



# AREA RUGS

## *design guidelines*

BY ADENE LUCAS

**AN AREA RUG CAN UNIFY A SPACE**, add warmth, absorb sound and bring texture and character into a room. Conversely, the wrong style, colour or size of rug can ruin the look and feel of a room.

Yet, despite everything that a great area rug can do for a room, the area rug is often the most neglected component. Although the area rug is the first of the many layers in any room, we tend to focus on the things that are at eye level, such as art, furniture, accessories and lighting.

**To help you find the area rug that will truly enhance your room's appeal, here are a few basic guidelines:**

### **SIZE**

What is worse than no area rug at all? A rug that is too small. It makes the room seem smaller, the furniture looks larger and the whole scale of the space will appear off. The most common larger sizes are 5' x 8', 6' x 9' and 8' x 10'. In your living space use a roll of painter's tape to mark the area where

you are placing the rug. A good rule of thumb is to create a border by leaving 12" to 15" of bare floor around the perimeter of the room. The rug should reach all of the furniture in the room, but if not, consider moving up to the next size. In the dining area make sure the rug is large enough to move the chairs without them teetering on and off the rug.

### **STYLE**

What is the look you are trying to achieve? Is it casual, contemporary or traditional? An area rug's style and colour will play a large part in the feel of a room. Patterns can be complex and small or simple and large. Select a colour that enhances the décor, which doesn't mean making it match perfectly. Recently at a client's home, I listened as she pondered replacing her dark leather furniture because the room was not working. The furniture had been placed around a large, dark chocolate-brown area rug. The area rug was the issue not the furniture. To make the room feel alive rather than flat, all she had to do was substitute a lighter rug with an accent colour – a quicker, simpler and more cost-effective solution.

### **BUDGET**

Some designers suggest that high-end furniture demands high-end area rugs and that a single home shouldn't have a mix of top-quality and more affordable rugs. I disagree. In my own house, I have a HomeSense rug in my dining room and in the living room, I have a rug from the House of Persian Rugs. These rugs work well with each other. I love to decorate using a variety of styles and a high-low mentality. You can have a high-end sofa with an inexpensive rug and make it work. There is no need to go without a rug until you can afford the best quality. You can read that on HGTV's website!



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#### WHERE TO LOOK

Now that you have a size, style and budget in mind, it is time to shop and find the perfect rug to fit those requirements.

If you have a flexible budget and are willing to invest in a rug as you would in a piece of art, go to The House of Persian Rugs. If you can't find a rug there, then you won't find a rug anywhere because you don't know what you want. They have thousands of rugs in a range of styles and sizes including transitional, contemporary and, of course, traditional. The staff will flip the rugs to show you the pattern and colours, then deliver your selection to your house so that you know exactly how the rugs look in that particular room. It is a great way to shop!

If your budget is more restricted, try HomeSense. You will need to go through the racks and look at the tag to see if the rug is machine or handmade, a more expensive natural fiber such as wool or a more affordable synthetic such as polypropylene or nylon. Big box stores such as Rona, Home Depot, IKEA and Pier 1 also carry area rugs. Carpet stores often carry a great selection of area rugs. You could even try 10,000 Villages which sells fair trade rugs from all over the world.

Now that you know and understand the rug basics, spend the time and do it right to avoid hauling that giant roll of carpet back to the store and living with a bare floor! ☺



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