

CATCH THE Rug Bug



Photos Heidi Ivy Neiss

Rem Yildirim, owner of Arrediamo Santa Fe, says he caught what he calls the rug bug back in the early 80s. "If you catch that bug, you cannot get rid of it. You get hooked on the colors and patterns," he describes. And indeed, it's easy to understand how one can get hooked; Arrediamo's vast showroom on Galisteo is like a rug heaven, full of colors and textures adorning every wall, nook and cranny.

Originally from Turkey, Yildirim came to the United States in the late 90s. "Everything started with an earthquake in Turkey. I decided to go to the American Embassy and ask for a visa. I came to the United States for my first visit in 1999," he recalls. "On my second trip, I came to Texas and drove through New Mexico and Arizona on my way to Los Angeles. After that, I decided to live on the West Coast. I found an attorney in El Paso, Texas, who helped me legally stay in the U.S. long term. Then I met my now ex-wife, who came to Santa Fe for Indian Market in 2001. She wanted to move here from California. That's how I ended up in Santa Fe. I established myself at the Tesuque Flea Market, and the years passed doing business and going back and forth to Turkey." Arrediamo has been in business 16 years, and has been in its current location for 10 years.

How does one discern a quality carpet? "There are two kinds of rugs. The first are mass produced, and often found in department stores. They are created identically and feature similar color palettes. We don't really carry those," Yildirim explains. "We sell old-fashioned rugs, either antique or newly made, but made the same way as in the past." For instance, the coloring has to be from natural vegetable dyes, and it has to be made from material like hand-spun wool or silk. To have more value it needs to be over 50 or 60 years old. Lastly, it's important to consider density in knots. It boils down to where it has been made, by which tribe, age, design, colors, etc.

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Where does one start? "Look at the back of the rug," Yildirim instructs. He runs his index fingernail the length of it, emitting a raw scratching sound. "Listen to the song of the rug. If it's high quality, it emits a coarser noise. It's the noise of quality." Yildirim carries only the best rugs imported from various places around the world.

"A good rug is like wine; it gets better with time. The more you walk on it and wash it, the quality improves." He says the plastic era brought down the quality of rugs. However, in the past 25 to 30 years, rug-makers have gone back to the old ways of dying and making rugs.

In addition to its world-class carpets, Arrediamo is known for its fantastic service, which includes free shipping, 7-10 day exchange or full return, and a lifetime warranty on certain rugs. In other words, at Arrediamo, it's easy to catch the rug bug too! ■

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Rem Yildirim, owner