



As special section editor, Elise Demboski brings with her 16 years of experience in high fashion flooring with a distinctive expertise in wool.

OPPOSITE: Design 255J Kashmir from the National Geographic Home West Indies' Collection by OW Sphinx.

At Home with WOOL

By ELISE DEMBOSKI

As the busy days of summer come to a close, less time is spent outdoors, and more of our thoughts turn towards home as “a haven of shelter, of happiness and love.” BY DEFINITION THEN, THAT MAKES HOME THE PERFECT SANCTUARY FOR YOU AND THE THINGS YOU MOST ADORE.



Bavaria Maple Cream from Unique Carpets Ltd.

When decorating, it makes sense to surround ourselves with items that bring us joy — items which are as comfortable as they are beautiful, regardless of the season. What better place to start than the floor?

Though a new carpet can transform a home better than just about any other decorating purchase, many people unfortunately tend to resist the urge to change their carpet. Studies show that most consumers desire to upgrade the look of their living room every five years, yet they tend to hold onto the same carpet for 10 years — or longer!

Fortunately, wool is at home either way.

First, wool ages gracefully and can maintain its good looks for a lot longer than 10 years. Because wool retains its classic good looks, you're never forced to replace your carpet simply because it is worn or dull. Second, wool is also known for setting the many trends we see in carpets and rugs, which means beautiful colors and fabulous textures found in wool are sure to have you coming back for more — sooner rather than later.

The good news is, with wool you have that choice when YOU are ready whether it's a full house of your favorite wool carpet or you opt to add personality to your living space with wool area rugs. The simple addition of a luxurious wool rug can change the entire feel of a room, and you don't need hardwood floors to do it. >>





A NEW WAY TO LOOK AT RUGS!

*ABOVE:
Style #EL-13
from Momeni's
Elements
Collection is a
striking new
Wools of New
Zealand Brand
rug that also
comes in
runners and
rounds.*

- ☛ Rugs look great layered over carpet and especially stylish over a flat weave that will frame it, like wool sisal. Layering rugs is a lot like layering clothes — a skillful mix of styles results in an updated look. So, pile it on this Fall, and enjoy the endless possibilities.
- ☛ Wool carpets and rugs can make a statement in some very atypical areas of the home as well as they create a unique personal space as in a home theatre.
- ☛ Designers tell us that rugs are hard workers because they absorb sound. Heathered rugs in darker shades are also good at hiding everyday dirt tracked in from outdoors.
- ☛ If you are adding a rug or carpet to a fully decorated room, your best choice may be a solid style that contributes a single color, or a subtle combination of shades, along with a bit of texture. A coordinating rug can also be used in a room with patterned furnishings, but designers will generally advise that the patterns should not touch. In this environment, make sure your upholstered furniture has legs and that a solid-color edge is added to the bottom of chair skirts and that full-length curtains are used to separate the two patterns.
- ☛ Think of your floor as your “fifth wall,” worthy of your decor attention, and don’t forget that it’s the surface people come in contact more than any other. So, why not make a bold, dramatic statement with products like the ones you find here in FABULOUS FLOORS? (Start a project folder and fill it with photos and samples.)
- ☛ Ideally, a rug or carpet should be the first purchase for a room, providing a palette that inspires the rest of the décor. By decorating from the floor up, you can pull accent colors from the rug to use as base colors in furnishings and custom window treatments. Coordinating patterns in accessories, such as custom pillows to pick up colors and patterns, add visual interest without causing pattern overload, and they’re quick design freshen-uppers.

If you are purchasing a home or in the process of building, budget apprehensions need not deter you from considering wool. In fact, you may be surprised by wool's affordability.

When determining a budget for your floor, a good rule of thumb is to try to establish a minimum, say, of \$1.75 per square foot for every \$100,000 paid for the home. Therefore, a \$300,000 home would have a *minimum* budget of \$5.25 per square foot of flooring fashion (plus cushion and installation, of course).

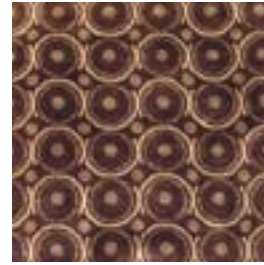
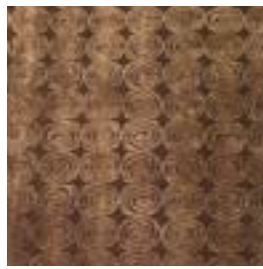
If your budget is tight, another option is cost averaging. This is accomplished by determining the areas of your living space where you would most like to make a statement with wool, like the living room and master bedroom. Simply subtract that cost from your total budget and then use the balance to select appropriate products for other areas, such as the basement or playroom, based on your lifestyle needs. With "cost averaging," you can stay within budget while enjoying the visual appeal and tactile pleasure of wool.

