

CHOOSING A RUG



Decorating your home, from the floor up

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When Ronak Kordestani was in Iran 15 years ago, working as a translator for a group of Japanese filmmakers making a documentary about a Qashqai tribal people renowned for their handwoven rugs, she had no idea that she would one day be a rugmaker herself.

“That’s when I fell in love with the entire process, when I learned about how they were made and dyed and the whole Qashqai lifestyle,” she said in describing her life-changing experience. “I always had the idea deep inside me, somewhere in my heart, but I didn’t really think about it until things started unfolding. The rest is history.”

Today, Kordestani is an artist, designer and the curator of the Kordestani Collection, a carefully selected mix of hand-knotted vintage Persian rugs and her own creations that she sells on Etsy and her recently launched website, kordestani-collection.com.

In Persian culture, carpets are considered the soul of a home and are an

important symbol of hospitality. In North America, carpets are usually an afterthought, the last item of inexpensive home furnishings purchased to decorate any given space.

“Because a good, handmade rug can actually be the most expensive piece in a room, I recommend starting with the rug, its theme and mood, and then finding furniture to match it,” Kordestani said.

Ouri Moulavi agrees. An architect by trade and the president of ESSGO Carpets, a family business started by his father in 1975, Moulavi believes one of the biggest mistakes people make when choosing an area rug is trying to match it with the decor.

“When you’re decorating, start from the floor up,” Moulavi said. “Pick up the colours from the rug for your couches and curtains, which is a lot easier to do than the opposite, because there are so many more choices in furniture fabrics and drapery than there are carpets.”



Those in the know suggest that homeowners, when decorating, start from the floor up, using the colours of a carpet to help determine the colour of couches, chairs and cushions. In this scene, for example, the white area rug sets off the dark wood floors and is reflected in throw pillows, table tops and the mats on framed photographs on the wall.

Other common mistakes people make is not investing in a superior quality rug and forgoing a carpet pad, he said. “Cheap rugs that are factory-made tend to fall apart, and they create a lot of static that

Cheap rugs that are factory-made tend to fall apart, and they create a lot of static that attracts dirt and dust. A carpet pad will double the life of your rug ...

Attracts dirt and dust. A carpet pad will double the life of your rug, protect your floors, keep the rug from moving, and absorb sound — so it’s a worthwhile investment.”

As for size, when it comes to carpets,



A carpet runner on the stairs not only protects the wood from wear and tear, it serves to muffle the sound of people travelling up and down.

it most definitely matters.

Unless they're starting from scratch, Shuja Bashir, the owner of Bashir Persian Rugs, recommends people draw the shape of their space, with exact measurements, as well as the layout of their furniture before coming in to the store.

One of the size guidelines he likes to share with clients is choosing a rug



A vintage Persian rug runner adds colour and life to any room, and can be used to define a hallway type of space even where there is no hallway.

that's big enough to accommodate all the dining-room chairs — even when they're pulled out from under the table. As for the living room, "when you're sitting on the sofa, your feet should land on the carpet," Bashir said.

Carpets unite the individual pieces of

furniture that are on it, so choosing a carpet that's too small is one of the worst decorating mistakes someone can make; it creates additional lines that divide the space, instead of unifying it.

In a living room, you need at least seven inches of carpet under the sofa; in



Investing in a quality carpet and underpad ensures your floor is protected, the carpet stays in place, and it lasts a long time.

the bedroom, the carpet should frame the bed with at least two feet on either side of the bed and four feet in front.

"Rugs not only come in a variety of sizes, colours and designs, but also textures such as wool, silk, cotton, polypropylene and other new, genetically modified fibres," Bashir said. "You can not only see, but feel the difference between them."

Wool is most durable, he noted, adding that pure silk carpets "are mostly

used in bedrooms, formal dining rooms, and as wall hangings."

With most new condos built with an open-floor concept, it's no surprise that more people are turning to carpets to help them define their spaces. Choosing the right area rug for an open concept can be tricky, but Moulavi has a tip that may help.

"In a large room that's an open space, I would put all the furniture on a rug that's at least 18 inches from the



wall,” he said. “You need a frame around the rug to make the room feel bigger. If it’s closer to the wall, it makes the room look smaller.”

As for Kordestani, she believes that multiple rugs in an openconcept space create all the lines needed to give it definition.

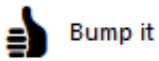
“You put a rug under your sofa, there’s your living room — you’ve defined the space.

“If you don’t have a hallway but you put a runner, you’ve just created one,” she said.

“You can never have too many rugs; you can even layer them.”

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