



Yasser Marte/East Oregonian

A turquoise quinceanera gown stands in the window display Wednesday, Aug. 31, 2022, at Adamari's Boutique in Hermiston. Quinceanera dresses can range in price from \$199 to \$1,400.

Hermiston boutique specializes in dresses for cultural milestone

By MARCO GRAMACHO
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Esperanza Ochoa, 42, moved to Hermiston in 1986 from the city of Ruiz, in the state of Nayarit, in Mexico. She made many friends and started to be invited to be godmother for her friend's children and saw the parents having to go to nearby cities to buy clothes for the special occasion.

She also saw them have to do the same for their girls' quinceanera, which is a celebration of a Hispanic girl's 15th birthday, marking her transition from childhood to maturity.

"The creation of Adamari's Boutique 12 years ago was a dream come true and a gift from God," said the owner of the store at 176 W. Hermiston Ave.

"Our community was losing time and money with gas to go to stores outside Hermiston," she remembered. "I said to myself that one day I would have a store where my community could find all they needed without losing money and time and finding high quality products," she said.

The boutique's lead product is the quinceanera dress. Prices can start at \$199 and go to \$1,400.

"The girls completing 15 years old want the most expensive dresses, but the parents don't," she said jokingly.

The store offers clothes and accessories from baptism until marriage.

"Our community has a very strong culture as Latinos and based on our religious beliefs," she reflected.

The store carries brands from Mexico and the United States.

"With the pandemic there was a boom in sales, especially quinceanera dresses," Ochoa said. "I don't know the reason why. Maybe people were afraid of what the pandemic would bring in the future and won't have a chance to celebrate important dates."

The market of quinceanera is booming in the United States. According to U.S. Census data, the Hispanic population of the United States as of July 1, 2019, was 60.6 million, making people of Hispanic origin the nation's largest ethnic or racial minority. Hispanics constituted 18.5% of the nation's total population.

According to Census data, about 80,000 people live in Umatilla County, and Hispanics or Latinos make up 28.6% of the population.

In the U.S., there are more than 400,000 quinceaneras every year, according to a report in Forbes magazine. Globally, quinceaneras are a \$49 billion industry and, combined with other traditional celebrations — weddings, baptisms, tres anos (celebration of a child who turns 3 years old), and



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Adamari's Boutique owner Esperanza Ochoa, 42, shows off her latest dresses Wednesday, Aug. 31, 2022, in Hermiston. "The creation of Adamari's Boutique 12 years ago was a dream come true and a gift from God," she said.



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Quinceanera dresses are on display Wednesday, Aug. 31, 2022, at Adamari's Boutique in Hermiston.



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A array of high-to-low heels sit on the shelves for sale Wednesday, Aug. 31, 2022, at Adamari's Boutique in Hermiston. The business specializes in clothing for quinceaneras.

others — create a \$400 billion market.

Quinceaneras cost \$21,781 and have 212 guests on average, per the Forbes report. Godparents help pay for the religious items used in the ceremony, such as the Bible and cross.

They accompany the person (or persons) being celebrated during the church ceremony and throughout the

reception. They also may take on the responsibility of organizing the gifts.

However, because of the high costs of these events, other friends and family contribute, helping pay for the venue, bar, party favors and wedding-like dress at a quinceanera, as well as weddings and baptisms.

Quinceaneras remain strongest in Mexico and

among Mexican Americans in the United States. However, different Spanish-speaking countries in the America also widely celebrate the event in different ways. In Brazil, a Portuguese-speaking country, a similar celebration is called festa de debutantes, baile de debutantes or festa de quinze anos. In the French Caribbean and French Guiana, it is called fete des quinze ans.



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The carousel horse "Dandy Boy" stands on display Friday, Sept. 2, 2022, at the Pendleton Art & Frames store in Pendleton. Charles "Chuck" Kaparich of Missoula, Montana, made the piece for Cher Mulhearn, who recently moved to Pendleton and is selling it due to lack of space in her home.

Wood horse in Pendleton revives golden memories of carousels

By MARCO GRAMACHO
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Cher Mulhearn and her husband recently moved to Pendleton and brought with them a piece of Americana — a carousel horse.

But not just any carousel horse.

Charles "Chuck" Kaparich of Missoula, Montana, made Mulhearn's horse. Kaparich was a cabinet-maker who learned to carve animals for carousels, and in the early 1990s became involved in downtown Missoula's revitalization project and started A Carousel for Missoula.

"Missoula's carousel was the first hand-carved carousel in the United States since the Great Depression," Mulhearn said. "His success in Missoula spurred a nationwide carousel revival."

Kaparich died in 2021 at the age of 73.

Mulhearn learned of carousels at a young age.

"When I was a little girl my father used to take me to a carousel in Leavenworth, Kansas, where I was born," she said.

Many years later she had the chance to meet Kaparich when she moved to Missoula, and designed a carousel horse especially for her.

"It took a year and a half to be done, and it was worth the wait," she said. "I named him 'Dandy Boy' because it took me so many years since my childhood to have him."

But after moving to Pendleton in August, she decided to consign her carousel horse because there is no more space for it in the house. The horse is for sale and on display at Pendleton Art & Frame, 36 S.W. Court Ave., Pendleton.

Kaparich carved Mulhearn's horse in the Dentzel style.

"Gustav Dentzel was a German immigrant working in Germantown, Pennsylvania, during the late 1800s," Mulhearn said.

"His carving style featured more muscular horses."

She said the company was the first to put a menagerie of animals — cats, deer, etc. — on American carousels.

According to the book "A Pictorial History of the Carousel," written by Frederick Fried, historian and carousel conservationist, the United States once had 5,000 hand-carved carousels. Today there are less than 160 due to their selling off of the ponies, parts and scrap metal.

"Kaparich was looking to buy a horse carousel for his wife and after consulting with Frederick Fried he decided to make an entire carousel," Mulhearn said.

That was Kaparich's first inspiration for the project A Carousel for Missoula, which is at Caras Park on the banks of Clark Fork River.

According to information in the website of the project, Kaparich, who had spent many childhood hours on the carousel at Columbia Gardens in Butte, Montana, had already carved four carousel ponies and had purchased an antique frame in thousands of pieces when he started the project for Missoula.

Kaparich taught others to carve, mechanics began the process of restoring 16,066 pieces of the antique frame and motor, painters were recruited, and Missoula began working together to create A Carousel for Missoula.

By the time the carousel opened in 1995, volunteers gave more than 100,000 hours for the construction of 38 permanent ponies, 14 gargoyles, the largest band organ in continuous use in the United States and more. According to carouselformissoula.com, Missoula school children collected more than one million pennies — \$10,000 — to adopt four ponies.

"I hope the tradition of horse carousels remains," Mulhearn said, "to keep creating great memories such as the ones I have."

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