



In designing this cherry-blossom-inspired rug, A. Houck Designs and TDM Design Inc. had to manipulate the branches and blossoms to ensure they were positioned correctly for the room's layout and not covered up by the furniture.

Photograph by Lydia Custer

# THREAD BY THREAD

## CREATING ONE-OF-A-KIND LOOKS WITH CUSTOM CARPETS AND RUGS

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**A** carpet or area rug can serve as the bold centerpiece of a space or provide a quiet grounding for the furnishings. Whichever role the floor covering plays, finding just the right look can be a challenge, which is why many designers and homeowners choose custom carpets and rugs.

The made-to-order capabilities in floor coverings are virtually unlimited. Options range from tweaking the color or altering the size of a rug to sketching an original design and creating a one-of-a-kind piece of art for the floor.

### The Art of Rug-making

For one Arlington, VA, living room, Interior Designer Andrea Houck, principal of A. Houck Designs, opted for art. The living room's conversation area has four chairs

clustered around a fireplace. The rug had to be a non-standard 8-foot by 8-foot square, and it had to work with the furniture and fabrics already in place. "I wanted something organic with an Asian feel," Houck says. "Since we already had a strong all-over pattern on the chairs, the rug needed to be quiet."

Houck explored in-stock options, but could not find a rug that met the space's needs – or her vision. So Houck sketched a design for the ideal rug. Her inspiration: the Washington cherry blossoms. Houck collaborated with TDM Design, Inc., a custom rug company, to turn her idea into reality. Michelle Taylor-Spearman, co-principal of TDM, finalized the design, creating a computer-generated rendering and then making a sample, or strike-off, of the rug. The result is a hand-knotted, Tibetan wool rug with silk accents.