

New England Loom

CURATED VINTAGE RUGS

Q&A With Lindsey Graziano

Why rugs?

I've always had a passion and eye for antique rugs. I love how much history and character they can bring to a room and knew when we eventually owned a home they would be a key part of it. They really are works of art - Even with the rugs I've owned for years now I see something new every time I look at one and they only get better with age.

Where did the business idea come from?

The business idea really came about after learning firsthand how tough it was to find great antique rugs at affordable prices for our wedding. For our reception, we really loved the idea of having an antique rug aisle/pathway leading into our tent so I started the search for the perfect rugs, knowing that after our wedding I'd use them in our future home. I quickly found that it's not like other home decor products, where you can google it and find exactly what you are looking for. Anyone that has looked for one of these rugs knows there's a little bit of an element of the hunt, where you have to know where to look or who to talk to. So fast forward to a year later, and I'd finally mastered the hunt and made some great rug connections along the way. Then when we bought our house and there wasn't the perfect spot for a few of the rugs in our collection, I posted them to Instagram to my 800 personal followers. They sold within minutes to friends and family. I think that's when I really saw the opportunity to do this at a large scale, and kind of take what I'd learned about sourcing antique rugs and make it easier for other people to find them too.



How do you source?

We do still get most of our rugs via relationships overseas (mainly Turkey) and it's like Christmas every time one of those big shipments arrive and I get to comb through new rugs. What's coolest to me about what we sell is that each handmade rug is one of a kind, so you never see the same rug twice. Each one is uniquely different. So while we do source a lot of rugs directly from the countries they come from, we try to source as much as we can locally. The benefit of that is that you actually see rugs in person before you make the decision to buy them. We have a few contacts locally in New England where we get a lot of our inventory and are also constantly visiting antique shops, estate sales, and browsing local auctions. Sourcing to consistently have 20-30 beautiful rugs to list weekly is definitely the most time-consuming part of our business, but I love that element of the hunt. I feel like every waking minute that I'm not working or traveling I spend sourcing.

Why Instagram?

Lindsey comes from a background in social media for a large ecommerce company, so saw the success of being able to sell products online and via channels like Instagram. Josh also comes from a sales background with a lot of experience on platforms like eBay. Instagram is such a visual inspirational platform and given the nature of what we are selling, it just made sense as our main marketing channel. When we first launched the handle we were just posting new rugs as they came in. But as our following grew, we started getting a lot of negative feedback around that process given that it meant customers had to be on Instagram within minutes of the rug being posted to be able to get it. And we understood that,

there's nothing more frustrating than seeing something you love on Instagram with a big SOLD next to it. So we started doing weekly batch listings as a way to streamline it a bit and give everyone a fair chance at getting each rug. New listings go live every Sunday night at 8pm ET and we do an Instagram story of all that week's new rugs with their names and sizes Sunday morning so that followers have time to browse through them and be ready at 8 to purchase if they love one.

Styles that work best?

I honestly just source what I like! There isn't much rhyme or reason to it other than the fact that every rug I source for New England loom is legitimately one I love and would put in our own home. For every one rug we choose, there are over 100 others that we weed through that aren't our style. I think this curated experience is what our followers appreciate, in that we take all the weeding and hunting out of the equation for them and only sell rugs that are hopefully the prettiest out there. Our most popular color combo request is currently pink + navy and we admittedly to source a LOT of pink rugs. I think pink is definitely having a moment right now and who knows how that will change over time, but currently you'll see a lot of pink in our feed. We also find that more geometric patterns sell better than the more traditional ones and that rare sizes (for us long skinny runners or 6x9) garner the most engagement.

How is it working together as a couple?

It's been a lot of fun! Honestly, I think Josh thought I was a bit crazy when I told him I was going to start selling carpets online and it took a lot to convince him to take \$5,000 out of our savings to invest in our first batch of 10 or so rugs. But since then, we've both put a lot of time and hard work into it and it's been rewarding to watch it grow. If you ever told us at the beginning that we would have seen over 5000 rugs pass through our home we wouldn't have believed it. I am the client facing side (I.e. Responding to inquiries, doing all the social media posting, photography etc.) but Josh really is the backbone of NE loom behind the scenes, handling all the orders, shipping and logistics, not to mention doing a lot of the heavy rug lifting!

