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Sears Retools Its Home Offerings With Celebrity Designer's Wares

By **AMY MERRICK**
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Following competitors who are beefing up their home departments, **Sears Holdings** Corp. is making its own foray into celebrity design with home-décor products created by Ty Pennington, the star of ABC's "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition."

Although the deal was in the works before Kmart Holding Corp. launched its bid for Sears, Roebuck & Co. last year, it nevertheless shows that the company formed by the acquisition is moving ahead with plans to shake up its stores.

The move is aimed at modernizing a home department that has struggled in recent years. The new line, Ty Pennington Style, has about 300 brightly colored, whimsical products, from comforters to shower curtains to dinnerware, grouped under collection names like "Bali Hai," a floral South Pacific motif, and "Caliente Stripe," a pattern of zesty reds and oranges. Sears, based in Hoffman Estates, Ill., will begin selling the brand next week.

Sears is one of a number of discount and department stores vying to improve their home merchandise. **J.C. Penney** Co. has produced hits with its Chris Madden bedding and bath lines and Colin Cowie dinnerware. **Target** Corp. has upgraded its furniture quality and, in January, launched its "Global Bazaar" collection of furniture and decorations from around the world. Even **Wal-Mart Stores** Inc. is touting its new 400-thread-count sheets.

Then, of course, there's Martha Stewart, whose line of home furnishings for Kmart is the quintessential example of celebrity design. Kmart completed its acquisition of Sears Roebuck on March 24 to form Sears Holdings. The company declined to comment on whether Sears stores will add the Martha Stewart Everyday brand of home furnishings, currently exclusive to Kmart in the U.S. Mr. Pennington's line will debut only in Sears stores.

Sears says Ty Pennington Style is different from rivals' merchandise because the color schemes coordinate across bedroom, bathroom and dining-room products.

Its pricing is comparable with J.C. Penney's Chris Madden line and is more expensive than Martha Stewart Everyday.

"I like when you walk into a room and you're hit immediately by something fun," said Mr. Pennington, a graphic designer and carpenter by training.

He said he chose the colors and patterns himself, inspired by his food and travel preferences.

Write to Amy Merrick at amy.merrick@wsj.com¹