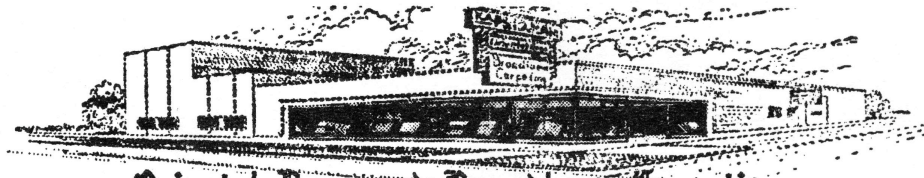


K. A. PRIDJIAN & CO.



Oriental Rugs and Broadloom Carpeting

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ON CHINESE CARPETS

For centuries China has been producing a wide variety of hand knotted oriental carpets of many designs, styles and qualities. Making a Chinese carpet is a complex and tedious task requiring the skills of many expert artisans and craftsmen.

DESIGNING

A designer draws on paper an outline of a design, sometimes very intricate, sometimes surprisingly simple. Then, using water colors and a vast array of subtle shades, an artist gives color to the design. When the artist is satisfied with his color plate, he and his assistants redraw the design life-size for the weaver to use at the loom.

PREPARING THE WOOL

China is famous for its high quality wools. Wool experts select the wools best suited for use in carpets. This wool is washed, blended, spun and dyed. For the best carpets, spinning is done by machine rather than by hand, since mill spun yarn gives a superior appearance and durability. The dye-masters use the finest chrome dyes, because chrome dyes do not weaken the fabric as acid dyes do, and they are colorfast. The dye-master can make hundreds and hundreds of shades. In special types of carpets, vegetable dyes are sometimes used.

WEAVING

Vertical looms are strung with cotton warp threads. These threads are pulled to uniform tautness throughout the loom. The weaver begins by tying a strand of wool into a knot around a pair of warp threads. He tugs the ends of the strand toward himself and cuts them. The cut ends form the pile of the carpet. As the weaver ties knot after knot along a row, he carefully follows the design, changing colors at a glance. After completing a row, he weaves weft threads through the warps. Then he starts tying the next row of knots. Producing a carpet by this painstaking process takes weeks and months. Normally several persons are working shoulder to shoulder at the loom together.

The knot used Chinese carpets is the Senna or Persian knot. Different techniques of weaving determine whether the carpet is called "openback" or "closedback". The weft of openback carpets is visible on the back, whereas the weft of the closedback carpets is almost always hidden. The difference in appearance is caused by different methods of interweaving weft and warp threads, which make for different configurations of the knot within the foundation of the carpet. Closedback carpets require about 20% more wool than openback carpets.

FINISHING

When the knotting is complete, the carpet is taken from the loom. Specially trained craftsmen shear the pile to uniform depth. Then they emboss the floral and symbolic designs to create a dimensional relief characteristic of Chinese carpets.

DESIGNS

Designs are classified as Floral, Peking or Esthetic. Floral designs are the most simple, sometimes having only a single spray of flowers on a plain field. Peking designs are the most frequent and are distinctively Chinese. They usually have a border, central medallion, corner designs, and sometimes more scattered design in the field surrounding the center. Very often symbols and patterns are adapted from related arts and China – lacquer work, porcelains, bronze and jade statuary, etc. Many have religious or legendary origins. Esthetic designs originated in France centuries ago when Savonnerie and Aubusson carpets decorated the palaces of the Continent.

QUALITY

The most important factors that determine the quality of a hand-knotted carpet are fineness of weave, pile density and wool quality. The carpet must have a dense pile made of strong, long-fibered wool which will take abuse. China is well known for this type of wool.

Qualities of Chinese carpets are designated by line count, or number of warp threads per linear foot. The more warp threads, the more knots must be tied (one knot is tied on every two warps). A 90 line carpet has 90 knots tied on 180 warps per linear foot. A 70 line carpet has 70 knots tied on 140 warps per foot. Each square foot of a 70 line carpet has 70 knots across and 70 knots vertically, making 4900 knots per square foot. A 90 line carpet has 8100 knots per square foot, about 65% more than the 70 line carpet. A seemingly small increase in the line count makes a very large difference in the actual number of knots that must be tied. An expert weaver ties about 5000 knots per day.

Pile height is measured in fractions of inches: $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{3}{8}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{5}{8}$, of an inch. Some of the finer carpets are made with thinner pile so that the very small intricate designs are clearly visible. In long knap carpets, these designs would become blurred.

CARE

Wool naturally resists soiling much better than cotton or artificial fibers. It is also more resilient. This, along with its strength, makes wool the most cherished material for use in any fine carpeting or rug. Wool is easy to care for. Regular vacuuming will keep it looking fresh. A wool rug should be professionally cleaned in soap and water.

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