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ANTIQUES

Heirloom Rugs

By Eve M. Kahn

The gene for collecting sometimes persists in families for several generations before petering out. Which is how Jan David Winitz, a rug gallery owner in Oakland, Calif., just acquired several households' stashes of 19th-century rugs from one unidentified family that has shuttled among homes in Manhattan, Long Island and Cape Cod.

Between the 1910s and the 1980s, two generations of the family's forebears collected Near Eastern and Central Asian rugs and maintained a rug storeroom at each home. The current heirs, Mr. Winitz said, "kept enough rugs to furnish their own homes" and sold him about 150 oth-

ers. He declined to disclose the price.

On Wednesday his gallery, Claremont Rug Company, will post images of the collection on its Web site (claremontrug.com). From Sept. 12 through late November, the rugs, which cost from \$20,000 to \$400,000 each, will be displayed at a Claremont exhibition called "Artistic Visions of the Refined to the Elemental." That enigmatic title is meant to convey the rug collecting family's taste for formal, realistically floral wool weavings called "court carpets," as well as tribal rugs with naïve images of livestock, sunbursts and trees, sometimes loosely knotted from camelhair....

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Claremont Rug Company Opens "Epic Purchase" of Art-Level Oriental Carpets

Jan David Winitz, who founded Claremont Rug Company in 1980, said, "This is an epic purchase. The collection was started at the turn of the 20th century, when the availability of rare, early rugs was infinitely greater than it is today."

The collection was acquired from the third generation of the family of an entrepreneur who retired at a young age and spent the last 30 years of his life traveling and acquiring art-level rugs, according to the family. Winitz said, "The collection was offered to us exclusively. It contains many pieces that are true gems. It is a privilege to present this rich treasury to our clients."