

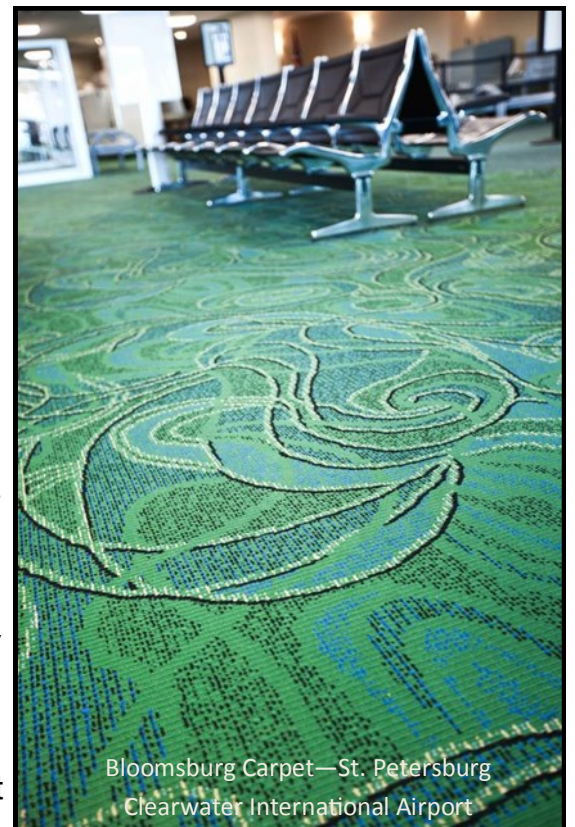
CFR THE COMMERCIAL FLOORING REPORT

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WOVEN CARPET AND INSTALLATION - AGAIN

This article originally appeared in our September 2011 CFR issue but we've had an onslaught of work in this area and issues and I wanted to give you an update. Woven Axminster and Wilton carpet is the Rolls Royce of the carpet industry. It is the oldest form of machine made broadloom carpet. Products from this process grace the most elegant and luxurious homes and facilities in the world. There are only a handful of woven Axminster and Wilton carpet manufacturers in the world and a smaller number yet who produce significant volume of commercial carpet. The primary commercial markets for these carpets are hospitality (high end hotels), casinos, high end restaurants and any property that qualifies as the best of the best in its particular category. Almost all woven Axminster and Wilton carpet manufacturing takes place outside the US with the majority of woven carpet now coming from state of the art mills in China but owned by the same manufacturers who've been in the business for decades. Only a few woven manufacturers exist in the US and they primarily produce corporate type carpet. The highest end woven Axminster or Wilton carpet is most often constructed of an 80/20 blend of wool and nylon (80% wool / 20% nylon) - the nylon is used to bolster the performance of the wool - but it can also be made with 100% nylon - either solution dyed or yarn dyed.

The patterns and design, color and construction of Axminster and Wilton carpet are normally custom creations. The tufted carpet sector of the industry has made extraordinary strides in emulating woven carpet but it will never achieve parity. Woven Axminster and Wilton carpet extols the elegance and luxury of the finest products on the planet. One of a kind woven carpet is truly art for the floor. No other carpet has the visual intricacy and impact of a custom woven carpet; it shouts individuality, this is particularly so of Axminster carpet which can have virtually unlimited pattern and color variations. Woven Axminster and Wilton carpet requires understanding by the marketplace. The patterns are



normally large, intricate and unique and the colors extravagant. These type carpets are very often made to fit the space, it can and often does conform to the configuration of the floor and the building's design, it becomes an integral part of the building or space design and it reflects a perspective on what the space is supposed to mean. It is a product that must be installed by craftsmen who devote their skills and specialize in installing it. This is a product that should cost more because it isn't just carpet its art for the floor.

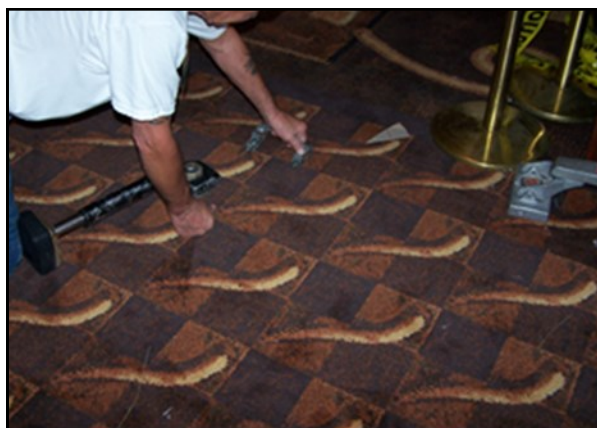


Nourison Carpet
St. Regis NYC Versailles Room

Since woven Axminster and Wilton carpet is constructed and manufactured in a completely different manner than tufted carpet it has different inherent characteristics. For one, it can only be rolled in the length; rolling it in the width is near impossible. Most of the stretch, if not all of it, is in the length of woven carpet. It takes far longer to manufacture woven carpet than tufted carpet as the machines run at slower speeds. The patterns in woven carpet are very distinct and, despite the endless patterning ability of high speed tufting machines, they still can't make patterns like those that can be made on a weaving machine that produces Axminster and Wilton carpet.

