

The ENGLISH HOME

2021
AUTUMN
EDIT

Celebrating the essence of English style

October 2021 | Issue 200 | £4.99 | UK Edition

NEW DISCOVERIES

The best of the autumn fabric & wallpaper collections

*Ingenious
solutions*
to common interior
design dilemmas

GREAT
ESCAPE
Visit Cornwall
out of season

EXPERT GUIDES

- Stylish hallways
- Carpets & rugs
- Beautiful dahlias

LIFE IN COLOUR

Four homes brimming with personality, distinctive palettes & pattern





Carpets, rugs and natural weaves are winning back the market share they lost, particularly to wood, but also to stone and tiles, as first choice for flooring prime areas of the home. The virtues of hard floorings are not in dispute, but they cannot compete with carpet, rugs and natural floorings for bringing texture, warmth, colour and pattern to floors through the house. The issue of controlling sound transmission, especially in a busy family house, also lands a winner in carpet's court. Fitting any new flooring is an investment and it is important with carpet and natural floorings to take a realistic approach to the cost of quality underlay and expert fitting and factor it in. The appearance and life expectancy of the new flooring depends on it.

ABOVE A runner is particularly inviting in a passage that opens into a room or garden. The perspective invites anyone passing to walk that way. *Morocco Tetouan sisal runner, £68 a linear metre, Kersaint Cobb*
OPPOSITE PAGE Discreet patterning in a carpet adds a practical as well as a visually appealing base note to a room. *Dune Moiré, £97.99 a square metre, Timorous Beasties for Brintons*

EXPERT COMMENT

Flooring specialists share their advice on which yarns and fibres to choose for different areas of the home



LORNA HAIGH, *creative director, Alternative Flooring*

QUALITIES OF NATURAL PLANT FIBRES FOR CARPETS, RUGS AND RUNNERS

"Cair, jute, seagrass and sisal are the four main natural weaves used as carpets, rugs and runners. Cair, spun from the coarse fibres on coconut husks, is hardwearing and can be laid in most areas including on stairs. Jute, woven from the fibres of the *Corchorus* plant, feels good underfoot and is best for low traffic areas. Seagrass, harvested in coastal areas of Vietnam and China, is softer than cair and makes characterful weaves. Though hardwearing, it isn't suitable for stairs. Sisal comes from white fibres in the leaves of the spiky *Agave sisalana* plant grown mostly in Africa. Being white it dyes well, and can have flecks of colour added to its range of weave structures. It also works well on stairs.

Most natural fibre floor coverings are latex-backed to give stability to the textural weaves. The care regime for fibre floor coverings includes vacuuming with suction only. They don't enjoy getting wet, and can be pre-treated with Intec, a stain inhibitor that coats the fibres and allows spills to be dealt with quickly before they sink into the weave."



DAVID WHITEFOOT, *technical director, The Carpet Foundation*

YARNS THAT GIVE CHARACTER AND WEAR TO CARPETS AND RUGS.

"Wool is the best carpet fibre for its combination of properties. It recovers well from flattening and is reasonably easy to clean. In fact, it naturally conceals soiling because the fibre is relatively opaque, so light doesn't travel through it and that's quite significant. However, wool isn't best for durability, and companies offering all wool carpet do so in loop pile constructions or in high tuft density and pile weight.

In the early 1960s, it was found that blending up to 30 per cent nylon with wool eliminated durability issues. Since that time, wool-rich carpets have generally had a pile of 80 per cent wool, with 20 per cent nylon. Nylon is exceptionally durable and similar to wool in many of its properties. When 80 per cent wool is combined with 20 per cent polypropylene instead of nylon, its main purpose is to use a less expensive yarn. Polypropylene is also very durable, but it doesn't recover from flattening as well as wool or nylon, which affects appearance retention and is best in low, loop-pile carpets. Low melting point polyester is increasingly a component in woven and tufted carpets because, added in small quantities to a blend of wool and nylon or polypropylene, the scattered polyester fibres help prevent pile yarns from untwisting and from shedding loose fibres." ▶