

MELISSA PENFOLD & ISABELLA WALKER-SMITH

RUGS

IN THE THIRD OF OUR SERIES OF LITTLE BLACK BOOKS, CREATIVE STYLE EXPERTS MELISSA PENFOLD AND ISABELLA WALKER-SMITH TAKE US RUG SHOPPING.

PHOTOGRAPHY *Edward Urrutia*

TABLE TALK Photographed at the beautifully renovated home of designer Ann-Maree Kerrin Architects by Hancock Architects. Furniture throughout, Restoration Hardware. Oscar the dog sits on 'Mackerel Skye' rug, Shibori in collaboration with Designer Rugs.

Styling assistants: Nonci Nyoni and Sophie Calder. Hair and make-up by Michelle Cox using Dermalogica, YSL Beauty & Sachajuan.

One of the most searched items on the Homes To Love website is 'rugs'. Your living room isn't complete without one. There's a dazzling range out there, but finding the right one can be like trying to solve a puzzle. Moroccan, Navajo or Tibetan? Flatweave or plush silk? Antique or new? Square or round? For decades, antique Persians, hand-knotted from silk and often taking years to produce, were the gold standard of floorcoverings. Then the market was flooded with fakes, tastes shifted, and high-quality rug production was no longer sustainable. Blame our increasingly casual culture. There has, in fact, been a 40-year move toward less formal carpets. Wool is the new silk. Established imperfections are the ideal standard. There is no rule that says you have to limit yourself to one rug in a room. Try using different rugs in large rooms to define areas. Still can't decide? Then layer them. These are a few of our favourite rug options in different price ranges – many are stylish enough to plan your whole house around. *Melissa + Isabella.*

CASTLERY

Founded in Singapore by New York banker Declan Ee, Castlery is a direct-to-consumer business, delivering stylish, modern, quality pieces for the home at accessible prices. Its new showroom at Sydney's Moore Park Supa Centa is an essential stop for a well-thought-out buzzy range of modern durable rugs. Find contemporary updates of Mid-century to Moroccan-trellis styles, loosely inspired by handwoven vintage Berber rugs in a natural palette. Castlery's focus is on quality construction, materials that last at an accessible price point, and durability for everyday use. castlery.com/au

IKEA

Check out its rug department for budget-friendly, versatile rugs that work well with just about any style, colour scheme, or setting. We're still not tired of 'Stockholm', one of the best inexpensive large wool flatweaves that is surprisingly soft. It comes in four patterns, and the black and white striped version is still the most popular with influencers. You can't go past the design in corals or red for a child's bedroom, guest room or study that is otherwise quite neutral. 'Silkeborg' patchwork rugs, made using parts of recoloured vintage Turkish carpets, come in all shapes and sizes with flowers, stripes, mosaics, multicolours. Another

option is 'Hovslund', an easy-to-clean, neutral Moroccan trellis-pattern rug in nylon that forms a great backdrop to most styles, and is easier to wipe clean and less prone to staining than some low-pile rugs. ikea.com.au

DOMAYNE

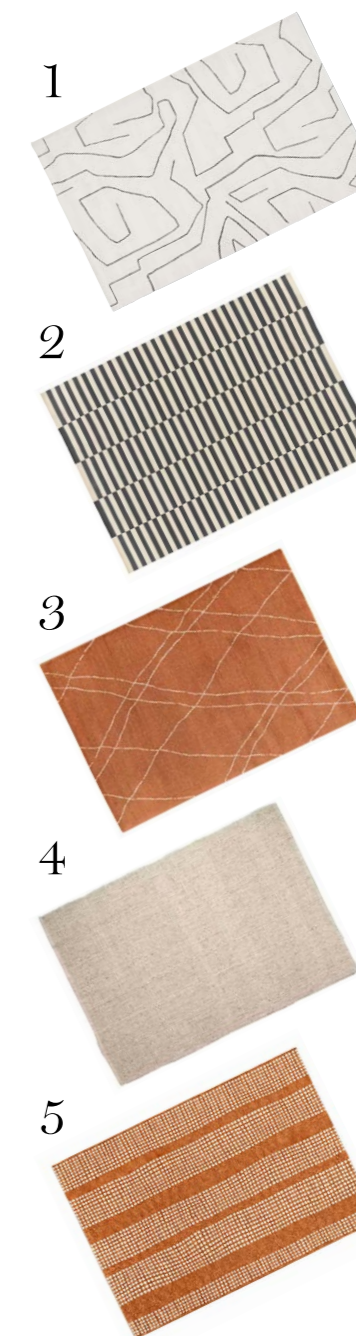
Offers a huge range of affordable rugs if you're not looking to break the bank. 'Roderick' is a soft, neutral style with a plush texture that is simple enough to suit any space. domayne.com.au

