

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Midnight Sun B&B celebrates 10 years

By John Thompson
News Reporter

Farshid and Del Amirtabar will need to expand the front entrance to the Midnight Sun Bed and Breakfast, at the rate they're going.

In the decade since they opened their clean, spacious home to guests, the front wall has filled up with plaques to signify the awards the business has won.

"This is 10 years, and we have 10 awards," Farshid says, beaming.

There's a string of Golden Host prizes from the Yukon Tourism Education Council, which most recently recognized Midnight Sun in an award announced October 27.

The Canadian Automobile Association has rated the business three diamonds. Canada Select has given it four stars. And the list goes on.

Farshid credits their business's success to "Persian hospitality." He's from Iran.

He admits to wondering some mornings, while shovelling snow from his walkway when it's minus 30° C, what he's doing in Whitehorse, so far from the subtropical swelter of the Caspian coast where he grew up.

But after spending 27 years in the Yukon, he's learned to live with the cold. And the big house he helped design – he trained to be a civil engineer in the Philippines – has more than a few hints of the Middle East, from the hookah in a kitchen corner to the Persian rugs and tapestries found in almost every room.

The building is big enough to have been mistaken for a small apartment complex by some, Farshid said. There are four guest rooms, each with a different theme.

There's the Yukon Room, decorated with the artwork of Jim Robb. The Persian Room is done up with more rugs and tapestries.

The Egyptian Room has glyphs painted along the room's walls. And the Victorian Room is, well, floral, with prints of pink flowers on its bedspread and pull-out sofa.

The rooms offer all the amenities. Each one has a full mirror, a hair dryer, a phone and internet



Ian Stewart/Yukon News

Del and Farshid Amirtabar of the Midnight Sun Bed and Breakfast have been offering travelers all the comforts of home for 10 years, and were recently recognized by the Yukon Tourism Education Council.

access. The Yukon Room has a beer fridge. The Persian Room has an attached room big enough to practice yoga or to hold a child's playpen.

Upstairs, past the guest rooms, there's also a kitchen with a freezer that's always stocked with ice cream, and a communal room with comfy chairs, a sofa and television, and a phone for long-distance calls that accepts a credit card. A coin-operated washer and dryer can be found in a closet.

It's past tourism season, but the bed and breakfast sees a trickle of regular guests through the winter. They're usually government workers in town for meetings, who have come to appreciate the clean, quiet and comfortable atmosphere of the place.

The house would be tidy, even if they didn't use it as a business, said Del. She describes herself as a compulsive cleaner.

She's from India. Del and Farshid met in Whitehorse, through



Ian Stewart/Yukon News

The Midnight Sun's Egyptian room.

her sister, who, like Farshid, is a practitioner of the Baha'i faith.

The business isn't in Whitehorse's most scenic location. On the corner of Sixth Avenue and Cook Street, the building overlooks several small industrial yards.

But it's central enough for Farshid to be able to point out from one window the Federal Build-

ing on Main Street and, from another, the stairs that ascend the clay cliffs, making it easy to orient guests new to town. And it takes just several minutes to walk downtown.

When Farshid first moved to Whitehorse, he lived in an apartment just across the road from where his bed and breakfast now stands.

The short distance he's moved since then captures for him the advantage of living here over fast-paced Toronto, where many endure long commutes between work and the suburbs.

"It took us 27 years to cross the road, it's so relaxing."

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