

BALLARD DESIGNS

ABOUT AREA RUGS

Thank you for your interest in our fine rugs. If you have questions not addressed here, please call us at 800-535-8776. One of our representatives will be glad to assist you.

SHOPPING FOR RUGS

Rugs have long been a favorite decorative accessory, adding personality, ambience and warmth to any room. But with so many sizes, styles and materials to choose from, how do you know which one is right for you? To help you make your decision, we've put together this quick reference guide.

Rug Sizing—Rugs come in a range of sizes, from runners (usually 2-3'W x 8-12'L; perfect for hallways or staircases) to area rugs (3-6'W x 5-9'L) to room-size (usually up to 12'W x 16'L). Before buying a rug, consider your needs. If you are purchasing a rug for a dining room, make sure it is big enough for the chairs to remain on the rug when pulled out from the table (some experts advise adding 4' to the width and length of your table to determine the right size). For all other rooms, guidelines suggest that room-size rugs lie about 1½' from the wall, while area rugs can be just about whatever size you like. Handmade Rug sizes are approximate.

RUG TYPES

Aubusson—In 18th-century France, the town of Aubusson became famous for its production of flat woven tapestry carpets. Aubusson designers used neoclassical and rococo themes, often with extravagant garlands of naturalistic flowers. Today, an Aubusson is an excellent choice for any traditional setting. More durable than a needlepoint yet extremely thin, these intricate tapestries feel best atop a good-quality rug pad.

Hooked—Rather than employing a needle, as is used in needlepoint, hooked rugs are made by hand with the aid of small hooks. These implements pull the yarn through a webbing to produce the looped surface of the piece. The smaller the loop, the more detail. The smallest loop, a "micro-hook," gives a fine and delicate texture comparable to needlepoint. A "petit-hook" is slightly larger.

Jute/Seagrass/Sisal—Made from strong, coarse leaf fibers, these rugs add natural color and texture to your floor. They're popular year-round or as a summer substitute for wool rugs. Many of ours feature hand-stenciled patterns. As these rugs are crafted completely from natural fibers, a rough texture, uneven surface and color variations are to be expected. (*Note: you may notice an unusual odor when you first unroll a natural-fiber rug. This is normal, and will dissipate after airing the rug out for a few days.*)

Kilim—Alive with geometric pattern, vivid hues and regional tradition, kilims are best in casual settings. Their unique "slit-tapestry style" construction yields a flat woven wool rug with no knots. For longer wear, kilims are reversible. We also like this style for accenting more than your floor—try a kilim layered over a tablecloth or as wall art.

Machine Made—Usually crafted of synthetic fibers such as polypropylene, machine-made rugs are a durable and inexpensive choice for high-traffic areas like kitchens, hallways and baths. Though not as long-wearing as handmade wool rugs (which can literally last for centuries), they will typically provide about 5-10 years of use.

Needlepoint—The skilled craft of needlepoint dates back to the 18th and 19th centuries. The dense cross-stitch of pure wool resembles tapestry, and styles range from neoclassical to French country to English Jacobean. Look on the reverse of a fine needlepoint rug—you'll clearly see knots and tie-off stitching. This is evidence of handwork, and a sure

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sign of quality. In addition to use as a floor covering, we suggest trying this intricate, lightweight style as a wall hanging or table covering.

Persian—Originating in what is now Iran, most Persian rugs are made of hand-knotted wool. Also known as Oriental, these carpets use age-old, rich Eastern hues and stylized motifs. We love Persian rugs for their long-lasting quality, the grace with which they age and how well they look in very formal as well as eclectic, casual areas.

Savonnerie—Taking their name from the former soap factory near Paris in which they were first produced, Savonneries were made for the royal palaces of the Louvre and Versailles in the 18th and 19th centuries. Considered the high point of European carpet-making, these rugs reflect the opulence and splendor of imperial France and are unrivaled in quality. Today's fine reproductions are typically soft wool pile with a pastel palette and ornate floral pattern (similar designs can be found on Aubusson and needlepoint rugs).

Soumak—These finely woven wool carpets originated in the Caucasus region of Eurasia and usually showcase geometric patterns of stylized diamonds and palmettes. More substantial than other flat weave styles, these rugs have a braid-like weave and are often reversible. Depending on the colors and design, soumaks are equally appropriate for either formal or casual living spaces.

Tufted—Tufting is a technique in which tufts of wool are pushed through a pre-woven backing to create the soft pile. The back is then covered with material (usually canvas). Similar in look to hand-knotted rugs, tufted styles use the same fine wool and dyes but offer better value.

Hand Knotted—Most labor-intensive of rug constructions. They can range in style from flat weave rugs to pile rugs. The density of the pile is determined by how tightly the knots are packed together. Many hand-knotted rugs have fringes, which are backing threads of the rug.

RUG CARE AND TIPS

1. Vacuuming helps restore pile height to keep your rug from “flattening” or creating wear spots.
2. Rotate your rug twice a year to avoid traffic wear spots on your rug.
3. Avoid direct sunlight on your rug.
4. Clean any spills immediately.