



Private residence, Seattle

The *Zebois* rug by Adam Hunter for The Rug Company is a painterly, neutral interpretation of wood grain mixed with zebra stripes. Woven in wool and silk, it imbues a sense of depth without dominating this room.



Steampunk Space, Nashville, Tennessee

Luke Irwin's versatile *Ikat* rug is one of Hunter's favourite designs. Sourced from Mehraban in Hollywood, here it demarcates the dining area of an open-plan space on a private estate, where the design concept was inspired by the bark of surrounding trees and the clients' love for astronomy.



Second nature

Former Broadway performer turned Los Angeles interior design star Adam Hunter shares his feelings for rugs with Rachel Meek

Rugs are considered straight after the lighting but before any other furnishings in an Adam Hunter interior scheme. 'The rug is the anchor, the heart of the room, it is on the floor and therefore it grounds everything else. It introduces texture and can really add to the inherent atmosphere, which informs the inhabitant's relationship with that room,' Hunter says. 'Choosing art is an emotional process, it's not scientific. Clients can understand the importance of art more easily than they can understand the importance of a good sofa, for example, and rugs are on the same tier as art.'

This recognition of the power of a rug and its ability to contribute so heavily to the all-important—but often

hard to pin-down—feel of a room prompted him to produce a designer collection for The Rug Company, which already consists of five designs and is likely to expand. The collaboration came about as Hunter got to know the company's co-founders, Suzanne and Christopher Sharp through sourcing rugs for his clients' homes. At the beginning of the relationship, he was impressed by the sheer luxury and rich textures achievable in new hand-knotted rugs, having previously worked mainly with antique Persian pieces. Then he was thrilled to discover, among their extensive designer ranges, collections by some of his own fashion icons such as Diane von Furstenberg, Alexander McQueen and Paul Smith. He was struck by the fact that these designers had chosen rugs as a vehicle to

express their creativity away from the catwalk. He describes seeing his own inaugural *Zebois* rug in Harrods as one of the best moments of his life (he is a self-confessed Anglophile).

Rug design is a side-project for Hunter, who is best known for his residential interior design projects for US celebrities. The first of these was for the skincare guru Kate Somerville. His star-studded client list includes lead actors from Hollywood films and TV series, like *Desperate Housewives* and *Mad Men*, and is born of his earlier stint in show business. It was in pursuing his first career as an actor and singer that he relocated from New York to Los Angeles in 2005 and he still has a great appreciation of the Californian weather and lifestyle, which merges indoor and outdoor living. Therefore, the immediate surroundings of a project are always a big inspiration, and the consideration of how to best emphasise and accentuate their best assets is always paramount to his work.

He is especially proud of the Steampunk Space in Nashville, a project he designed in its entirety, based on a concept of 'traditional stone cottage meets Apple store' and which features custom rugs throughout. To accommodate the 6-8 month lead time required for the hand-knotted bespoke rugs that are such an early consideration, Hunter and his team usually rely on colour poms to provide the main tonal notes of a project, to which the wall coverings, soft furnishings and other details will be fine-tuned. But, for those who cannot wait for hand-knotted, he has developed a TRC Lab collection with The Rug Company; a more commercial, tufted option with half the lead time of his core lines. When sourcing ready-made rugs, he frequents the LA showrooms; Aga John Oriental Rugs, Mehraban, Stark and Mansour, as well as Kush Rugs in Portland.

So what does 2020 hold for Adam Hunter? Besides residential projects for new clients in Brentwood and Beverly Hills, and further afield in The Hamptons and Aspen, he is nearing the completion of a new living space of his own. Having already transformed one apartment within the 1960s Shoreham Towers to great acclaim in 2016, he is upgrading to a larger condo in the same building. He describes the overall feel as like 'night'—moody and deep as opposed to the earlier fresh and clean 'day' space. A 'transcendent' new rug is also in the offing, inspired by the sky at dusk 'right before it goes to black'. However dark Hunter's interiors get, it is clear that he will continue to set a glowing example to the design world, creating spaces that shine for Hollywood's stars.

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