If you learn to maintain wool properly, its good looks can last a lifetime or more. (Learn more from the experts at "Find Wool Fast" on Page 79.)

Given the vast range of carpets and rugs available in wool, finding one to meet your budget could not be easier. Once you experience the toe-curling comfort and exceptional performance of wool, you'll want to surround yourself with more. It's a simple pleasure that goes a long way in making your home a more comfortable and welcoming place to live. 🐏

Axminster Scarborough scroll, trellis and runner/border patterns in colors, from left to right, Pistachio, Roasted Chesnut, Toffee Apple, Gypsy Green, Carousal Cream and Carnival Praline, all crafted in British wool.





Banana Silk

By NANCY STEVENS

What does a rug in “*banana silk*” conjure up?

It’s one high-sheen texture that’s getting a lot of attention, and it’s part of a range of custom area rugs in a wild yet popular fusion of Old World and New featured at Marc Phillips Decorative Rugs New York Studio. From pale-

colored antique reproductions with European and Oriental inspirations to rich-tone Tibetans coupled with Modernist and Art Deco period designs, the collection also projects a new edginess with modern and industrial influences.

Studio owner Bobby Partial works directly with clients and designers and says, “We take elaborate antique designs, painting and fabrics and remove some of the details in the pattern to create very modern and minimalist styles that have an edge for our metropolitan clients.”

The look illustrates the Marc Phillips’ philosophy which embraces the importance of experimenting with unusual textures and weaves utilizing natural fibers like wool, hemp, jute and nettle.

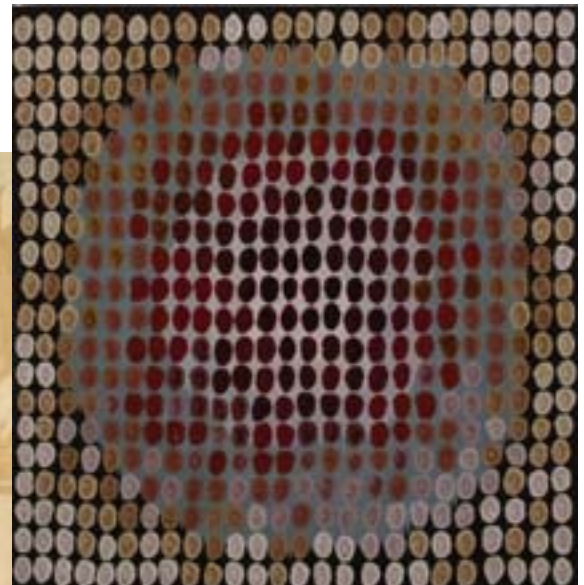
Other trends include the return of the shag and the use of angora wool to project a soft, disheveled and somewhat wild look. “These are tactile rugs you just want to reach out and feel,” Partial said.

In addition to bold textures, Marc Phillips also sees some new tone trends. Why else would designers create antique custom reproductions for homes that need a beautiful floor, yet one with a worn look? To distress rugs, they are hand-washed, treated with a mix of natural and manmade dyes and then laid out in the sun to enhance the time-worn effect. Colors turn gentle and subtle as they would with maturity. The result is delicate hue-and-tone for a soft neutral palette for a room’s interior design.

In previous issues of FABULOUS FLOORS, we reported on the new “anything goes” trend appealing to a consumer’s unique personality far more than traditional formal designs. That would explain the simultaneous popularity of rugs with bold bright colors in red, purple and lilac hand-in-hand with a solid demand for gray and chocolate brown.

The Marc Phillips new studio in New York allows the company to mine world markets for truly unusual rugs, but also to turn focus to a multi-generation family craft, custom-made rugs and other flooring (including wood) working in partnership with high-fashion designers and private clients.

Rugs can range from \$50 to \$120 per square foot, meaning a nominal 9x12 custom rug will cost \$5,400 to \$13,000. (*For more information, visit www.marcpPhillipsrugs.com*). 🍷



*At right, French Wreath is a two-color wool trellis by Godfrey Hirst.
Below, Marseille by Couristan is a tufted wool loop that comes in five earthen colors.*



*At left, Laguna by J. Mish.
Above, 'Radiant', is the latest British Wool range by Hibernia Woolen Mills.*