HARVEY NORMAN

For rugs that offer good looks and value for money, look no further than 'Hanna', 'Gabi', 'Contempo' and 'Moon' with their neutral geometric patterns. Made from polypropylene, they are as sturdy as they come. harveynorman.com.au

MISS AMARA

A bargain hunter's paradise, the Miss Amara brand produces fashion-conscious, wallet-friendly rugs in all kinds of styles: distressed, traditional, tribal, geometric, floral, abstract, shags, patterns and Berbers. Available in five sizes, six shapes, and 17 colour ranges, meaning the scope for updating our interiors is endless. They react quickly to new ▶



1 'Mira' wool area rug, \$549 (244x153cm), Castlery. 2 'Stockholm 2017' flatwoven rug, \$549 (350x250cm), IKEA. 3 'Moon' tribal rug in Rust, \$499 (230x160cm), Harvey Norman. 4 'Roderick' rug in Beige, \$1449 (330x230cm), Domayne. 5 'Hazrin' washable rug in Beige and Rust Brown dot pattern, \$199 (180x120cm), Miss Amara.

“Starting a room with a rug helps you set the tone for a room and allows you to see how it will evolve.”

trends as well as offering a styling service and no-questions-asked return policy. If you're after a more budget-friendly rug but don't want to compromise on style, this is a great option. missamara.com.au

PAMPA

The Byron Bay-based brand specialises in shag styles and flatweaves designed locally and handmade from pure wool by weavers in Argentina. Each creation is made using natural dye pigments from plants, flowers, vegetables, even insects, to achieve a raw, natural palette, and is signed by the individual weaver. They are also slightly less likely to make your interior look as if it's been 'done' by an interior designer. Multicolour stripes, zig-zags and from tight to wonky. Prices from \$890 to \$7190. pampa.com.au

TEMPLE & WEBSTER

The online interiors marketplace, with more than 180,000 products to choose from. From runners to sheepskin, pet-friendly options and riffs on popular Moroccan-style diamond-patterned shaggy Berber rugs in a neutral palette, which remain one of the design world's biggest trends. There is a good Bohemian range for Navajo styles in softer colours, like the ones Ralph Lauren made popular. You can plonk large sizes on the floor, mid-size ones on top of beds, and smaller ones over bannisters and chairs. You're sure to find the perfect rug for your space. Materials range from wool, jute, cotton, and synthetics. templeandwebster.com.au

ARMADILLO

Perhaps one of the most popular designer rug brands in Australia, Armadillo's minimalist, timeless, and thoughtful

designs, are perfect if you are looking for something earthy and calming. The focus is on sustainable natural materials, such as jute, wool, and silk (even linen), with hardwearing construction. The type of rugs people want in rooms where comfort and warmth are paramount that would work well near a bed or in a living room where children can snuggle down and play. This is a certified B Corp company, which means your purchase goes a long way and proves sustainability is as important to Armadillo as creativity and craft. Check the New Icons range, which rejects fleeting trends in favour of enduring design. Designed for relaxation and entertaining, the intuitive pieces are thoughtful, liveable and made to last a lifetime. armadillo-co.com

BEHRUZ STUDIO

A designer favourite. You'll find quality designs that feel both subtle and stately, with textural moments that stand out. Thomas Hamel is a long-time client. Behruz's bespoke service allows you to collaborate with a team of skilled artisans to create a spectacular piece tailored to your own vision. behruzstudio.com

