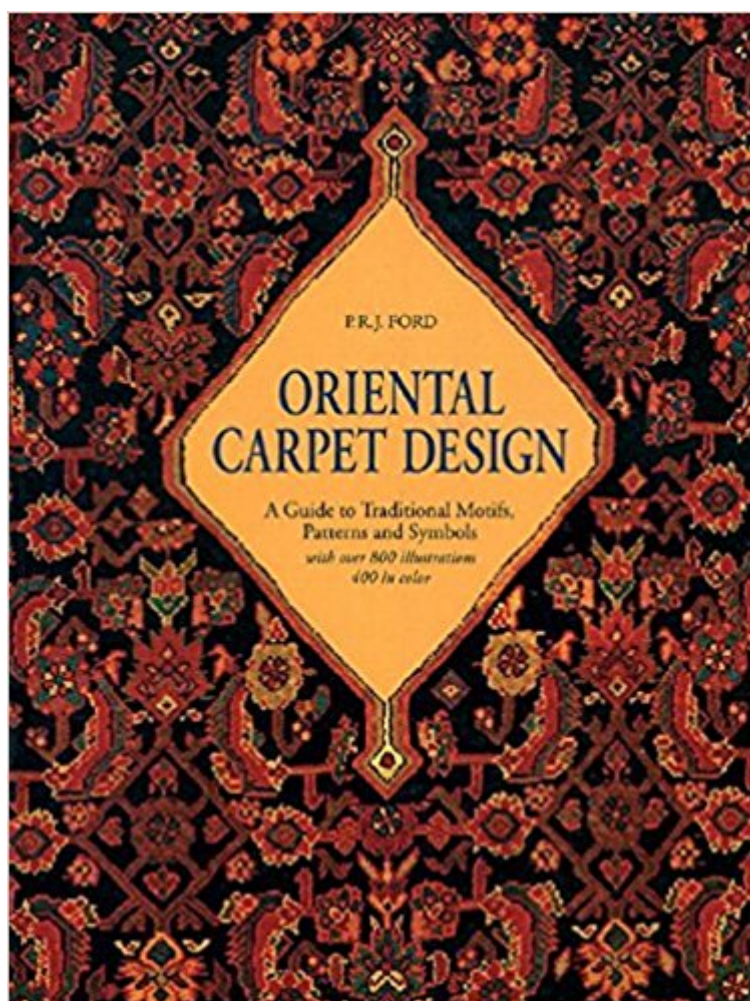


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Oriental Carpet Design: A Guide To Traditional Motifs, Patterns And Symbols



Synopsis

"One of the most useful books to cover the whole of the field...Mr. Ford is to be congratulated on having produced a work that should stand the test of time." — *Carpet Review Weekly* In this comprehensive survey, P. R. J. Ford shows readers how to recognize the different structural and design features of oriental rugs and carpets. The designs are grouped according to their essential characteristics. This approach illuminates the cultural background of each, revealing at once the similarities and the differences between the various carpet-weaving areas. Illustrations of modern types, with descriptions of their key characteristics — construction, materials, sizes, colors — and of the clues that establish a rug's precise origins, appear together with a balanced appraisal of the qualities of modern production from towns, villages, and tribal areas. Extensive cross-referencing and detailed indexes make this an invaluable reference guide for dealers and collectors, and for anyone who has an appreciation of and interest in rugs. 800+ illustrations and photographs, 400 in color

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Customer Reviews

P. R. J. Ford is the author of *Oriental Carpet Design*.

This book contains much information and many colored pictures. Obviously, the author is very knowledgeable in the subject matter. I like to browse through it pages and read the text, and I learn new things every time I do that. My only criticism (and that is why I gave it only 3 stars) is its

