

Azar's Oriental Rugs Brings Art Under Your Feet

Once in a while, Azar Alizadeh will get on a plane and travel to a far-off country to look for the perfect oriental rugs. But the world has become smaller, and the rugs have become closer to hand — and closer to her customers, as well.

Now, customers can buy inexpensive rugs, hand-made or custom-made rugs from all over the world with more variety than ever.

Alizadeh has been in the business for over 18 years, having grown up with it as a child in Germany.

"I was born to it," she said.

Alizadeh said that in addition to getting her rugs from large rug markets, she also has designs that are exclusive to her store.

"It's a big business," she added. "It's not village stuff any more. The quality is much better, and you see a lot of different designs. The cooperation between manufacturers and distributors make the rugs more sellable."

Of course, some rugs continue to be produced by villagers.

The rugs come from many countries, including France and Belgium, Romania and other places in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia of the former Soviet Union, from Turkey and Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Egypt, India, and China and Tibet.

The prices range from as low as \$50 for a two-by-three foot rug to \$80,000 for a 12 by 18 foot masterpiece.

"However, if you purchase a good rug, you'll own it for the rest of your life," Alizadeh said. "You can roll it up and take it with you. So, in the long

run, rugs are not that expensive these days."

There are currently four showrooms. The main one, in Birmingham, carries all handmade rugs. The showroom in Farmington Hills opened a year ago, and offers both handmade and machine-made rugs, as well as custom-made rugs. A third showroom is located in Grand Rapids, and there is a Design Center showroom in Troy for designers only.

"I'm working seven days a week because there is so much work to do," she said. "We have 15 employees working for us, and when you are the owner you have to work much harder."

Azar's Oriental Rugs was the first such business in the Birmingham area but other dealers have since moved in.

"We are becoming a center for rugs," Alizadeh said. "That is good because then anyone who wants to buy rugs comes here."

Alizadeh's impact on the community has also been felt in other ways. In 1994, she won the community service award from the Birmingham Community House for the aid the company gives to local charities. Alizadeh is also the co-chair of the Birmingham-Bloomfield Race Relations Task Force.

The Birmingham store is located at 670 S. Woodward and is open Monday, Thursday, and Friday 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday noon to 5 p.m.

The store can be reached at (810) 644-7311.



Azar Alizadeh of Azar's Oriental Rugs in Birmingham.

Azar's

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