BENI RUGS

True statement-making Berber designs. All Beni rugs are handmade from the soft wool of sheep grazed in the high Atlas Mountains of Morocco, with quality pieces ranging from traditional and modern authentic shaggy, diamond-patterns to totally customisable one-offs. Each design comes in 12 sizes, and each rug takes about 10 weeks from order to delivery. Popularised by design publications such as *Domino* and *Elle Decor*, and known for their collaborations

with high-profile tastemakers such as Athena Calderone and Colin King, what makes each Beni Berber unique is that you get a sense of the artisan's personality in each design. It's meant to capture the unique spirit of a handcrafted textile, something acquired perhaps, in an adventurous trip to an open-air market. But it's also designed to be discreet enough to blend in with the furniture and take the punishment of kids and pets. These rugs are made of 100% wool in a wide variety of styles and pile heights. Beni Rugs products are washed and dried up to five times to help create a super soft, luxe texture and finish. True statement-making designs. It's hard to choose a favourite. From \$790 to \$8760. benirugs.com

THE GREEN ROOM

The rugs here are proof that rugs can double as art pieces. Sophisticated, abstract and elegant designs by famed names like Kelly Wearstler so you know they're going to be of the highest quality. Also designs by Alexander McQueen, Liberty, Paul Smith, Diane Von Furstenberg, Ken Fulk, and Michael Chan. You'll see them in some of the hippest bars, restaurants and interiors here and overseas. Even pieces from UK's famed The Rug Company, which uses natural, renewable materials throughout its collections. It also holds the Butterfly Mark from Positive Luxury – an indication of its commitment to creating a better planet for all. The Rug Company's handwoven pure New Zealand wool (a material chosen for its softness and durability), takes the irregularity of nature and transforms it into one-of-a-kind pieces. Its latest collection forgoes dyes,

instead taking its colour palette from the warm tans, dusky creams and dark charcoals that naturally occur in the sheep's fleeces. The brand is a member of GoodWeave, a non-profit organisation dedicated to ending child labour in the textile industry. Extraordinary stuff. thegreenroom.com.au

CADRY'S

One of our favourites. Silk pieces, tribal weaves, vintage, antiques and contemporary collections with global names like Jan Kath, as well as custom designed, tufted and hand-knotted styles. Since 1952, the venerable third-generation family business has sold the most beautiful handwoven rugs to almost every prominent Sydney and Melbourne family. Repeat clients include Merivale, Michael Love, Marco Meneguzzi, Phoebe Nicol, Cameron Kimber, Matters + Made, and more. Artisan-made, offering quality as well as a high-end production process for its vast and varied collection. The dyes used for rugs come from untreated Tibetan and Nepalese botanicals, with vibrant indigos and earthy neutrals handwoven into designs using an ancient Tibetan knotting technique. cadrys.com.au

