

AROUND IRAN

WHERE TO STAY IN ISFAHAN.
WHERE TO GO IN ISFAHAN.
WHAT TO SEE IN ISFAHAN.
WHAT TO BUY IN ISFAHAN.

ISFAHAN

CITY OF MANY FACES

the king of miniaturists

On a quiet back street in Isfahan is the 200 year old house of Professor Mossaver-el Malki, the king of miniaturists. You enter through a short passage way, turning right to a high-ceilinged reception room with several small tables and lovely carpets. On one wall is a self portrait of the artist with the gold medal he won at the Brussels World Fair. The artist himself greets his visitors warmly. His perceptive eyes and vigorous features are the same as in the portrait, but unfortunately his shaking hand tells of an illness which no longer permits him to exercise his art.

The Professor welcomes you courteously and proudly shows you photographs of the Shahbانه, the beautiful Queen, viewing his work. There is a large painting of a battle scene which can be also seen in the Chehel Sotun Palace. The artist explains that this differs from other miniature works, since his painting usually has one perspective. One can see the wealth of detail and the precision which distinguishes Persian miniatures. There is another painting of Persepolis in the days of Darius the Great, reconstructed imaginatively with a blend of archeology and artistically reminiscent of the work of the Italian renaissance painter, Canaletto. The Professor's name is in Persian script with a small humorous cartoon of himself, and appears in a corner of each of his works.



As one looks about the room, with its decorated walls and ceiling and its brightly colored stained glass windows, there are other masterpieces. A "Feast of the Animals" rendition in one corner shows a delicacy and subtlety of line which reveals some of the Chinese influence. The Professor reminds us that Persian art, indeed, is similar to Chinese.

When we comment that the different kinds of animals seem to be frolicking to get joyfully off their feet, the Professor explains that the message of the painting is his desire that all nations of mankind should enjoy life in harmony. On the walls, letters from Churchill and Roosevelt are displayed with their thanks to the artist for copies of his miniature, done in classic style, showing three worried faces of Churchill,

Roosevelt and Stalin (who met at the Tehran Conference during the World War II). There are a number of other certificates of honors received and letters displayed in the reception room; one letter from King George V of England thanked the artist for his special work commemorating the King's coronation.

Most of the letters had framed photographs copies of the letters (written in English) translated into Farsi but one from Chang-Kai-Shek was entirely in Chinese. The house has a small indoor pool in one adjoining room where birds sing joyously, and a courtyard with a larger pool in which the gold fish glide.

It is a lovely setting for an unforgettable experience. It leaves you with the feeling that you have met one of the world's most accomplished artists.

