

ASK THE DESIGNER

Area Rugs can make a Big Difference in Putting a Room Together

By Jean Bisnaire, Niche Decor

?My living room feels bare without an area rug. With so many different sizes, styles, patterns, and textures ? how do I go about deciding on one??

(Feel free to send me your comments or questions to askjean@nichedecor.ca)

That's a great question because many don't realize how important areas rugs are in a space. They can either be the starting point or the finishing touch that brings the room together. The right carpet can set the tone for an entire room. Its colours and patterns give soul to the space, bringing it to life and reflecting the personality of the home and its owners.

A rug serves many purposes ? it can define a space, distinguishing areas in an open concept home. It can be a source of comfort adding a soft layer between your feet and the floor or cushion the falls of young children.

Carpets also act to protect your floors from scratches and sun damage. Lastly, carpets are great for acoustics. They can reduce noise by absorbing excess vibrations as well as help to block the sound of footsteps from travelling to the floor below.

When choosing a carpet, there are several factors to keep in mind. First, establish a budget. Selecting a price range that you are comfortable with will help to narrow the selection and make finding the right piece easier. Did you want to invest in a piece by spending a couple of thousands of dollars or did you want something inexpensive to take the abuse of younger children?

Next is colour. What colours work in the space? Consider your personal taste as well as the colour of the floor, walls and existing furniture. You should search for a rug with the same zest as you would if you were selecting a piece of art.

When deciding on a rug, quality is an extremely important factor. Premium natural fibers such as wool and silk are best for durability and your health. Both wool and silk are non-allergenic, fire retardant and wool in particular is stain resistant. If eco-friendly design is something that is important to you, it's good to note that wool is a renewable resource.

It also acts as an insulator making a space feel warmer in the winter months, and cooler on a hot summer day. Hopefully we start having some of those again soon!

On the topic of quality, pay attention to the craftsmanship of the rug. A more intricate design and higher number of knots are good indicators of a better quality carpet. Industry professionals have likened the knots of a rug to pixels in an image. The more knots, the better the design resolution.

My clients often ask what size rug is right for their space. I opt to go by the size of the room rather than the size of the furniture. The larger the rug, the larger the room feels. The scale of the piece should be in line with the rest of the space. I like to consider the volume of the room, ceiling height, and the size of any other décor elements.

A high quality carpet will have the same impact as a beautiful piece of art. Take your time looking around, ask questions, take photos and have fun with it. Most carpet retailers will give you the option of sampling their rugs in your space so you can get a better feel for the colour and pattern in your room. Once you've found the right piece you'll know. You'll fall in love with it all over again, every time you enter your room.

What are you doing to create a casual elegance to come home to?