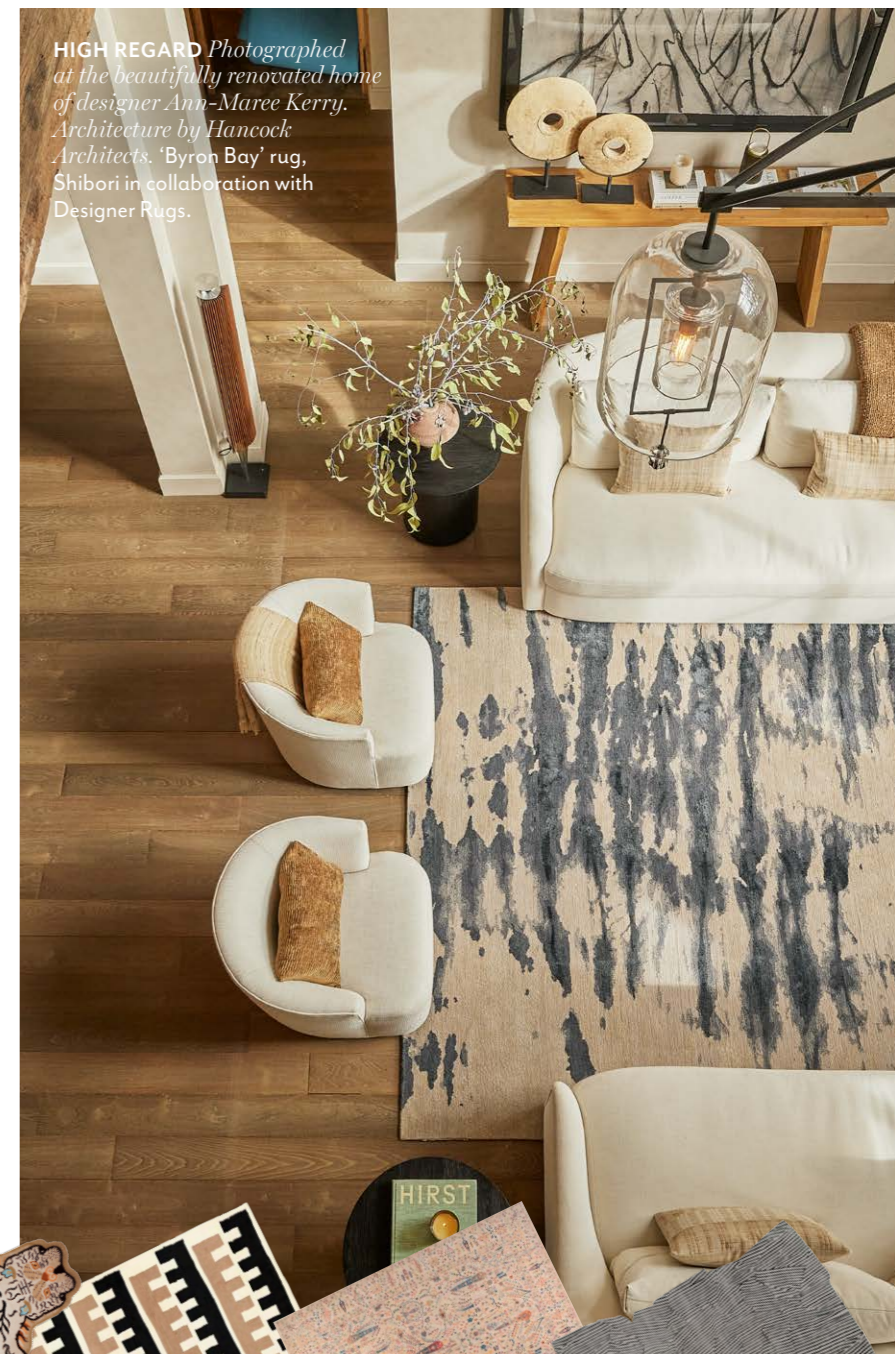
CULT

The place to shop cutting-edge Spanish rugmaker Nani Marquina's designs that ▶



1 'Trellis' rug in Natural & White, \$900 (240x170cm), Armadillo. 2 'Panthera Albus' Tibetan rug, POA, Behruz. 3 Customisable rug in Natural Wool, \$662, Beni. 4 'Afghan Fine Shahi' rug, \$33,700 (417x299cm), Cadrys. 5 Julian 'Avant' rug in Graphite shaped by Kelly Wearstler, \$11,653 (183x122cm), The Green Room.

