

# PalmBeachPost

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Fabulous Finds

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REAL ESTATE WEEKEND 7

Fabulous *Finds*

## Beautiful Arzu rugs offer hope to Taliban-ravaged Afghanistan

Arzu is a 5-year-old, Chicago-based nonprofit organization that designs and sells a line of hand-woven, natural wool rugs produced in the Taliban-ravaged country of Afghanistan.

Proceeds from the sale of these rugs go to the under-appreciated, hard-working Afghan women who use their centuries-old weaving tradition to earn sustainable income.



Vivian Armentl

The idea for the company came from a retired managing partner of Goldman Sachs who continues to serve on the Afghan Women's Council.

Inspired by what she learned and saw in Afghanistan, Connie K. Duckworth founded Arzu and made it the goal of the organization to not only help break the poverty cycle but also to provide female weavers and their families with health care and education.

Today, more than 700 Afghan weavers are employed by Arzu. The program affects more than 2,050 individuals in households and communities. Many have either lost their husbands to the Taliban's deadly regime or must take care of a wounded husband who is unable to work.

Therefore, the woman of the house is forced to find a way to support her family in a place where women are considered third-rate citizens. Arzu gives these women and their families hope.

In fact, Arzu means "hope" in Dari, one of the official languages of Afghanistan.

To work for Arzu, weavers must first agree to a social contract. They must promise to send all of their children under 15 years to school full time; in addition, all women in the household, including the weaver, must attend literacy and numbers training.

In return, Arzu agrees to pay the weavers fair market value for their rugs. The organization also offers a worker-safety program to address ailments that are common among rug weavers, such as premature blindness and tuberculosis.

There are dozens of rugs to choose from, with 16 to 32 new designs coming out each year. The most popular is the Hope — an Afghan design and one of the oldest rug designs in history, dating back to 500 B.C.

Rugs as intricately detailed as the Hope take months to complete. No machines are involved in the making of this or any other design. Even the dyes used are 100 percent natural — from fruits, vegetables and plants.

Every Arzu rug has been given a unique name and is sold with the story of its weaver. These rugs are of the highest quality and are extremely durable.

If you're looking for a beautiful accessory with a heart-warming story behind it, consider an Arzu creation. With continuing support, the Arzu concept can expand to help other nations in need.

Visit Robb & Stucky Interiors in Boca Raton to see which Arzu rugs are available. Ask to see additional designs. If the rug of your choice is not in the store, it most likely can be ordered.

Vivian Armentl is design director at Robb & Stucky Interiors in Boca Raton. For more information about Arzu rugs, visit Robb & Stucky Boca Raton at 200 Plaza Real, Miramar Park; call (561) 347-1717; or visit [www.robbstucky.com](http://www.robbstucky.com)

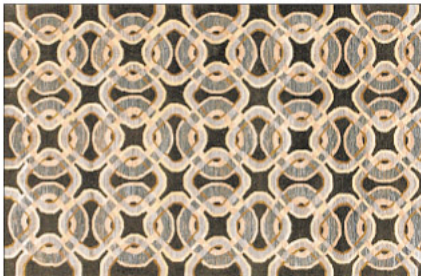
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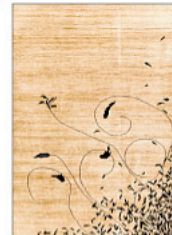
Arzu offers a range of styles, including this more modern Cloud rug.



'Arzu' means 'Hope' in Dari, one of the official languages of Afghanistan. This rug is called Chains of Hope.



All Arzu rugs are hand-woven, made of natural wool and colored using natural dyes. This rug is called Intertwined.



Weaving is a centuries-old tradition in Afghanistan. This rug is named Regenerate.