

One of Us!

As told to
KASSIDY LANKFORD

HOOSHANG
HARVESF

Hooshang Harvesf, Ph.D., affectionately known as the “Mayor of Avondale” is the owner and operator of Avondale’s oldest store, Hooshang Oriental Rugs.

What is your background and how did you get started in the rug business?

I was born in Persia and I have always loved rugs. Where I’m from, rugs are everywhere. Whether rich or poor, most families have oriental rugs in their homes. Rugs, in a way, are in my blood. As a child, my father always told us that before we settle into a career that it was very important for us to get an education. He told us that after we got an education, we should pursue a career in something that we love to wake up every morning to do. I listened to my father, got a PhD in Economics and have been doing rugs ever since. Although my career is in rugs, I have never regretted getting my PhD.

Can you explain what exactly an oriental rug is?

An oriental rug is simply a hand-knotted rug with tile that is made anywhere in Asia. The only exception to this are Kilim rugs, which are flat-woven but are still considered oriental rugs.

What is unique about oriental rugs compared to other types of rugs?

Oriental rugs are special to me because they are hand-knotted. They are labor-intensive, very beautiful, and very intricate. Persian rugs, specifically, are the best in the world. There are very nice rugs from other countries as well, but if you take the best rugs from China and the best rugs from Persia, the Persian rugs will be better every time. 70% of my inventory is from Persia, and the rest of the rugs are from all over the world. I get rugs from places like



China, Turkey, Pakistan, Romania, and more. Because the making of these rugs is very labor-intensive, it is most cost efficient to source them from out of the country.

What is your favorite part about doing what you do?

My favorite part about this business is the people. I love people, and I love working with people. I enjoy finding these rugs from all over the world. I look for several things in rugs – quality of wool, balance between color and design, and complication of design. I also look for who the rug was made by, rarity of the rug, and where it was made. A lot of factors go into the making

of a good rug. It can be challenging to find the perfect rug, but it’s special because some of the rugs in my store cannot be found anywhere else in the world. I also love working in Avondale. I have lived in the area for many years and I have such a love for this community.

What do you love to do outside of work?

I really love to travel. I haven’t been able to do much traveling since the start of the pandemic, but as soon as it is over I will be traveling again. I have traveled all over the world, but my favorite place to visit is Rome. I’ve been there several times.