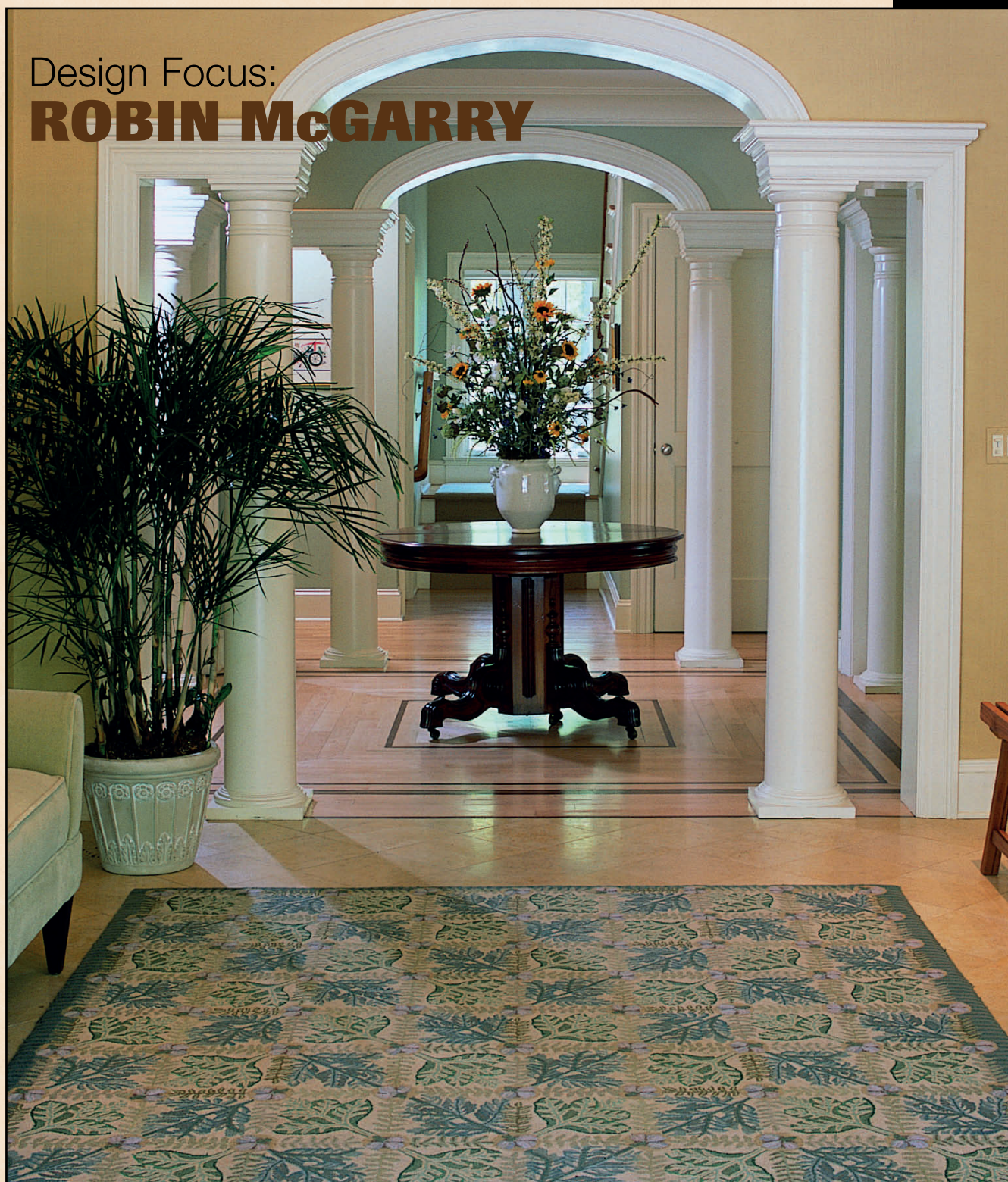


AREA

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ORIENTAL RUG IMPORTERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

