count was north of 1,000 but it felt like satin, which some people like, but we don’t. It just kind of depends.”

Are there any new or emerging fabrics?

“There are some new fibers and I don’t think they’ve gained a lot of traction yet, such as modal, which comes from trees. It’s a rayon. And of course bamboo. Often for hospitality those fibers are blended with cotton or polyester because on their own they’re not durable enough. Polyester always had a stigma attached to it. But when you blend it into a towel or sheet, not only does the item dry faster, but it’s

a stronger fiber than cotton. On the wholesale hospitality and senior living side, polyester is not a bad term anymore. We like it because it’s a strong fiber.”

Has technology changed how things are manufactured?

“Textiles is a lot less human-intense than it used to be. Machinery and automation has replaced a lot of human factor. My wife and I were touring one of the few mills still left in the U.S. because the American-textile industry is just a shell of it’s former self. It was a company called 1888 Mills. The 1888 represented the year it was founded in Georgia. We toured the towel mill. Most of the employees are the engineers who keep the computers running that run the looms.”

When did you relocate from Portland to the Gearhart?

“We moved in late February. We’re fortunate we can be based anywhere. Today our business is so diverse between hospitality, senior living and commercial businesses like seafood processing. A lot of them are based in Seattle but have canneries in Alaska along with bunk houses or dormitories that need sheets and towels.”

What appealed to you about coming to the coast?

“As a kid, my folks had a vacation home on the north coast. I always associated coming down here with being on vacation. When my wife and I decided to put our home of 24 years in



Portland up for sale, it was like ‘Where do we go?’ We settled on the north coast. Our daughter is still in Portland, but it’s only 1 ½ hours away. This is a great place to live.”

Do the seasons impact your sales?

“Definitely. Right now, from Memorial Day to Labor Day, our customers should be very busy. It’s the traditional hospitality season, but of course with everything that’s been going on with the pandemic, our industry has taken a huge hit.”

What impact has the covid-19 crisis had on your end specifically?

“As our customers go we go, so it’s been a little quiet. One of our seafood customers in Seattle asked us about personal protective equipment (PPE). For the last six weeks we’ve been selling masks and infrared thermometers like nobody’s business. It’s helped keep the lights on. We’ve got the goods down in LA, so we can get them up here in four or five days. But as far as selling sheets, towels and blankets? Not so much.”

What kind of volume are you selling in regard to the masks and thermometers?

“Thousands. We’re very grateful to be able to provide these to our customers because everybody is panicked and there’s so much uncertainty. Many of them have to meet federal guidelines and others just want to protect their staff, guests or clients. We’re happy we can help

fulfill a need.”

Has the cost of any products risen or gotten prohibitively expensive as a result of the on-going trade war with China?

“Not prohibitively expensive but a lot of fabric is made in China. And because of the trade dispute and tariffs imposed on textiles, those fabrics have gone up. And because you can’t say next week I’ll get it from North Carolina, prices have gone up. Our primary bathrobe supplier is based in Florida but the robes are made in China. you can’t just get another bathrobe manufacturing facility up online. When this all came crashing down, several of our suppliers are going ‘We have to broaden our supply chain base’. Well it doesn’t happen overnight. They said ‘I’m sorry, we’re going to have to add 10% or 12% on top of every quote.’ It’s kind of an unknown with this pandemic where tariffs are going, but we’ll find out.”

What part brings you the greatest satisfaction?

“The diversity. Every day is different in part because of the several businesses we’re involved in between seafood processing, hospitality and senior living.”

What’s the biggest lesson you’ve learned since being in business?

“Listen. Less is more. Listen.”

BIG CREEK FISHING LODGE ASTORIA, OR • FISHING & LODGING

Hot Tub • Sauna • Wireless Access on Site



STEELHEAD SPRINGERS, FALL CHINOOK,
COHO SILVERS AND MORE AVAILABLE
DURING THEIR MIGRATION SEASON
UP **BIG CREEK!**

BigCreekFishing.com
92878 Waterhouse Rd.
Astoria, OR 97103
(503)458-0990

- 3/4 of a mile of private bank fishing
- Kids under 12 fish free
- Year round fishing, except for Sept. (closed)
- 3000 sq ft. facility, sleeps 11
- We accommodate large groups, corporate retreats, weddings and events!