organization. The traditional way books on Oriental rugs and carpets are organized is according to region of origin. The author of this book tried something new – categorizing by design. This decision is very unfortunate as it makes the book practically useless as an aid for establishing the origin of a rug in any systematic way. Very few rug weavers from one village will produce a rug that is identical to a rug produced in a neighboring village. Furthermore, they are unlikely to produce a rug identical to one woven by another weaver in the same village. Having said that, there is something in common for all rugs coming from the same area. It is very difficult to define the "Shirazness" of a Shiraz or the "Tabrizness" of a Tabriz or the "Kazakness" of a Kazak, but the experienced rug dealer or collector will be able to identify the region of origin immediately when seeing a rug; if not precisely then at least the general area. One often hears a collector looking at a rug for the first time saying something like "this feels like a Sarouk" before examining it more closely. This "feeling" is a result of seeing many "Sarouks" and developing the sense of what "Saroukness" feels like. So even though the new "Sarouk" is not identical to any of the "Sarouks" one had seen before, that feeling will direct her to take this as the starting point. The closer examination of the knot, the colors and design, whether it is a single or double weft weave etc. is just for more exact identification and confirmation of the first impression upon seeing the rug. I see this the same way as identifying a piece of music. It is impossible to define what ingredients makes a piece sound like Bach but the music lover would be able to tell upon hearing a single phrase that it is likely a Bach. Listening more carefully would enable one to hone in on the identity of the piece. Oriental rugs from all parts of the Middle East, Central and Western Asia and the Caucasus, all use very much the same design elements, colors and materials. One can find medallions, geometric or floral patterns in every genre. It is how these elements are combined together that gives a rug its unique identity. Perhaps the only exceptions to this are certain types of old Tekkeh Bukharas that use a very typical and unmistakable design. Thus, choosing to organize the book according to design doomed this book for failure in achieving its stated objective of being "a handbook on rug identification, a practical to the six hundred or so basic design styles..." (First line in the Introduction chapter). The first chapter of the book is entitled The Boteh and it covers rugs that have the Boteh motif in their design. The Boteh motif is very common and can be found in practically every rug making region. So this chapter discusses rugs from the Caucasus, Heriz, Serabend, Hamadan, India, and more; practically from every region. These rugs

have nothing in common other than using this one motif in their design. Also, because of sorting by design the reverse is true: Rugs from the same area are discussed in multiple places. For example, Senneh rugs are discussed in The Boteh, Universal Design, Geometric Design, and Floral Medallion-Plain Designs chapters. This is the case with almost every major regional category. The reader interested in reading about rugs of a particular region must jump between multiple chapters and the index to piece together all the information provided about such rugs. Another problem is that it is often very difficult to decide where one should start looking for information leading to the identification of a particular rug. Many rugs will have multiple characteristics that could place them in multiple categories. If my rug has two octagonal medallions and a surface filled with floral patterns with Botehs in the four corners where should I start my search for its identity? Would I find it in the chapter on geometric designs, or Medallion Designs? Perhaps I should start with Floral, or maybe with Floral Medallion-Plain or Boteh? Having said all this, I would compliment the author for the huge amount of very detailed information and the many beautiful colored pictures compiled in this volume. If he has any intention to publish a revised edition I would highly recommend that he re-organizes the book according to the area of origin. Although there are many books on the market that do that, most fall short by not making the categories sufficiently fine. All books that I am aware of divide the region into the following regions: Anatolia or Turkey, Persia, Turkoman/Afghanistan, The Caucasus, and China. Some books bring examples of Syrian and Egyptian carpet, but these have only historical and academic interests as these areas have not been major rug producing centers for a number of centuries. The above areas are vast and consist of many regions that have been producing very different types of rugs that are rarely discussed in a systematic way. Mr. Ford's book contains much valuable information about regional differences and sameness, sometimes to the point of discussing the commonality if difference between rugs produced by neighboring villages in the same region. Unfortunately, this information is lost due to his unfortunate choice of organizing the book by design.

If you have to get just one book about carpets, this is the one. I own many books on the subject, but none can compare for the depth of information and the quality of the images. Ford just knows more, and organizes the text and images better, than anyone else.

I love Oriental rugs and wanted to learn more about the design and history. This book seems very well-researched and features lots of illustrations, which is helpful. I wanted a book that could also serve as a reference guide to look up styles, regions and terms to help me identify them.

Unfortunately, using it this way is very difficult, I'm finding. For a novice, this book may be too advanced and the indexing could be better. Overall, it's a good book that "dives deep" into this ancient art form.

Great book!

This is an important book for those wishing to understand more about the design elements of Central Asian carpets. The text is excellent, the only criticism I have is that the images are often of relatively low quality. I think this is because it is a reprint of an older book.

An excellent from an author who is both knowledgeable and coherent. The book is full of beautiful pictures of rugs that are readily available and not museum pieces..

After making a few carpet purchases, we used the book to identify them. Great photos and close-ups of the patterns. This book is useful to all levels of collector, and just interesting to flip through to learn about rugs. Only drawback is that it is not available as an ebook.

Very good book and service.

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