

Oriental rugs buying guide

About Handmade Rugs

Oriental Rugs are not only beautiful, but also so durable that they last for generations, hold their value or even appreciate over time, age beautifully and look prettier with age than when they were new. They are also very easy to maintain and clean. These qualities make handmade rugs a greater value than any other home furnishing in the amount of beauty they add to any home or office, and the value and incredibly long service they give to their owners.

Do's and don'ts

As beautiful and mysterious as handmade rugs are, they are also very hard to judge unless you are an expert. This makes it extremely important that you deal with a reputable rug dealer who has a substantial stock, preferably specializing in hand knotted rugs, with many years of experience. Going out of business sales and travelling auctions are the worst place to buy hand knotted rugs from, because they usually are outlets for the rejected goods of the rug industry and don't always offer any real savings.

Where to buy oriental rugs

Choosing the Right Oriental Rug Store

Choosing the right oriental rugs store is the single most important factor in your rug buying decision. No matter how much you learn about rugs, you have to depend on the dealer you choose for information, advice, and guarantees. Deal only with a rug store that you "FEEL" comfortable with. You should get a feeling of honesty, integrity, experience, and excellent customer service.

Pressure

DO NOT deal with a rug dealer that pressures you to make a hasty decision. Most good rug dealers will allow you to view the rugs (and even some would allow you to take it home for a try) and make an informed and calm decision. If you feel intimidated, uncomfortable, or pressured by a dealer, just walk away. Make sure you feel in a nice and courteous environment.

Information

This should be a very important factor in choosing a rug store. If the store does not have a knowledgeable staff, or they are unwilling to convey enough knowledge about the rugs like their fiber content, country of origin, quality, and clear comparisons between different types of rugs, then you don't want to deal with them.

Online rugs search

It is always advisable to go online and do some research about what you're buying. Have a rough idea of prices, qualities and other details of a rug. Look for a local reputable dealer around your area.

Price on oriental rugs

A great feature of handmade rugs is that you can find a rug to fit almost any budget. Even a large room size rug, made entirely by hand with natural fibers like wool or cotton, can be acquired from

any store for just a few hundred dollars. Visit view shops and note down information on what you want to buy. Then decide on the shop that you want to buy rug from.

Size

This is the first step in choosing the right rug(s). No matter how beautiful, magnificent, and valuable a rug is, it must be the right size for your decor. The size is the first factor you should determine for each area you are considering a rug for. For example, the hallway and the dining room are the most "size sensitive" areas. The hallway should have a rug that covers the entire hall end to end, or with a small distance of about a foot at each end. Any rug too small or large for a hallway will be more obvious than a similar situation in a family room, entry or bedroom. The Family room, living room, bedroom, entryway, kitchen, etc. are all easier to work with than the hallways and dining rooms.

Material

The primary materials used in rugs are wool, cotton and silk. Most tribal or nomadic rugs are wool pile and wool foundation. Natural fibers have the durability, beauty and value that synthetic materials can never match. The most durable, easy to clean fiber is wool. Silk rugs are luxurious and beautiful but not meant for very high traffic areas.

WOOL: There are many grades of wool. Generally wool from sheep that are from higher altitude areas is finer, the neck and belly area also have finer wool. The wool from young healthy animals is better. Live wool, the only kind you want, is sheared from a live animal, while dead wool is chemically removed from dead animal. The dead wool has no oils and is rough to the touch.

WARNING: DO NOT STEAM CLEAN or DRY-CLEAN handmade oriental wool rugs. Steam Cleaning takes out the oils from the wool and converts good live wool into dead wool. It is deceiving because the rug looks very clean when cleaned by steam, but the damage is irreversible and shows after a few cleanings when it is too late. Dry Cleaning leaves a chemical in the fiber that is harmful to the longevity of a fine handmade wool rug.

WARNING: The biggest misrepresentations of materials are acrylic sold as wool, rayon or mercerized cotton sold as silk. Any product description can be written to sound like the product is magnificent. Look for specific information and skip the lip service. If the material is omitted, or a synthetic material is glorified like it is gold, it is still synthetic material and does not have the durability and value of natural fibers.

TIP: To make sure a silk rug is really silk, take a little piece and burn it. If it leaves a little stem, it is silk, if it disintegrates, it is rayon. The most common way to present rayon in the rug industry is "artificial silk", or worse "art silk", in either case, it is not silk. A lot of Silk rugs from India, China, and Pakistan are not real silk so make sure you know what you are buying. Any reputable dealer will always tell you clearly what material a rug is made with.