HIGH REGARD Photographed at the beautifully renovated home of designer Ann-Maree Kerry. Architecture by Hancock Architects. 'Byron Bay' rug, Shibori in collaboration with Designer Rugs.



double as upholstery, bedheads and wall art. Used at the United Nations in Geneva, Facebook in Dublin, and loved by celebrities such as singer Shakira. The brand is renowned for unusual shapes, brash colours and elaborate patterns with 250 designs, spread over 38 collections. Seek out Marquina's own creations, such as the 'Topissimo', which uses textural, multicoloured polka dots—as well as Do-Lo-Rez by Ron Arad, the London-based Israeli, which turns a jagged, multi-edged grid into a sprawling piece of floor art. And French brothers Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec created Losanges, an octagonal-shaped collection featuring a dense array of colourful diamonds. Prices start at about \$200 for a small 'Kala' carpet based on a design from

India. Proceeds from the sale of the collection go to fund a school in India, where most of the label's rugs are made. cultdesign.com.au

DESIGNER RUGS

Yosi Tal is a rug icon. For three decades his company has designed rugs for Qantas, Google, Microsoft, Lendlease, Westpac, Coca-Cola, Parliament House, the Australian embassies worldwide and teamed with award-winning designers such as Hare + Klein, Greg Natale, Catherine Martin and Dinosaur Designs to produce hand-knotted rug collections that are out of this world. The showroom is renowned for having the largest, most complete collection of contemporary handknots in the country. Yosi is quite

convincing about hand-knots. "Hand-knots are labour; they are art. The look is clean, contemporary and organic, yet adds instant warmth and character to any space. Hand knots are the crème de la crème of rugs," says Yosi. They will instantly transform your room, unify your look, and increase your sense of space. Made using natural yarns of wool, silk, hemp and bamboo, such rugs are typically measured by knots per centimetre. A higher knot count means a higher quality rug, and it also allows for more intricate design using finer yarns. We're crushing on hot new releases: Shibori, using ancient Japanese-dyeing techniques, as well as rugs in unconventional shapes by Bernabeifreeman. And apparently,



VIEW FROM THE TOP
Photographed at the beautifully renovated home of designer Ann-Maree Kerry. Architecture by Hancock Architects. 'Entomology' rug, Shibori in collaboration with Designer Rugs.

Dinosaur Designs' newest collection sold out almost overnight. Go for quality, value, something unusual (in stock, no waiting). designerrugs.com.au

I&B PERRYMAN ORIENTAL CARPETS

Robert Kim, late decorator for the King and other notables, would go nuts here. It's the only one of its kind in the southern hemisphere, selling large Persian and Turkish antique 6x4m carpets with a certain understated opulence loved by the old guard. You'll find a huge range of rugs from Central Asia as well as bessarabian kilims from Bulgaria, black round floral kilims from Mordovia, and Oushak Turkish carpets that create a great base for a room and are easy to work with. Rugs from Donegal in Ireland, and new Tibetan rugs handwoven to order. Also in stock, or custom-made, are oversize and decorative carpets, and runners in silk or wool in shades of chocolate, burnt orange and indigo. Spanish rugs and affordable Afghan kilims, 3.5x2.5m, \$1500. "Our products are luxurious and have a strong sense of craftsman," says owner Ian Perryman. Cameron Kimber, Darryl Gordon, Chrissie Jeffery, Studio McQualter are long-time clients. Kimber comes for kilims to cut up and use to cover ottomans. Expert cleaning and restoration service, too. Antique rugs, contemporary carpets, vintage kilims. perrymancarpets.com

JARDAN

There's a huge range of textural tone-on-tone and geometric patterns here. The juicy colour palette certainly doesn't hurt either. The rugs riff on everything from the Art Deco era to Bohemian styles and are made using the finest New Zealand wool. Constructed in a soft khaki hue, 'June' rug is functional and hardy enough for an everyday space but also sophisticated enough to impress guests. jardan.com.au

JENNY JONES RUGS

If you want to floor everyone with something fabulous, head to this Perth institution. Since the 1980s, designers have flocked to the rug studio for its gorgeous range of rugs, that are renowned for their colour combos, and quality. jennyjonesrugs.com

THE RUG ESTABLISHMENT

No synthetics, here. Contemporary handmade rugs using natural yarns only, many of them in stock. Each design is meticulously crafted by skilled artisans in India, Pakistan and the Middle East. Choose from 300 one-off creations in the Capsule collection plus 20 ranges in varying colour options. Soft plush piles, in the moody, dappled colours of nature, their tightly woven flatweave base, contrasted by thick, raised-pile yarn and

