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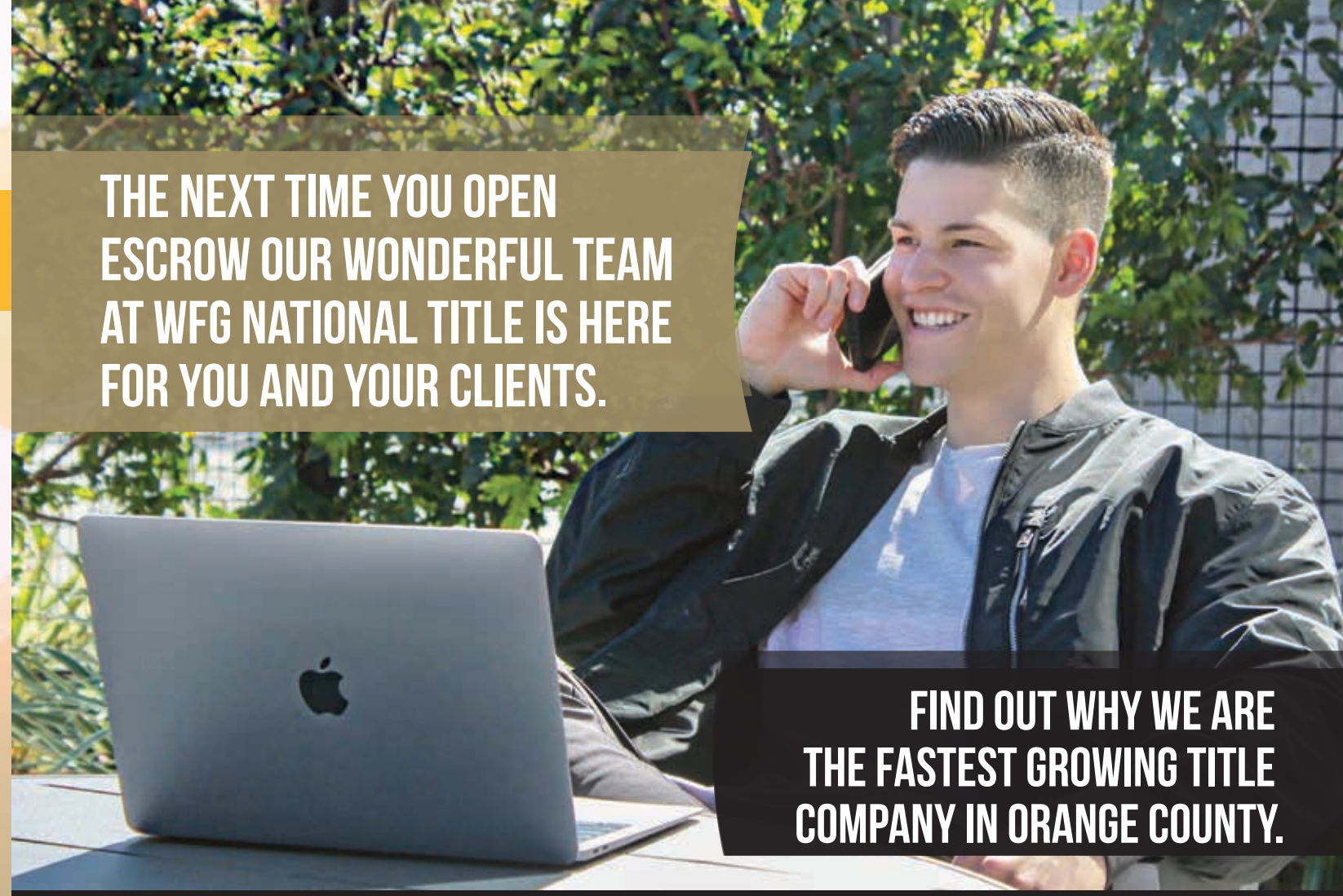
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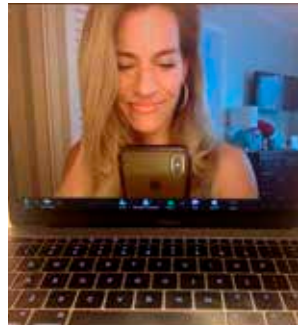
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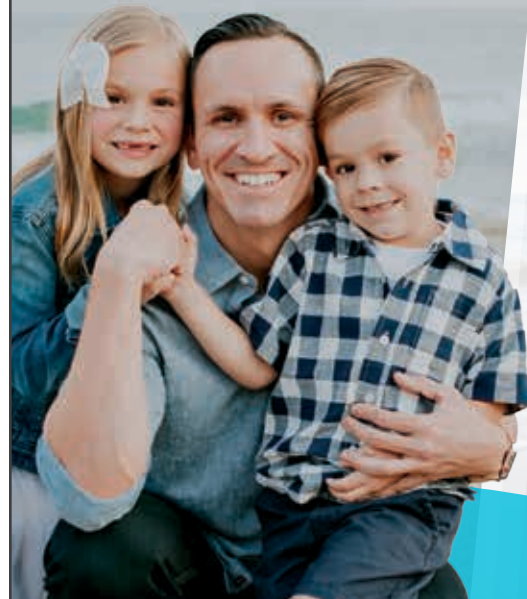


