

Select wall color and flooring before filling the room



Each yarn color in this handmade wool rug, selected by an interior designer, was used in create the look of this living room.

Courtesy of Vieceli Interior Design

**By Jean Murphy
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When decorating a room, it is wise to consider the shell, or envelope, first. Choose the looks for your walls and floors and then proceed to fill the room.

However, if you happen to find the perfect upholstered couch or chair first (or have it from a previous home or a relative), feel free to pull a color from it for your walls or floors.

"I am seeing lots of wood floors with area rugs. That is what my clients are choosing for their family rooms, dining rooms and living rooms," said Lori Vieceli of Vieceli Interior Design in Palatine.

"Depending on the situation, they are refinishing wood floors that already exist in their homes or they are choosing a wood laminate or engineered wood. But they want that look. What they choose depends on their budget, whether or not their home already has wood floors that just need to be refinished or if they have dogs that will scratch wood floors," she said.

"My customers know they are putting down their flooring for the long term because you have to remove everything from the room to do the floors. So, they are carefully considering their budgets, how they use the room and, when it comes to stain color, whether the room gets lots of natural light or not. If the room tends to be dark, most use a lighter stain. If the room is bright, they can choose a darker stain," said Vieceli, a certified interior designer and American Society of Interior Designers member.

She works almost exclusively with Yonan Carpet One in Rolling Meadows when making flooring choices. Yonan also has locations in Downers Grove and Oak Park.

Vieceli's clients are then adorning those wood floors with abstract area rugs. Many are tone-on-tone designs with loop and cut designs to give them added texture, she said.

"These offer a lot of visual interest, which is what they want," Vieceli said. "I recently had a client who painted her walls navy blue and chose a tone-on-tone rug in shades of blue. That was her 'neutral' look."

Vieceli estimates that half her customers choose a neutral color for their area rug, opting to add pops of color to their room through occasional pillows and other inexpensive touches. Other clients use their rugs for that infusion of color.

Some are even bringing back a bit of the shag rug look popular in the 1970s by choosing long-yarned area rugs and putting them under a living room table, for instance, for a unique look.

If their budget is limited, homeowners are opting for rugs made of polypropylene fibers mixed with bamboo silk. Those with more latitude in their budget often choose wool, she said.

Wall-to-wall carpet is still a popular choice, she said, particularly in bedrooms where parents want a "soft space" for their children. Some are also choosing wall-to-wall carpeting for their living rooms, particularly if they are on a budget because it is less expensive than wood floors and area rugs.

When wall-to-wall carpet is the choice, Vieceli said most are choosing low pile, stain-resistant carpets in neutral colors. They generally do not want carpets that show traffic, although, once again, plush carpet might be used in a bedroom for that softer feel.

"Homeowners are thinking about resale, in most cases, so they are choosing neutral colors that won't pose a problem when they put their home on the market," she said.

Other solutions are popular in other parts of the home. On staircases, most homeowners choose bare wood or carpet runners, she added. If a runner is chosen, Vieceli cautioned, the quality of the installation is paramount. In fact, she mentioned, Yonan has an expert installer who is known for matching carpet patterns on-site and offering a seamless look -- even on staircases that turn or curve.

In kitchens, Vieceli said wood-look ceramic tiles in large squares or rectangles are quite popular, as are large tiles in grays and taupes. The stone look is not as popular as it was a few years ago, she said. And in bathrooms, rectangular ceramic tiles in grays, white and ivory are the hands-down favorites.

The other part of the room's shell that needs to be considered are the walls.

Mel Alger of Alger Decorating in Palatine said accent walls seem to be losing favor among his customers. In years past, he painted them often but now he is only getting an occasional request.

Many of his customers, he noted, are opting for matte finishes that are practical because they can be wiped down after dirty hands or paws adorn them with dirt.

"Most people only repaint their rooms when they are doing a major redecorating or are ready to move, so they know that whatever they choose is going to be there for a long time," Alger said. Consequently, they are careful about their choices.

And most are carrying similar colors throughout their home -- generally not making one room a drastically different color.

"But looking at that fan deck of paint colors can be really confusing for my customers. I advise them to have a Sherwin-Williams color consultant come to their house and guide them in their color choice. Because they are the suppliers I use, I can offer my homeowners that added service," he explained.

As for popular colors, Alger said he still sees lots of grays (particularly one called "Let it Rain") and light greens.

He also agrees with some of House Beautiful magazine's top paint colors for 2016 -- emerald green, dark blues and teals, grayish blues, lavender and dark aubergine. Of course, white is a perpetual favorite.

"I have also been using a lot of Poised Taupe, which is a dark tan with a hint of red," Alger said.

House Beautiful also mentioned pale pinks and yellows, as well as chartreuse, in its list, but Alger said he has not had a client choose those colors. Possibly they are more popular in other areas of the country.