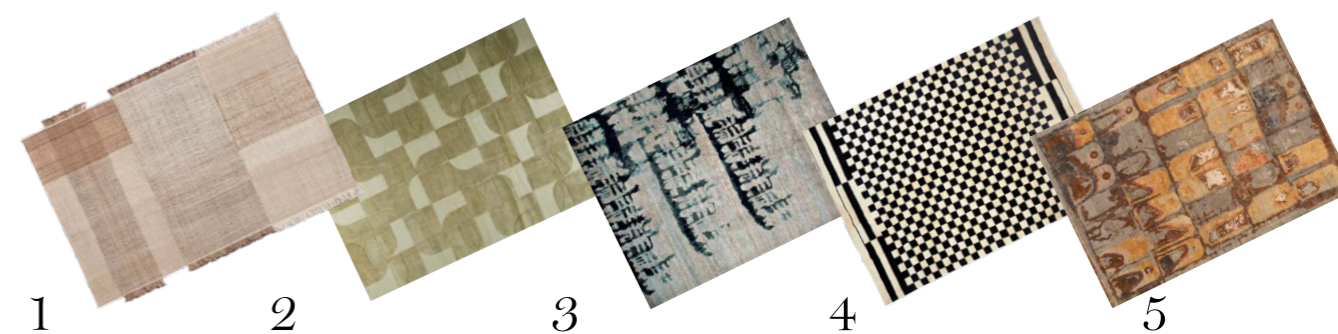
lots of texture. Each rug is woven by the brand's skilled artisans, who have spent decades honing their craft and who deploy various techniques to create these textural masterpieces. therugest.com

HALCYON LAKE

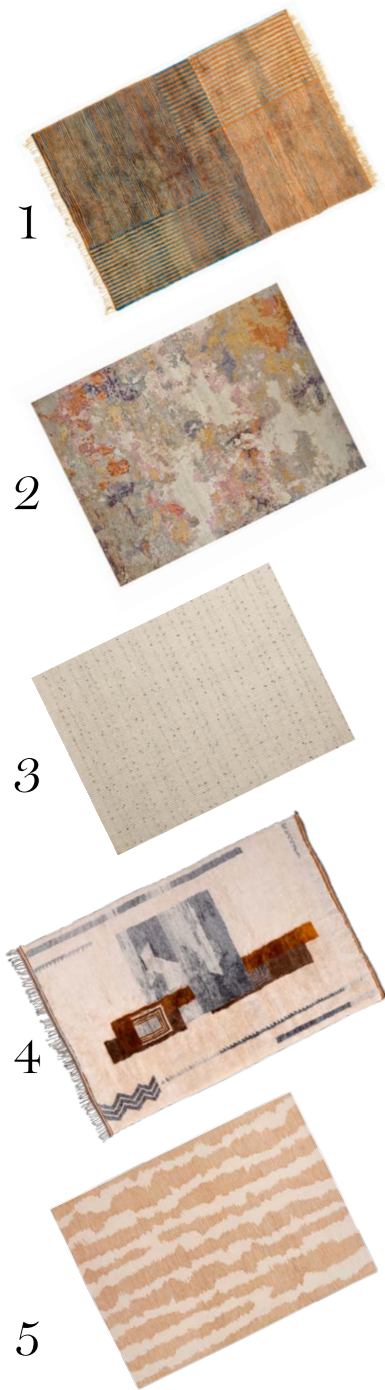
In business since 1984, the contemporary handmade rugs are used by big name architects and designers with patterns referencing everything from Art Deco to North African motifs to bold, dynamic designs and plain textured pieces. Plenty of modern riffs on almost every painting movement from Dadism to Surrealism and de Stijl. Also, a beautiful artisanal collection called Atlas, where every rug is a one-off creation, reminiscent of traditional Moroccan berbers. Made using hand-dyed wools with a thick pile that allows for colour variation and a deeper, richer palette. halcyonlake.com

