

Pride of Persia Rug Co.



For more than a decade, Mehdi Abedi and Lisa Slappey have taught "The World of Persian Rugs" through Rice University's Glasscock School of Continuing Studies. They are the owners of Pride of Persia Rug Co., which specializes in older Persian rugs along with high-quality newer rugs from around the world.

Are there cleaning products that should be avoided on rugs?

Cleaning rugs is best left to professionals. If you do attempt to spot clean a rug at home, chemicals should be a last resort. Before trying any cleaning product, read the label. One customer brought a runner and the OxyClean used to clean it; the product label said "not for use on wool." The result was not pretty. GooGone also warns against use on wool. Any high pH soap that removes lanolin from wool and leaves it brittle can damage your rug. Also, never use bleach on wool rugs.

Is it possible to restore a rug?

Most often, restoration is possible. Normal wear and tear combined with our own negligence and damage from pets, insects, traffic and plants makes restoration, or at least basic maintenance, a necessity. There is a distinction between repair and restoration. Professional restoration is often virtually undetectable to the untrained eye. For major jobs, it can also be expensive. Does the cost of the restoration exceed the value of the rug? Ask to see a sample of the work and request an estimate before deciding who should restore your rug.

Would you recommend buying a second-hand rug?

Antique rugs are by definition "second-hand" if they have passed through more than one generation of users. Be sure to note the quality and condition of any rug before you purchase it. Certainly, a better rug in use is preferable to a new rug of lower quality. A good rug that has passed the test of time will serve you well. Be aware that some "second-hand" rugs are on the market because other people had good reason for not wanting them. Are the colors undesirable or out of date? Is the rug water damaged? Has it lost fibers? Is it covered with pet stains?

Give the rug a thorough inspection. Don't buy someone else's trouble.

Are some colors more fade-resistant than others?

Any color not set properly may fade or not washed properly may bleed. Generally, colors soften from exposure to light and repeated washing. Most rugs feature a combination of vegetable and chemical dyes. Preparing dyes is a very technical matter. For many who follow the traditional techniques, it can also be a closely guarded secret. Recently, there has been a movement to return to traditional dyes made from indigo, madder root, and ronnas (henna) plants. Some of the most fade-resistant vegetable dyes are made in the central Iranian city of Yazd. The rich burgundy and blue colors of Yazd rugs are most often permanent. This virtue has become a vice in the decorator market that stresses the muted or faded look. Such richly colored rugs can create confusion for those associating "vegetable dye" rugs with soft colors and earth tones.

Will a Persian rug fit a modern home's décor?

Many Persian rugs are surprisingly versatile. There is amazing variety of styles and colors available within the category of hand-woven Persian rugs. Almost any home, from classic to contemporary, can accommodate Persian rugs. One look at a fine Persian Gebbeh, for instance, will open an entire world of choices beyond the traditional red and blue floral medallion Kashans many Americans consider the archetypal Persian rug. Whether they are antique or brand new, Persian rugs offer tremendous possibilities for your home's décor today and for years to come.

How long will a rug last?

With proper care, a good rug should last

several generations. It is not uncommon to find 100 year old rugs in good condition and still suitable for use on the floor. At 150 years, a rug is considered old and no longer capable of sustaining foot traffic. As is true of any textile, the fibers in rugs deteriorate over time and with use. Rugs made of lower quality materials (especially slaughterhouse wool) have shorter life spans than their high-quality counterparts.

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