

Homes

CARPET ENJOYS RESURGENCE

'It's nothing like your parents' or grandparents' carpet'

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Special to Postmedia Network

The word 'carpet' might conjure up images of your grandparents' wall-to-wall shag carpeting. And though hardwood may still reign supreme in today's homes, broadloom or wall-to-wall carpet is enjoying a resurgence.

"Carpet is relatively well priced and it's an all-in-one solution for large floor areas, as you don't require any other floor covering once it has been installed," says Jane Lockhart, principal of Jane Lockhart Design in Mississauga.

"Carpet is also very warm and inviting, which adds a cozy feel to Canadian winters that can be hard to achieve with hardwood or vinyl plank flooring alone. And with new material technology in the carpet space, it's easier than ever to maintain today," she says.

The resurgence of wall-to-wall carpet may come as a surprise. "I can promise you carpet today is nothing like your parents and grandparents," says Jamie Welborn, senior vice president of product management, soft surface, for Mohawk, a leading global flooring manufacturer.

'PIECE OF ARTWORK'

"Our parents' and grandparents' carpet had a harsh feel — thus rug burns when crawling around — and was probably the solid colour beige or brown. The patterns and designs were very limited with more sculpted designs that made uneven carpet. Today's carpet is softer with more

vibrant colourations, including multi-colourations and patterns that are very defined, like a piece of artwork."

Welborn has been in the carpet industry since 1987. "The biggest misconception is that carpet is dirty and full of bacteria. If a consumer takes care of their flooring with regular vacuums and addresses spills in a timely manner, this is not the case," he says. "In fact, carpet acts as a filter and there are less airborne particles in a room with carpet, so it is actually better for people with allergies."

Additionally, Welborn says, carpet softens slips and falls; reduces noise by absorption; costs less upfront and if maintained will cost less over the lifetime of your flooring; and is made with stain-resistant fibres such as polyester or Triexta, which are hydrophobic, meaning it's water-resistant.

Lockhart says she's seeing carpet installed most often in bedrooms and throughout basements because it provides both comfort and noise reduction. "Better fibres and a mix of weaves found in carpets today makes cleaning easy and avoids wear marks, which were more common with carpet in the past," she says.

Styles that incorporate textures and unique tone-on-tone patterns — think loop and cut piles added together to make timely shapes and patterns — are on trend, Lockhart reports. "For instance, natural-inspired textures like waves or bark patterns have been increasingly popular, as they provide a soft and calming atmosphere. When it comes to colour, medium to lighter tones have remained popular and on trend, such



Carpet is an all-in-one solution for large areas, says designer Jane Lockhart. GILLIAN JACKSON



Today's carpet is described as artwork. MOHAWK

as charcoal, ivory and grey."

There are numerous things to consider when choosing carpet, including where it will be installed. "Bedrooms have less activity than hallways and living rooms, so colour, carpet weight and construction will be different," Welborn says. You'll also want to consider the number of kids and pets in the household, and colour and design options, he adds.

HARDWOOD TRENDS

When it comes to hardwood — which Lockhart describes as the "most popular covering for floors" — lighter woods are moving towards medium to light sandy colours, which are warm and "extremely forgiving" in high-traffic spaces.

"Chevron and herringbone remain popular hardwood designs, as they add an old-world flare," she says. "Border and metal inserts are an add-on to hardwood typically done in custom building projects, leveraged as unique and special additions to hardwood in central areas of the home like front foyers, dining rooms or hallways."



Designer Jane Lockhart says carpet is often installed in bedrooms and basements. LARRY ARNAL

HARDWOOD OR CARPET?

Q: What are some things a homeowner should consider when deciding to install hardwood or carpet?

A: "Your lifestyle and cleaning style will be important elements to keep in mind when it comes to selecting your flooring," says designer Jane Lockhart. "Carpet is a great option if you don't have major cleaning needs other than vacuuming. There are also pet-proof carpets available if this is an important part of your lifestyle, but hardwood remains the easier option to manage in terms of spills."

"While hardwood is easier to clean, it does not offer the same cozy atmosphere as hardwood. It's much more comfortable to lay on the floor watching TV on carpet versus hardwood! Both options have seen tremendous advancements in technology for wear and tear, cleaning and installation, making either carpet or hardwood a great option, depending on your needs."



Jane Lockhart, principal of Jane Lockhart Design. SUPPLIED