

Higher GROUND



Haig Tootikian

STORY **CATALINA MARGULIS**
PHOTOGRAPHY **JASON HARTOG**

THE PLACE: Now in its fourth generation, **Imperial Rug Galleries** is a family business that prides itself on its history and dedication to quality. “The company was founded by my great-grandfather in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1901,” says Armen Tootikian, who now runs the business with his brother, Haig. “My father came to Toronto and started working here, establishing our Oakville store in 1980.”

A second location opened in Toronto in 1990, broadening the company’s appeal and reach. “In Oakville, we’ve been on Lakeshore since the beginning. There’s very much a sense of community there,” says Armen. “In Toronto, we opened in the King East design district, where there’s a different vibe altogether. There’s a more artsy feel. They’re looking for design inspiration for their home.”



THE STYLE: “All we do is hand-knotted rugs,” says Haig, who explains that theirs are built to last. “A lot of our styles now are modern, abstract designs, but the construction is the same and stands the test of time. They’re modern designs but made to last decades on end without showing wear and tear.”

INTERNATIONAL APPEAL: Part of what makes Imperial Rug unique is that they’re one of the few businesses that travel overseas to do the buying the old-fashioned way, says Haig, who notes that they bring in rugs from India, Nepal, Pakistan and Afghanistan. “We go to the factories to see where the rugs are being produced, so we can inspect the product going into them – the qualities of wool and silk and the dyes used.”

WHAT’S TRENDING: “Modern/abstract has been the trend for a while now, but there’s more emphasis now on accent colours,” says Haig. “So it’s not just layers of grey; we’re seeing people come in who want colour again in their rug. There’s also more demand for more traditional elements.”

EXTRA EXTRA: Customer service plays a big role. “One of the other major things we do is the service side of the business,” says Armen. “We do cleaning and repair. We take multiple pieces to clients’ homes so they can try them out and live with the product for a few days. We also do pickups and deliveries.”

WHERE: 346 Lakeshore Rd. E., Oakville | 905.845.1305
232 King St. E., Toronto | 416.777.0304
imperialrug.ca **OH**

