



Wishes come true for Alpena man

July 8, 2013
Betsy Lehndorff , The Alpena News

ALPENA - Mike Arzo's last name means "may your wishes come true."

And it could be the reason he plunked down \$280,000 at a Las Vegas trade show for a hand-painted carousel that was made in Argentina.

Later this month, area residents could get their first chance to catch a ride among the pageantry of bejeweled horses and elegant white chariots lined with red velvet. All are inspired by the ancient, over-the-top city of Venice.

Article Photos

Mike Arzo peeks out from behind some of the hand painted horses on his Carousel Venetian made by Felimana Luna Park, S.A. of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

"When I am making you happy, I am happier than you are," said Arzo, who owns a sports and amusement ride five miles north of Alpena on US-23.

Arzo said when he was a child in Armenia, he and his family were poor.

"I would wait in line hoping for a ride on a carousel," Arzo said. "One time I stood in line three days in a row. Finally someone offered me a free seat, and then a family member arrived and I had to go back in line."

Despite his situation, Arzo grew up to earn an advanced degree in electrical engineering and invented a digital readout system for elevators. The product was snapped up by Otis Elevator Company, and Arzo's future was launched.

Drawn to Alpena because of its spectacular fall colors, Arzo purchased a miniature golf and driving range called Puna's Playground. In 2009, he and his wife, Mary, reopened it to the public and he began adding amusement park rides as a hobby. Other family members, including Arzo's brother and Mary's parents, offered a helping hand or visited to cheer them on.

The carousel is located in a large pole barn, which also shelters an Irish bumper car ride. But construction of the floor isn't yet complete, so Arzo is hoping the ride will open by the end of this month.

"It's hard to find somebody in Alpena, who knows how to put together a carousel," park Manager Josh Alberts said.

But work has been proceeding at a steady clip. A Ferris wheel and colorful outdoor rocket ship ride were added last year.

Both Arzo and Alberts said the horses' tails are made out of real horsehair, and the painting is meticulously detailed. No two horses are alike, some embellished with gilded scales and all glittering with jewels.

Arzo and his wife do not have children of their own, and look forward to entertaining young visitors in the future.

"When I see the kids on the horses, that will be the payoff," Arzo said. "That's what I am."

Betsy Lehndorff can be reached via email at blehndorff@thealpenanews.com or by phone at 358-5693. Follow Betsy on Twitter @bl_alpenanews.

[© Copyright 2013 The Alpena News. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.](#)

- See more at: <http://www.thealpenanews.com/page/content.detail/id/526064/Wishes-come-true-for-Alpena-man.html?nav=5004#sthash.ksSN52rZ.dpuf>