

Published April 8th, 2015

Two Businessmen Start a New Chapter of Their Lives in Lafayette

By Sophie Braccini



Farshid Ramani at Red Carpet Flooring Photo
Sophie Braccini

Abdullah "Zee" Azizi and Farshid Ramani recently opened new businesses on opposite sides of Mt. Diablo Boulevard. To the east, Azizi purchased Ace Auto Care at the end of 2014. While Ramani, to the west, opened Red Carpet Flooring in March. Azizi is fresh out of the military; Ramani is a seasoned business owner. Both chose Lafayette to start new chapters in their lives.

Azizi, 27, returned to the U.S. in 2014 after begin stationed in Afghanistan. A month later he bought Ace Auto Care. He thought owning a business would help him readapt to civilian life. "The two worlds (military and civilian) are very far apart," he says. "Many people think that (the military) is very stressful, but it's not. Everything is set for you. You know what's next. The struggle is different. There, it is very basic; you try to survive as a human being. Here, the struggle is trying to make a living. It is more stressful."

Azizi moved from Afghanistan to the U.S. with his family in 2007. A year later, after finishing high school, he joined the military, where he put his love of languages and linguistics to good use. "I loved being in the military; you are exposed to many

different cultures," he says. "For me, being so new to this country I met with Americans from all over, not just California, and in Afghanistan I met people from all over the world. Of course, it was dangerous where I was," he says, "but it's human nature, you adjust, and you do get used to it. You accept your situation; anything in your life you accept it."

The military reinforced the family values that he already had, he says, and he is bringing them to his business. "What we do defines us," he explains. "When you are deployed you can lose your life any second; what is left of you is what you did." In the auto shop, he believes that the same values of dignity and truth are just as important. "To me it is important to tell the truth so I can go to sleep at night," he says. "It's how I prioritize my life."

Azizi partnered with his father, who is an experienced mechanic, as was his grandfather. "All the technicians who work here are certified," he says, "and all our repairs are guaranteed for one year or 12,000 miles." He offers discounts to students, seniors and military personnel.

Close to Postino, on the western side of Mt. Diablo Boulevard, Ramani operates his flooring company with a similar ethic. When difficult economic times hit, Ramani decided to move his Concord business and his 20 years of expertise closer to his Moraga home and opened Lafayette's Red Carpet Flooring.

"I wanted to be part of the community here," he says. "There are certain values that people take seriously here that match the way I've always worked." For example, Ramani goes beyond legal recycling requirements when replacing old flooring. He seeks economical brands that have environmentally friendly surfaces that are going to be safe for children. He also gives 1 percent of his profits to the Lamorinda school districts.

"I work with businesses, apartment managers, as well as individual homeowners," he says. He

often offers design ideas to his clients since the array of choices for flooring nowadays is so vast, from hardwood to recycled wood, scratch-resistant laminate to natural or water-resistant LVT tiles.

The showroom on Mt. Diablo Boulevard opened in mid-March and gives clients a good idea of flooring options. "My wife has been a real estate agent in Orinda for many years," he says. "For us, having repeat customers and growing our businesses through word of mouth is the way to go."

Ace Auto Care - 3430 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette - (925) 284-5550 - aceautocare.net

Red Carpet Flooring - 3561 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette - (925) 691-9000 - redcarpetfloorings.com

Lamorinda Weekly business articles are intended to inform the community about local business activities, not to endorse a particular company, product or service.



Abdullah "Zee" Azizi and his father (standing) at Ace Auto Care Photos provided

Reach the reporter at: sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA