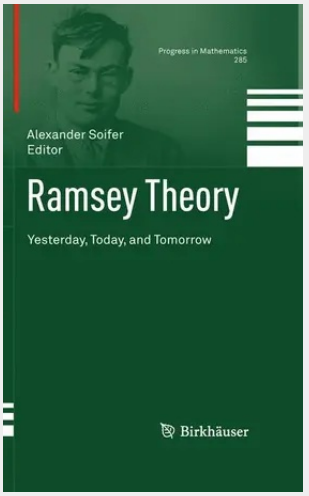
Soifer

Ramsey Theory

Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow



Ramsey theory is a relatively “new,” approximately 100 year-old direction of fascinating mathematical thought that touches on many classic fields of mathematics such as combinatorics, number theory, geometry, ergodic theory, topology, combinatorial geometry, set theory, and measure theory. Ramsey theory possesses its own unifying ideas, and some of its results are among the most beautiful theorems of mathematics. The underlying theme of Ramsey theory can be formulated as: any finite coloring of a large enough system contains a monochromatic subsystem of higher degree of organization than the system itself, or as T.S. Motzkin famously put it, absolute disorder is impossible. Ramsey Theory: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow explores the theory’s history, recent developments, and some promising future directions through invited surveys written by prominent researchers in the field. The first three surveys provide historical background on the subject; the last three address Euclidean Ramsey theory and related coloring problems. In addition, open problems posed throughout the volume and in the concluding open problem chapter will appeal to graduate students and mathematicians alike.

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106,99 €
99,99 € (zzgl. MwSt.)

Nicht mehr lieferbar

Artikelnummer: 9780817680916
Medium: Buch
ISBN: 978-0-8176-8091-6
Verlag: Birkhauser Boston
Erscheinungstermin: 05.11.2010
Sprache(n): Englisch
Auflage: 1. Auflage. 2010
Serie: Progress in Mathematics
Produktform: Gebunden
Gewicht: 1030 g
Seiten: 190
Format (B x H): 159 x 241 mm

Kundenservice Verlag Dr. Otto Schmidt KG
Neumannstraße 10, 40235 Düsseldorf | kundenservice@otto-schmidt.de | 0221-93738-997 (Inland)