



Oahu (808) 529-0776

## GENERAL RUG BUYING INFORMATION

Area rugs are very important functional and decorative elements. Contemporary mobile lifestyles make area rugs the floor covering of choice—just roll them up and take them with you! Think of purchasing a rug the way you think about purchasing a dress or suit—by color, style and design. Good, well-priced rugs can last a lifetime and become heirlooms to be passed on from generation to generation.

### **Knot Density**

Think of the knot count of a hand-knotted rug as being determined by the design. A bold design does not require as fine a knot structure as an intricate, curvilinear design. It may help to think of the knot density in computer terms as pixels. An intricate design with fine details requires more pixels to appropriately define the design.

Just because a rug has a less fine knot structure does not necessarily mean that it is inferior when compared to a more finely knotted carpet. Yes, a finer knot count will influence labor and will influence cost. That does not mean that a more modestly priced carpet of lower knot count will not last or bring years of pleasure.

The fact is that many of the most sought after decorative carpets are not necessarily made in the finest weave. For example, Tibetan carpets generally have a lower knot density than their Persian cousins, but are often the perfect complement to a relaxed style of decorating. The simplicity and texture is a large part of the warmth and charm of these Tibetan-weave carpets.

### **Hand-Knotted vs. Machine-Made Rugs**

#### **It's easier to see the differences when a rug is placed face down:**

1. Machine-made rugs are not actually knotted. The wool fiber is put into place by machine, and then secured with latex backing. This makes the back rough to the touch and creates a grid appearance on the back. The latex and glue used in these rugs break down over time, which causes wears and holes.
2. There is also a relatively new type of rug being sold: Hand-Tufted. The hand-tufting gun forces the yarns into a grid, and then the backs are covered with latex or a fabric backing. These rugs are sometimes marketed as “hand-made”, but don't be fooled—they are essentially machine made rugs done with a hand-held instrument.
3. “Hand-Carved” rugs are machine-made rugs that have some details in the pile cut by hand. They usually have a false fringe sewn on a canvas backing. Again, these are not hand-knotted rugs and will be priced accordingly.

#### **To spot a quality hand-knotted rug, inspect the quality of the wool:**

1. Look for the length of the wool fiber, its springiness and the luster.
2. The thickness of a rug doesn't matter when determining the quality of a rug.

#### **When looking at the back of a rug:**

1. The design can be clearly seen from the back of a genuine hand-knotted rug. Creating the design one knot at a time allows the design to be more detailed. It also therefore takes much longer to produce than a machine-made rug. The result is better knot density and a tighter, higher-quality weave.
2. The image of the rug's frontal design should be clear. A rug that has a less-defined design on the reverse side has not been as tightly knotted.
3. The more knots per square inch, the more labor it took to produce the rug. A skilled craftsman can tie approximately 800 knots an hour, taking months to complete a larger rug.

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