

Area Rug Terminology

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Styling Terms: Abrash: Change or variation in the color of a rug due to differences in the wool or dye bath.

The effect of abrash is subtle shading differences. In older or antique rugs, Abrash occurs naturally. In new rugs, both machine made and handmade, Abrash is carefully created by changing the color of the yarns to mimic a vintage look.

Contemporary: Non-traditional style category. The designs range from tailored architectural geometrics to free-form asymmetrical styles.

Field: Central part of a rug design generally surrounded by a border.

Ground: Background color which sets off the principle design motif of the rug.

Hand: Tactile qualities of a fabric including softness, stiffness, rough, scratchy, etc.

Overtuft: Tufting process done by hand or machine in which an already tufted and dyed carpet has another yarn system tufted through the back of the fabric to develop a pattern on the surface of the carpet.

Pile: Cut or looped yarns that form the top surface of carpet or rugs.

Point: One tuft of pile.

Tone-on-Tone: Two or more shades of the same hue achieved by combining two ends of different shades, two different yarns of the same color or cut pile and looped pile of the same color.

Traditional: Styling designation that refers to long established patterns in the Oriental/Persian or classic European schools. In new rugs, traditional designs are produced either in modern colorations or in colors that replicate antique rugs.

Transitional: A broad style category that falls between traditional and contemporary. Many floral patterns are included in this category. **Handmade Terms:** Aubusson/Tapestry Weave: Hand weaving method originating in France in which the "stitches" on the face look more linear, and the back may look "stringy." This occurs when the weaver changes yarn colors.

Flat Weave: Weaving in which no knots are used. The weft strands are simply passed through the warp strands. Dhurries are flatwoven rugs that originate in India and are usually made of cotton or wool. Kilims are generally finer, tapestry-like flatweaves.

Handmade: Constructed by hand. The category can include hand knotted, hand tufted, hand hooked, needlepoint, Aubusson and hand loomed rugs.

Hand Hooked/Hand Tufted: Rug-making process by which craftsmen insert yarn into a backing with a hand held single-needle tufting tool. The machine is often called a "gun." The rug's pattern is stenciled on primary backing material. After the tufting is complete, a backing is attached to protect and anchor the stitches.

The pile of a hand hooked rug is made up of loops. A hand tufted rug has a cut pile surface. Rugs may also combine cut and loop techniques. A rug that has a total cut pile appearance is also described as "full cut." **Hand Knotted:** Rug made by weavers who knot pile yarns around the warp fibers that run the length of the rug. Generally, the more knots per square inch, the more valuable the rug.

Knot Count: The number of knots in a square inch of a rug. Hand made Chinese rugs are often described in terms of "line." A 65 Line rug would have 65 knots per foot of width, 65 knots per foot of length, and 29 knots per square inch.

Needlepoint: A rug making technique made with wool yarns worked on canvas using the same method as a needlepoint pillow.

Tibetan Knot: A distinctive rug-weaving technique now used in other regions as well as in Tibet. A temporary rod, which establishes the length of pile, is put in front of the warp. A continuous yarn is looped around two warps and then once around the rod. When a row of loops is finished, then the loops are cut to create the pile. This method produces a slightly ridged surface.

Warp: Vertical strands of fiber, which stretch from the top to the bottom of the rug. Knots are tied to the warp yarns to create face pile.

Weft: Horizontal strands of fiber that are woven through the warps. The weft anchors and secures the knots.

Machine made Terms: Fabricated (or Inlaid) Rugs: Tufted broadloom carpet is cut and inlaid on a patterned form to create a customized rug.

Frames: Racks which hold spools of yarn on a Wilton loom. Each frame holds a separate color creel. Thus an eight-frame Wilton weaves an eight color rug.

Machine made: A rug constructed on an electrically powered machine, now usually computer controlled. **Power Loomed:** (See machine made) Power loomed has become the preferred term for machine made rugs.

Machine Tufting: A technology developed in the United States in which yarn ends are placed into a backing in a manner similar to a sewing machine equipped with hundreds of needles. U.S. tufting machinery is usually 12 or 15 feet wide. Most wall-to-wall carpeting in the U.S. is tufted. Most machine tufted rugs are sold through mass merchants and discount stores.

Wilton and Axminster: Types of electronically driven looms used to weave rugs in multi-colored patterns. Present day looms are highly sophisticated, computer controlled machines. **Fiber Terms:**

Acrylic: Man-made fiber with wool-like appearance. Does not dye as well as nylon and is less durable. Hand-tufted acrylic rugs in accent sizes have been introduced in the U.S. during the past five years. Rugs over 20 sq. ft.

BCF: Bulk continuous filament yarns are synthetic yarns processed by a mechanical means to fluff them out before tufting or weaving

Continuous Filament: Nylon or polypropylene yarn made in one long strand that can be tufted or woven without the need for further processing.

Faux silk: "False silk" is usually a synthetic, such as polyester, or cellulosic fiber such as viscose/ rayon. Mercerized cotton is also used as a silk look-alike. Also called art silk, faux silk is usually used as small accents or in a short, dense pile constructions.

Heatset: Twisted yarns are treated with heat to retain their "permanent wave" for better performance and appearance retention.

Nylon: Durable synthetic fiber which also has good dyeing characteristics. Nylon yarns can be solution dyed, skein dyed and/or space dyed

Polyester: Synthetic fiber most often used in staple spun yarns.

Polypropylene/Olefin: Synthetic fiber used extensively in machine made rugs. This low-cost fiber is colored in the pellet phase of production. Performs best when heatset and/or used in a dense construction.

Solution Dyed: A method of dyeing synthetic fiber in which pigment is added to the nylon or polypropylene chip before it is extruded as filament yarn.

Space Dyed: Yarn colored in sections of different colors before being tufted or woven into a rug. Abrash effects can be created with space dyed yarns. Space dyeing is frequently applied to nylon fibers.

Wool: There are many grades of wool. Long staple wool from New Zealand is considered to be most effective for rug manufacturing.

Worsted: An extra step in wool processing that combs out shorter fibers resulting in durable and lustrous yarns.