HALI RUGS

Embrace the natural world and discover a dazzling array of modern thick pile wool and textured rugs, tribals, traditionals, Turkish as well as ultra-contemporary carpets that showcase raw textures, organic materials and free-flowing motifs using ancient techniques passed down through many generations of artisans with the finest yarns in muted tones. The fourth-generation family company has ▶



1 Nanimarquina Tres Dhurrie rug in Ochre, \$4040 (240x170cm), Cult. 2 'June' rug in Pale Khaki, \$7000 (350x250cm), Jordan. 3 Hare + Klein 'Etched' rug, \$8490 (300x240cm), Designer Rugs. 4 'Turkish Tulu' rug, \$6600 (384x277cm), Perryman Carpets. 5 'Sherpa' rug, \$4900 (270x180cm), Jenny Jones.



1 'Atlas' Moroccan rug, \$7250 (270x185cm), Halcyon Lake.
 2 'Spencer' rug in Multi, POA, Hali.
 3 'Fritz' handloomed rug in Ivory, \$1353 (300x200cm), Tribe Home.
 4 'Last Dance Beni M'Rirt' rug, \$8600, Tigmi Trading. 5 'Terrain Stripe' rug, \$499 (244x152cm), West Elm.

Don't want to have what everyone else has?

Robyn Cosgrove is rewriting the script on what custom rugs mean in Australia to launch Spring 2024. It's a more advanced custom system – one-on-one with Robyn, who built one of the most trusted handwoven rug brands in the country over the past 45 years used by the biggest names in design and architecture. Cosgrove will meet designers, decorators and architects in her Alex Tzannes-designed atelier where you feel like you've been transported to Europe. The specialised Cosgrove experience makes for an extra special rug. Eclectic, contemporary, romantic, Cosgrove's legendary rugs represent the pinnacle of craftsmanship and are unsurpassed for quality and attention to detail. People went wild at her 'Farewell' retail sale in December 2023, with 90 per cent of stock (about 500 rugs) selling in three days. One designer apparently bought 25 rugs. Very few people bought a single rug. Exciting stuff. robyncosgrove.com

showrooms nationwide with something for every space. SJB, Hecker Guthrie, Arent & Pyke, Kate Nixon, Studio Doherty, Carr, The Stylesmiths, Simone Haag, McKimm and Viktoria & Woods are repeat clients, so you know you're in good hands. hali.com.au

INVALUABLE AUCTIONS

Prices at auction tend to be far lower than at retail. And thanks to sites like Invaluable.com and LiveAuctioneers, which aggregate the listings of auction houses in a format similar to eBay, the process of acquiring great, collectible rug designs has been democratised, making middleman sites, such as 1stDibs, less necessary. The downside of buying at auction is that you can't return. Auctions are also a great hunting ground for flatweave wool rugs from Sweden, in most sizes, that have developed a sizeable following of buyers at auction. invaluable.com

NATURAL FLOORCOVERING CENTRE

For the price of a decent blazer you can get a lifetime of pleasure from the easy-to-clean, hard-wearing, latex-backed sisal, seagrass or rush rugs here. Sourced from China, Belgium and elsewhere, its range of weaves, patterns and colours hold furniture so well. It's Isabella's choice. The first thing Isabella did when she set up her first family home a couple of years ago was get the company on speed dial, and buy a couple of huge made-to-measure rugs in Oriental Rush for her living room and study, and a slightly more luxe Belgian rug for her main bedroom. "The rugs added instant depth to the rooms, created a great backdrop, and were just amazingly good value. I grew up with Natural Floorcovering sisal underfoot so it just felt like the most obvious choice. They hold furniture so well and when you get the flooring right, everything else will come together," says Isabella. naturalfloor.com.au

INTERNATIONAL FLOORCOVERINGS

Its sisal rugs grace some of Sydney and Melbourne's best interiors. Used by big-name designers like Adelaide Bragg, Thomas Hamel, Marco Meneguzzi, Michael Love, Cameron Kimber, Iain Halliday, Lynda Kerry, and Anna Spiro. You won't go wrong with the 'Tuscan', 'European Tortoiseshell' or 'Greta' sisal. interfloors.com.au

