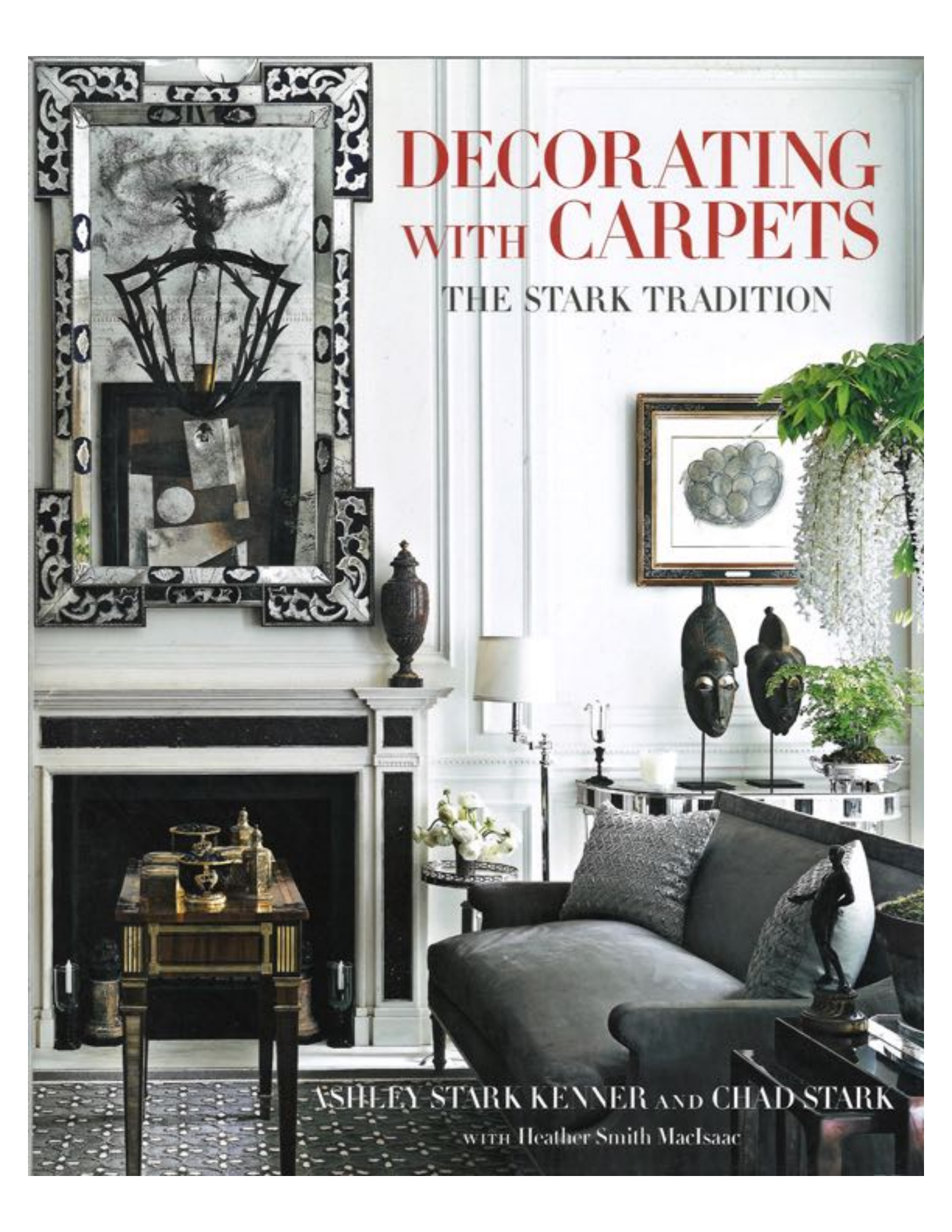




DECORATING WITH CARPETS

THE STARK TRADITION

ASHLEY STARK KENNER AND CHAD STARK

WITH Heather Smith MacIsaac



ABOVE Wall-to-wall sisal, like the gray-stained wood wall planking and white canvas slipcovers, suits the casual living room Bruce Bierman designed for a house on Fire Island.

OPPOSITE A zebra hide outlined in black and laid atop a Natura sisal carpet in silver delivers an extra visual treat at the base of glass coffee tables in a living room by Triangle Interiors.

make for incredibly cozy viewing, but it's the tartan carpeting that sends the room into a fling with the Scottish Highlands.

Game and billiard rooms share the entertainment prerogatives of screening rooms except that they are less insular; both natural and artificial light come into play. And instead of all eyes looking up and facing one direction, they are commonly focused on table height. In such conditions, carpeting in bright colors or large-scale patterns could take the eyes off the prize.

Usually it's the pool table itself that cues the carpet. In a Palm Beach billiard room (page 182) that glows with pier mirrors and gilded-bronze sconces, the ornately carved table is set off by a golden carpet that resembles nothing less than watered silk. In a billiard room of equally grand proportions but far less formal attitude (page 184), an antelope print playfully carpets the floor.

If a poolroom is typically an inward-looking space, one most often used in the cooler months, a pool house is quite the opposite. In a room designed for easy transition between indoors and out, the carpet must be prepared both to embrace nature visually and to handle its incursions—of water and sand mostly.

Sisal is the preferred treatment for such conditions. The highest grade of the natural fiber is used for carpets that are strong, durable, and, thanks to its resistance to static electricity, kind to bare feet. Hard-wearing and affordable, sisal comes in weaves and colors that seem to emerge from the natural environment. In a pool house by Alessandra Branca (pages 168–69), the waters appear to have just receded, leaving ripples in the carpet.

Waves are naturally graphic and a perfect motif for yachts, which are either riding them or looking out at them. Given the constant panorama of nature that yachts provide, an abstracted pattern that supports but does not compete with the surroundings, such as overscaled nautical ropes (page 190–91) seems appropriate for the saloon's carpet. Regardless of motif, safety issues dictate that the carpet sit flush with any other floor material. When one's stability may already be rocky, there's no need to provide something extra to trip over. Better a dense, soft surface to buffer any pitching and swaying and to invite the lounging that yachts are so conducive to.

RIGHT In a contemporary take on a traditional conservatory, the needlepoint carpet in a sunroom decorated by Bruce Bierman features sprays of fern fronds.

OVERLEAF A Ravi sisal area rug atop a stone floor lends a breezy indoor/outdoor feel to a finely dressed pool house by Thomas Pheasant.