Understanding woven carpet is, quite frankly, limited to very few people in the industry and as those individuals mature that number dwindles. The manufacturers and representatives of woven carpet are truly an elite group; those who possess skills and knowledge of a very specialized product. Woven commercial Axminster and Wilton carpet is at the mountain peak when it comes to categorizing textile floor covering materials.

The installation of woven Axminster and Wilton carpet is also a very specialized skill. You can't stick any installer, seasoned or not, on an installation project of these products. There are actually very few firms in the country, that work on projects all over the world that can install woven carpet properly and as exactly as it should be installed.



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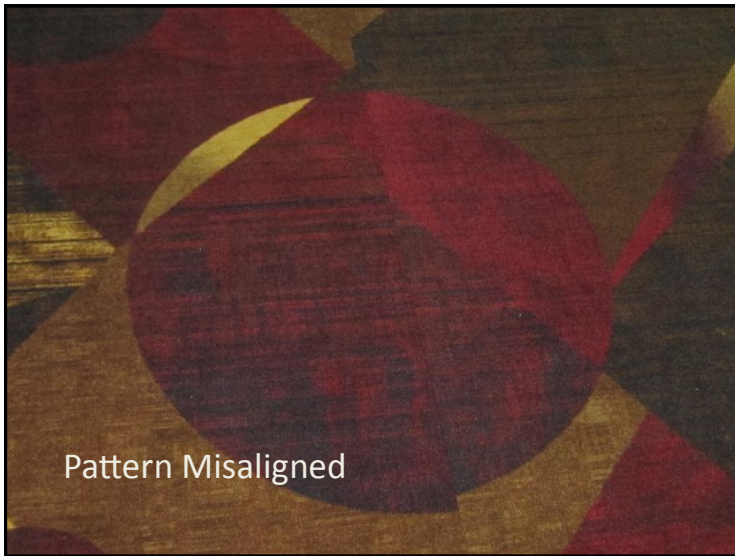
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It requires a different mindset and understanding of carpet installation to work with woven carpet. This is not the type of work that should be open for bid and given to the lowest bidder without any skills or experience working with these products. It is common for the manufacturers of intricately detailed woven carpet to provide very detailed floor plan layouts and roll placement on a project – something totally unique to this segment of the market.



Pattern Misaligned

Clients willing to make the investment in woven goods should expect and demand quality and qualified installation. There have been comments we've heard that "we've installed lots of woven carpet and know how to do it," only to find that the firm who installed the carpet just wanted the work and were willing to say anything to get it. Since most commercial installations of woven carpet involve the double glue method, (gluing the cushion to the floor and the carpet to the cushion); a failure of this type installation can get very costly. Woven carpet, especially when double glued, is the kind of product you either install right or wrong, there is no in between nor is there a "fudge factor." You can't think you know how to install woven carpet; you really have to have the special skills to do it. This is like going to a medical specialist; a surgeon for example. You want the best; a specialist who has a reputation for being the best and has the most success at his particular area of expertise. Most woven carpet failures are installation related.

The Designer, Architect and General Contractor have a responsibility to provide their customer with the best product and service ensuring that the customer's expectations are met. This can't be done with the lowest bidder on a woven commercial installation, particularly if the product is custom made.

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In most markets there aren't installation firms that possess the skills necessary to properly install woven Axminster or Wilton carpets. That expertise normally lies with a handful of truly skilled craftsman who do nothing but woven carpet installation. This is not to say that there aren't local firms in major metropolitan marketing areas or in specific locales such as Las Vegas for example, which is a hot bed for installation of woven Axminster carpets, that can perform woven carpet installation. But this isn't always the case.



Debonding from the existing cushion
double stick method of installation

We've been called into save many woven carpet projects, from the layout of the job, overseeing an installation, to the installation itself or taking it over if jeopardized, to specifying a manufacturer who can handle the complexity of the woven carpet needed for a project. There have been projects where it's been necessary to send in an expert to oversee a woven installation, take over the installation or, in the most intricate of circumstances, salvage a failed installation. Relative to salvaging a failed installation; this is like bringing in the Special Forces for a very special operation that requires the best of the best for success and success in these cases can't always be guaranteed.

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Working on projects throughout the world that require custom woven Axminster or Wilton carpet is not something many of you may do but there are a lot of projects, or even a portion of a project, where this product is used. When you do have a project that involves these types of products you need to be aware that it is different and therefore requires special treatment.

If you should ever need assistance, guidance, help with a solution or just want to talk about a project with woven carpet you have, don't hesitate to call us. We exist to serve you and to help keep you out of trouble or get you out of it.

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