TRIBE HOME

Add geometric design to your living room with the bold handwoven Moroccan rugs made using pure wool. Works with master weavers from around the world to create a kaleidoscopic of geometrics that look great with wicker furniture and books strewn all over the place. Try them in the bedroom, living room, dining room, entry, in wool, jute, bamboo/silk blends, pure silk or viscose in popular sizes as well as round,

“Wine stains removed, curling edges straightened out, worn areas made less obvious, and other tragedies like pet accidents and badly placed plants made good.”

and runners. Mostly natural, ivory, grey, charcoal, green, blue, red, yellow, brown and orange, blush and multi. More than 130 rug designs: \$920 to \$14,000. One of the first rug companies in Australia to join the TRAKS program, our first rug recycling program, created by Textile Recyclers Australia, to transform unwanted rugs into yarns that can be used to create new furnishings and keep them from becoming landfill. tribehome.com.au

TIGMI TRADING

Tantalising rugs to brighten up a floor, a room, or your life. The Byron Bay company is strong on the unusual, with a well-thought-out range of one-of-a-kind vintage treasures to big, bold, graphic contemporary designs, that are great conversation starters. They're a really good way of decorating. The founder, Danielle McEwan, has a great eye, scouring the world for her modern, traditional, Moroccan and Turkish styles. There are eight collections, with each piece crafted almost entirely by hand – and a focus on edgy natural shades of bianco, latte, tan, ochre, verde, aubergine, and espresso. The imperfections underscore the age-old techniques of each piece. tigmatrading.com

WEST ELM

Modern abstracts, Moroccan looks, Persian styles, shags and solid rugs. Its offerings don't have the same tapestry-like effect as the higher-end places, but the designs, in patterns referencing everything

Secret Rug Repairs

Don't throw out your carpet just because it's stained; if it's not threadbare, there's life in it yet. Don't use spot-cleaners, detergents or shampoos on stains and never rub. Consult the experts as soon as possible. We'll get in trouble for revealing this one. Adam Daines, trained in England more than 30 years ago, and is where top-notch dealers such as Robyn Cosgrove Rugs, Cadrys, I & B Perryman and the former Nomadic Rug Traders get rugs cleaned for outstanding results. Rug Works by Adam Daines restores and rescues antique rugs and carpets of all kinds in all states of disrepair. Wine stains removed, curling edges straightened out, worn areas made less obvious, and other tragedies such as pet accidents and badly placed plants made good. All hand-done the traditional way. His methods are a deep, dark secret. He can remove notoriously difficult stains and make any rug look right again. A serious find. [@rugworksbyadamdaines](https://www.instagram.com/rugworksbyadamdaines)

from Art Deco to North African motifs, still look beautiful underneath sofas and chairs from every era. They are also slightly less likely to make your apartment look as if it's been 'done' by an interior designer. westelm.com.au

MICHAEL TRAPP

Leather and reed straw tuareg mats have gone from the mosques of Mauritius (where worshippers use them as prayer mats) to Manhattan hotspots such as Ace Hotel. Naomi Watts has one in her

dining room. Christian Louboutin has one in his holiday house. These carpets give a room a masculine edge. Some of the best examples sell for around \$1800. michaeltrapp.com

NAZAR

Collectors make regular raids. James and George Nazar who are third- and fourth-generation rug dealers focus on areas such as Iran, Turkey and Afghanistan. So much choice you might spend more than you planned. nazarruggalleries.com.au

FREEDOM

An oasis of affordable rugs for all tastes: chunky knit, distressed, flatweaves, jute, geometrics, abstract, contemporary, traditional, florals, shags, tribal and washable. Seek out brands such as Marimekko, Morris & Co, Rug Culture, Sanderson, Studio Rugs, Wedgwood, Laura Ashley, Florence Broadhurst, its own brand and much more. Four sizes as well as runners, round and oval shapes. Fifteen colourways to choose from. freedom.com.au **H&G**

next month
**STONE,
 TILES &
 TAPWARE**