

ASK THE EXPERT

Charlie Harb
"The Rug Doctor"

Charlie Harb is president of C. Harb's Oriental Rugs. He is a third generation rug expert, dealing in Oriental rugs, rug cleaning, carpet repair and many other rug related services.

Q: I've seen "handmade" rugs in catalogs and dept. stores which have a cloth on the back of them but are cheaper than similar looking rugs that don't have the backing. Why?

A. Indeed though handmade rugs with cloth backings look similar to Oriental rugs w/o backings they are in fact totally different products. Rugs w/the cloth

backing are hooked, not knotted. Unlike knotted rugs the hook rugs can fall apart quite easily and have no inherent resale value at all.

Q. My rugs are getting soiled & I've heard of dry cleaning & steam cleaning & wonder the best way to clean a nice Oriental.

A. Dry cleaning is basically a surface polish and not a thorough cleaning. You should never have your Oriental rug cleaned along with your carpeting. It should be dusted, washed, rinsed and moth-proofed and the fringe cleaned separately then hung to dry. Wool rugs are terribly absorbent and without proper care they will stain easily. Prevent-A-Stain will allow spills to bead up for easy blotting away.

Q. I've been reading in the paper about these customs auctions & most recently about Rugs from the Mississippi River flood. What are these?

A. These sales you see advertised on a regular basis are misleading. There are several companies whose business is to go town to town & auction Oriental rugs at as high a profit as possible in an auction market. They structure their ads to appear to be absolute auctions of seized goods or something similar. In fact, if you read the fine print you will discover a some what different story. In fact, they will not allow a rug to be sold unless the winning bid represents a substantial profit for them. All sales are final though and the company is out of town the following day.

Q. I'm interested in purchasing an Oriental rug but I am concerned our color scheme may change, what do we do?

A. When you buy an Oriental rug you are making an investment. Rugs held long enough, invariably go up in value, however if you need to change your rug in the short term, our policy is to give 100% of the purchase price in trade-in value for rugs originally purchased from us.

Q. I purchased a rug that was called "Art Silk", very inexpensive compared to other silk rugs. What's the difference?

A. Silk rugs traditionally have more knots per sq. inch than wool rugs — and silk is more expensive. However "Art Silk" is not silk at all, it is actually "artificial," a very inexpensive synthetic, which resembles silk when new, but wears very poorly and actually cost a dealer less than the cheapest wool per sq. ft. Unfortunately I've spoken with many people who have purchased these rugs under the impression that they are genuine silk. A reputable dealer will always explain exactly what "Art" silk is and how it compares to other materials.

Q. My rugs slide around on both my wood flooring & my carpeting. Is there a solution.

A. Yes. We have non-skid pad for hard floors and a revolutionary new different pad for rugs over carpeting.

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If you have any questions feel free to write to Charlie at 1234 Beach Blvd. Jacksonville 32250 or call him at 247-3333 Mon.-Fri. 10:30 am-6 pm or Saturday 10:30-5:00 p.m.

May 22nd Times-Union**Check these rugs**

Consumers have complained to the Jacksonville office of the U.S. Customs Service about Persian rug auctions held in the Jacksonville area:

There are two major gripes about these sales:

First, the ads for the sales lead consumers to believe that the auctions are sponsored by Customs when, in fact, they are not. In addition, the buyers at such sales later discovered the rugs are of inferior quality.

Customs warns consumers that only an established, professional dealer who knows rugs can determine the quality and origin of Oriental rugs. Also, Persian rugs that originate in Iran have been prohibited from import into the U.S. since October 1978.

For more information on public auctions of property that has been seized by U.S. Customs, call EG&G Dynatrend at 703-351-7887. EG&G Dynatrend is the only agency authorized to auction items seized by U.S. Customs.

Also, for the free U.S. General Services Administration Guide to Federal Government Sales, write to: Federal Sales Guide, Pueblo, CO 81009.

SCAM ALERT