



BY SARAH ST. AMANT

# Laying Down THE RULES

Beyond style, type and budget, size is the most important factor to consider when purchasing an area rug

**M**any consumers make the mistake of selecting a carpet that is much too small for their space. As a designer, I remind clients that area rugs are meant to define a space, by way of placement and by the statement they make.

I often encounter clients who are skeptical of using an area carpet in their room, considering their investment in hardwood. However, in most cases, a vast space needs a rug to anchor the furniture arrangement and define a conversation area. Area carpets serve to provide a sense of warmth and comfort that a hard-surfaced floor, alone, cannot.

*“If your table is round, consider having a piece of broadloom cut into a round area rug.”*



## SIZING IT UP

There are many important guidelines to consider when selecting the size for your area carpet. In a dining room, for example, it should be long and wide enough on all sides to allow for chairs to slide in and out easily. A good rule of thumb is approximately 24 to 30 inches, all the way around your table. For a standard dining table (42x64 inches) that seats four to six people, a rug measuring 8x10 feet is a good starting point.

When using an area rug in a dining room, it is always a good idea to consider the furniture arrangement in the room before determining the rug size. You should measure

where the area rug will end so the rug does not get caught under the front of your server, sideboard or other pieces of furniture.

## THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

Custom is not always synonymous with expensive. I have assisted many clients who have been on the hunt for the perfect area rug, later to find that a piece of broadloom cut to size and serged, or bound with a decorative tape, has saved the day. This allows you to create an area carpet that fits your space perfectly, fitting the room's measurements and matching colour preferences with beautiful

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results. So think outside the box: If your table is round, consider having a piece of broadloom cut into a round area rug.

## PROPER PLACEMENT

Living rooms present many issues when placing an area carpet. A common mistake I encounter when I first visit a client's home is seeing a lone coffee table sitting on an area carpet. In doing this, all attention is drawn to the coffee table rather than the entire furniture arrangement in the room.

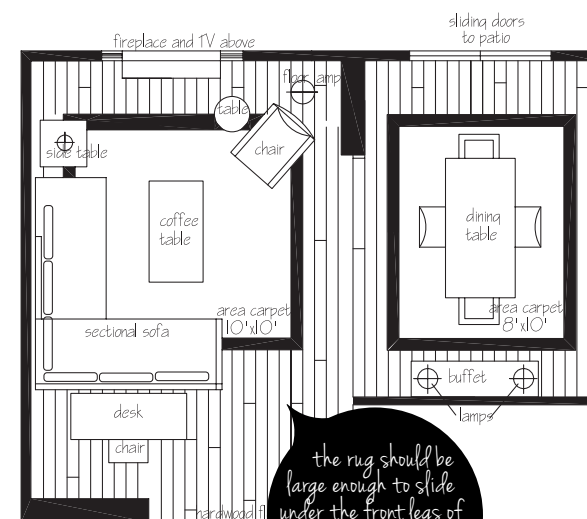
For living rooms, the rug should be large enough to slide under the front legs of sofas and chairs in a seating arrangement, unifying the furniture. Alternatively, depending on the size of the room, it looks equally nice to have all the furniture placed on the area rug. A good guideline, is to allow

approximately 9 to 12 inches of exposed floor between the rug edge and the perimeter walls of the room.

## COLOUR COORDINATION

When decorating your home from scratch, a good tip is to buy your accent rug first, and then pull colours from it to use on the walls, furniture, pillows, and other decor. This approach will create a consistent colour scheme, bringing your whole room together. It is far easier to buy furniture and accessories to complement your rug than the other way around!

With some careful consideration of personal needs, precise measurements and an incorporation of personal tastes, everyone can find an area carpet that suits their style and needs. It will serve as a beautiful addition to any room.

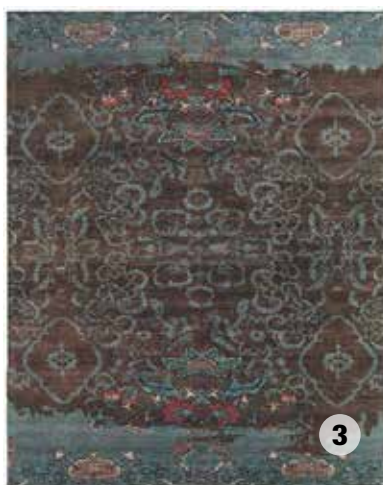


*the rug should be large enough to slide under the front legs of sofas and chairs in a seating arrangement*



BOTTOM LEFT: ASCOT CARPET BY STANTON CARPET; AVAILABLE THROUGH DESIGNERS ACROSS CANADA

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## { RUG CARE }

- Sweeping your rug with a broom or carpet sweeper on a weekly basis is highly recommended, and every other week, use a vacuum. This is a fast and efficient way to remove the grit that might cut into rug fibres. When vacuuming, it is advisable to do so with the nap. Vacuuming against the nap can press dirt back into the rug's pile. Vacuuming a shag rug with a long pile is never recommended.
- Care should be taken never to vacuum the fringe of a rug, especially with hand-knotted pieces. In hand-knotted rugs, the fringes are truly pieces of the rug's foundation. If damaged, the entire rug may be at risk of unravelling.
- To ensure that your rug wears evenly, you may want to rotate it 180° annually.
- If the rug is not in an unusually high-traffic area, you should only have to cope with major cleaning once every three to five years. Only a qualified and reputable cleaning company with good references and insurance should undertake the cleaning of an Oriental rug, as techniques are different from those used to clean wall-to-wall carpeting.
- Accidents happen – always have a bottle of plain soda water available. The bubbles in soda water dilute and lift the stain; it works well on most stains if applied immediately. Make sure that your cleaning cloth is only lightly dampened though, as excessive moisture can damage your rug.

1. Saphir Callo Collection (3259F Dark Grey) 2. Saphir Callo Collection (3261F Cream/Silver) 3. Vivendi Collection (6401F Brown/Teal) 4. Ouray Collection (Ouray 6133 Blue/Ivory); available at Minster Interiors (minster.ca) through your designer.

## { AREA RUGS 101 }

When it comes to area carpets, consumers are faced with many choices – hand-knotted, hand-tufted, power-loomed, oriental, and machine-made. When you also factor in size, pattern, style and budget, the options seem limitless. Therefore, with so many choices available, it is important to educate yourself about the characteristics of area carpets before making your purchase to suit your lifestyle and your budget.

Generally speaking, hand-knotted rugs are the most durable, however, there are different levels of quality based on the type of wool used as well as the number of knots required to create the rug. Depending on the quality

of the rug, this is definitely an investment piece and can last for generations. A 5x8-foot rug can take up to six months to make, larger sizes – years! So, it is understandable why the price point can be in the thousands.

Hand-tufted rugs, while handmade in quality, are not actually knotted by hand, but rather are made with the assistance of a tufting gun, and not as high-priced as hand knotted.

In the case of accent rugs, the price point is actually a good indicator of the quality of an area carpet, especially when the tag indicates 100 per cent wool. It is characteristic of all synthetic and wool pile rugs to lose short

fibers, but the amount of shedding will vary based on the quality of wool. So, the quality of the wool is important to consider – lesser quality wools will shed, while higher quality wools such as New Zealand wool will exhibit minimal shedding. Keep in mind, you get what you pay for!

Not everyone wishes to utilize a wool rug in their space, though. Alternatively, there are area rugs for the budget-conscious consumer, such as machine-made pieces or utilizing broadloom cut to a desired size. The look of machine-made rugs can be equally pleasing to the overall room decor, but they have a different look and feel.

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