Design Focus:

ROBIN McGARRY



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For Connecticut-Based Designer

Robin McGarry

Rugs Are Key Elements of Design

Although Robin McGarry did not grow up with oriental and decorative rugs, she always expressed an intense curiosity about them. Over the last decade, however, this initial attraction has developed into a passionate appreciation for the artistic and decorative value these weavings contribute to an interior. Hence, rugs now play a key role in the Connecticut-based interior designer's residential projects located in the tri-state New York area and elsewhere including Georgia, Florida, and Washington, DC.

Having been raised in the era of wall-to-wall carpeting in Florida, at first Ms. McGarry knew only that they were beautiful but also found their mystique intimidating. "I started getting more exposure to rugs in the 1980s when people began tearing up their wall-to-wall carpeting and installing wood floors and area rugs," comments the designer whose prominent firm, Robin McGarry and Associates, is based in Weston in Connecticut's fashionable Fairfield County. "Also, as the houses became larger, the need for rugs grew exponentially." A true professional, Ms. McGarry

LEFT A vegetable-dyed Tibetan rug with variegated green hues anchors this living room creating an aura of warmth and comfort. Photography by Lorin Klaris www.lorinklarisnphotography.com. Courtesy of Robin McGarry & Associates.

STORY BY ALIX G. PERRACHON



did not blindly delve into the exotic realm of oriental rugs. She embarked on a self-education program—attending lectures and exploring prestigious New York showrooms—which armed her with the confidence needed to present them to her clientele which includes well-heeled members of the investment sector.

While in the 1980s she would generally confine the use of oriental and decorative rugs to reception areas—living rooms, including rooms, and entrance halls—she currently places them throughout the house including bedrooms, kitchens and bathrooms. “I can now say that I use them in 100% of my resi-

dential projects,” continues the designer. “They have become a priority for my clients who are willing to spend more money on them than ever before.” Moreover, she has also used them in high-end corporate offices, including conference rooms, reception

ABOVE The gold cream hues in this Mahal-style rug are echoed in the walls and furnishings in this inviting living room. Photography by Lorin Klaris www.lorinklarisphotography.com. Courtesy of Robin McGarry & Associates.

OPPOSITE The ivories and greens in this Sultanabad-inspired rug provide the color scheme for the furnishings and walls in this light and bright living room. Photography by Lorin Klaris www.lorinklarisphotography.com. Courtesy of Robin McGarry & Associates.







Design Focus

areas and lobbies, and executive offices.

For Ms. McGarry, oriental and decorative rugs offer a number of advantages versus their machine-made counterparts. Indeed, “they add a beautiful element of design as well as personality to a room which machine-made rugs simply don't have,” she notes. More specifically, she is attracted to their palette and patina. Equally important from a pragmatic standpoint is the durability of handmade rugs due to the lanolin content of their wool. “Clients are always pleasantly surprised when they find out how resilient they are in high-traffic areas such as family rooms and kitchens,” she comments. “In fact, I've never had any complaints!” Quite the opposite—what could have been disasters have turned into quasi-legendary success stories. In one instance, a custom-ordered Tibetan rug had just been installed in the space when the client's dog, an Irish shepherd, dragged a large roast chicken dripping oil over the freshly woven rug. In another instance, a client's poker game ended up with a bottle of red wine spilt all over an ivory wool-and-silk Tibetan piece. In both cases, the clients were overjoyed when the rugs returned from cleaning looking as good as new.

When shopping for rugs, the designer's choices are a function both of the personality of the client and room as well as of the budget. “It really depends

RIGHT This Sultanabad-influenced vegetable-dyed rug exhibiting subtle ivories and greens creates a peaceful and comfortable ambiance in this spacious gallery which leads onto another complementary rug. Photography by Lorin Klaris www.lorinklarisphotography.com. Courtesy of Robin McGarry & Associates.