How to antique rugs play into home design?

Rugs really anchor a room and I often find myself starting with the rug and designing everything else around it. I love how much color and character they can bring to a space. you'll notice on our feed we name every single one and almost humanize them a bit, almost like you are bringing a new pet or family member home. Buying a vintage rug is an investment and a big decision, so we want to make the process feel special. They are so well made and such high quality that it's likely something you'll have in your home for a long time, if not forever. We love that history behind them.

On shooting at home?

We have an attached insulated/heated garage where we store all of our rugs and boxes. Josh built a few wooden ladders in there so we can hang them. And currently we shoot all of our photos in our own home! There are pros and cons to this - the pros being the obvious that we don't have to schlep rugs around anywhere but the cons being that most of the time our house is in a state of disarray! I can't tell you have many times we've moved our dining table in and out of the room and usually in any given room there's a stack of rugs waiting to be shot there. Luckily our house gets a lot of natural light and also has hardwoods in every room. Half of our house is dark hardwoods and half is light which looks a bit weird but is actually a dream for shooting rugs given that some lend themselves much more to dark vs light and vice versa. We also do house calls occasionally if a client is deciding between a few rugs, but wants to try them in their space first. It's almost like a white glove delivery service,

You have such an incredible sense of style. Between the beautiful rugs you source, your perfectly curated home, and your work with Wayfair, you truly are a styling wizard. Who and/or what do you get your inspiration from?

Thank you! My style is very influenced by the east coast where I grew up and I've always sourced a lot of design inspiration from the beach and ocean, which you will also see reflected in our website design and logo. But oddly enough my two favorite designers (Emily Henderson and Amber Interiors) are on the west coast, and I find myself pulling a lot of that modern/boho California aesthetic that I am so inspired by into a lot of my work. I just about died when Emily included me in her recent vintage rug resource [post!](#)

There are so many incredible small businesses and individuals out there that are looking to make a difference in our world in their own unique way. Is there someone/something you just can't get enough of right now?

Shopping vintage! We were so surprised by how supportive the vintage small business community has been— whether that's in home or fashion. We have created such a strong support group in other vintage sellers, even with other rug dealers who you might deem "competitors", in that we are all aligned around the common goal of encouraging buying secondhand as a way to reduce your eco footprint. You hear so much about "sustainable" clothing or product lines these days – there is nothing sustainable about creating something new! Especially considering that the clothing + textile industry is the world's 2nd largest polluter. And while I am definitely guilty of this (currently working on my Lulus addiction) we try to shop vintage as frequently as we can for our home and can always get behind other small businesses that are champions for this as well.

A few more fun facts about us! (as shared on IG)

1. My husband Josh is the backbone of this business, handling all shipping (not to mention lugging those large 100lb+ beauties). Every rug order you receive is packaged by him by hand. My amazing mom also helps with all the photography! #dreamteam
2. You frequently see Mowgli on our feed but we actually have TWO dogs! The other just isn't as much of a camera hog ;)
3. A lot of you ask about this and it IS hard to not to keep every.single.rug! We try to source the best of the best and each rug is legitimately one we love and would put in our own home.
4. You'll notice that we name each rug after a New England town or landmark. We think this humanizes them a bit, almost like you are bringing a new family member home. Buying a vintage rug is an investment and big decision, so we want the process to feel special.
5. The majority of our rugs come from international relationships but we also try to source as much as we can locally, & many are ones we've hunted for right here in MA or VT. It's crazy to think about the distance some of these rugs travel before ending up in their new homes!
6. Some of the rugs we source don't ever even make it to these squares here on Instagram! We work with a lot of clients directly behind the scenes. If you know exactly what you are looking for but are just having trouble finding it, feel free to reach out to us and we can help source.

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