PREVIOUS The intricate delicacy of this all-over Persian village-inspired pattern is a counterpoint to the contemporary lines of the furnishings in this sitting room. Photography by Lorin Klaris www.lorinklarisphotography.com. Courtesy of Robin McGarry & Associates.







on the spirit of the space we are designing,” she notes. While her personal taste leans toward the tribal geometric, her tireless curiosity has driven her to constantly explore new realms in the high-end segment of the market and to thus use a broad range of pieces. In the antique rug sphere, Tabrizes, Lavar Kirmans, Agras, Serapis, Herizes, and Kazaks are among those that have found a their way onto her clients' floors. However, Ms. McGarry lately has been mainly focused on new rugs. In effect, she states: “Their designs, colors, and qualities are constantly improving.” Among these are high-end vegetable-dyed reproductions, in hues both saturated and subdued, as well as Tibetan rugs. As for Aubussons and other European-inspired rugs—cur-

rently absent from her repertoire—she is open to using them in a project if they are right for that particular client and space.

If possible, Ms. McGarry starts the design process with the rug whose hues set the tone of the space. “The rug creates a lot of color in the room and carries the palette for the space,” she comments. However, working the rug around the fabrics does not present a problem given the number of choices

ABOVE The all-over floral trellis in this vegetable-dyed rug creates the decorative focus in this light and airy living room. Photography by Lorin Klaris www.lorinklarisphotography.com. Courtesy of Robin McGarry & Associates.

OPPOSITE Robin McGarry. Photography by Lorin Klaris www.lorinklarisphotography.com.

available in today's market.

As part of the designer's philosophy of creating an ambiance of peace and tranquility in the home, no single element including the rug dominates the space. "The rug is an integral part of the room's design composition and of how it relates to the furniture and fabrics," she comments. Hence fabrics are understated with a focus on texture rather than pattern. "I don't want to muddy the room with competing rugs and fabrics," continues the designer. "Any pattern I use is generally relegated to the rug, pillows, and art." Moreover, she strongly advocates the use of one large room-sized rug within a space, as opposed to several, to enhance the interior's overall

harmony. "I like the rug to be as large as possible to make the room look bigger and more comfortable," she states. When connecting rugs from one space to the next, she prefers that they be of different origins as they long as they relate to each other with respect to color.

Since Ms. McGarry started using oriental and decorative rugs, she has witnessed a surge of appreciation for them amongst her clients. "They are not necessarily better educated about rugs but they have become more aware of rugs' desirability and the important role they contribute to the design and ambiance of a room," she remarks. "I cannot imagine them *not* being popular in the future."

ABOUT THE DESIGNER

After earning a B.S. degree in Interior Design at Florida State University in 1978, Robin McGarry worked as an interior designer for a number of firms, including Ferry-Hayes Designers in Atlanta, GA, until 1989 when she began working independently. She founded Robin McGarry and Associates in 1995 in Weston, CT, as a full-service interior design firm specializing in residential and office interiors. Characterized by a transitional style with a contemporary twist, Ms. McGarry's interiors exude comfort and an aura of tranquility and peace. They are renowned for their clean lines which harmoniously interact with an artful blend of furniture both antique and new in addition to unique accessories.

Ms. McGarry's work has been featured in a number of publications including Beautiful Baths—Better Homes & Gardens, Fairfield County Home, at Home (Westport, Greenwich, Darien Magazines), Westport Magazine, The Franklin Report (Connecticut Westchester Edition), and Leading Residential Interior Designers, 2006 (The Perfect Home Book Series), a coffee table book. She has participated in the Kinderwood Designer Showhouse, Danbury, CT. A professional member of the ASID since 1986, she has been actively involved with the organization's Connecticut chapter. She has sponsored a number of community charity events including the Connecticut Challenge 2006 (cycling for cancer survivors).