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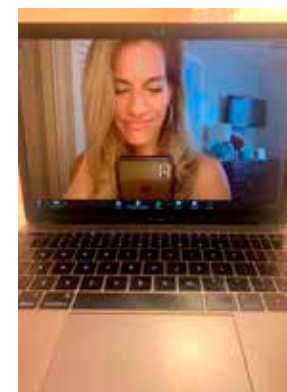
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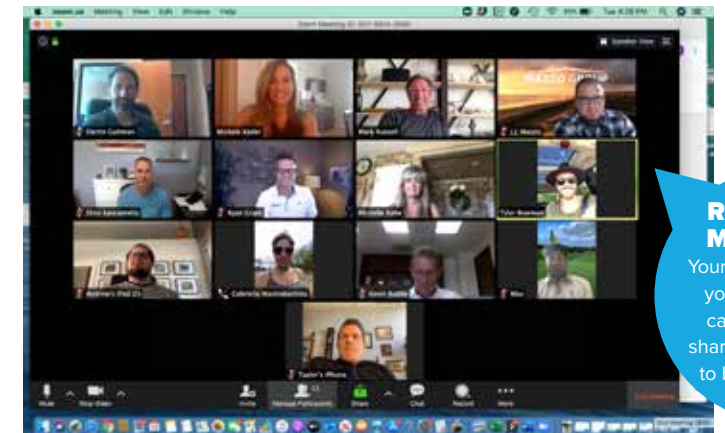


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QUARANTINE COOKS

SANDY & RICH MARQUEZ of RE/MAX Coastal Homes

When the coronavirus shutdown began, power couple Sandy and Rich Marquez, with RE/MAX Coastal Homes, took to the kitchen.

“Since our Cabo vacation was canceled...we planted a garden in quarantine. We love making guacamole,

so cilantro is a must. Warm weather also calls for mojitos, so we have fresh mint as well,” say Sandy and Rich.

Sandy shares one of their favorite, quick-and-easy quarantine recipes: delicious blueberry scones.



One of Sandy and Rich Marquez's specialties is guacamole with fresh cilantro grown in their garden.



BAKERY STYLE BLUEBERRY SCONES

Blueberry scones that taste bakery-fresh! Juicy blueberries, crunchy turbinado sugar, and perfectly browned for breakfast or brunch.

Prep: 20 min
Cook: 20 min
Total: 40 min
Servings: 8
Yield: 8 scones

INGREDIENTS:
2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 cup sugar
1 tablespoon baking powder (yes, TABLEspoon)
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon grated orange zest
1/2 cup cold salted butter, cut into very small cubes
1 large egg
1/2 cup cold heavy cream
1 cup blueberries, fresh
A few tablespoons of additional heavy cream for brushing the tops
Turbinado sugar for sprinkling the tops

INSTRUCTIONS:
1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Stir the flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, and orange zest in the bowl of a stand mixer (or just a mixing bowl). Add the butter. Mix ingredients with an electric mixer until fine crumbs form.
2. With the mixer on low speed, add the egg and heavy cream in a slow stream. Mix until a thick, stiff dough forms. Add the blueberries and mix until the blueberries are just incorporated into the dough. If some of them break, that's okay — you'll get those pretty juice drips down the side.
3. Flour your hands. Remove the dough from the mixing bowl and place on a floured work surface. Roll into a rectangle, about 1 inch thick. Cut into 8 triangles; pull the triangles apart from each other and brush with heavy cream. Sprinkle with turbinado sugar. Bake for 18-20 minutes or until golden brown and firm to the touch. Sprinkle again with turbinado sugar for extra texture. Enjoy warm; store leftovers in an airtight container for 1-2 days.

NOTES:
Parchment paper helps prevent burning on the bottom. For lighter scones, be sure to keep the butter as cold as possible throughout the process. Stick the dough in the fridge for a few minutes if it's getting too warm and soft.

Serves: 8
Calories per serving: 372

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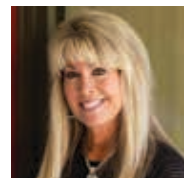


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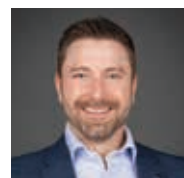
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ZEN ZIEJEWSKI

►► cover story/top producer

By Lindsey Wells



Photo by Andrew Bramasco



The Z Team (Left to right: Vanessa Scott, Jonathan Bennett, Zen Ziejewski, Chuck Harper, Scott Woodburn).

CHANGING LIVES...ONE HOME AT A TIME

“Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile.” —Albert Einstein

If you have ever spent even the smallest amount of time helping someone else, whether it be through your time, money, or energy, chances are you’ve experienced the truth behind that quote by Albert Einstein. The same rings true for Realtor® Zen Ziejewski — in fact, in a lot of ways, it’s a way of life for him. Zen entered the world of real estate in 1988, and his drive, humility, integrity, and faith propelled him to the top of the game in the Orange County real estate market. Since joining Keller Williams

Realty in 2010 and establishing a faith-based team, now known as The Z Team, Zen’s mission is so much bigger than merely selling houses; his reason for doing what he does has nothing to do with numbers and everything to do with serving others.

Zen was born and raised in Southern California. Shortly after graduating from the USC Marshall School of Business, he realized his passion for real estate after his own experience as a first-time homebuyer in his early

20s. He pursued his license and vowed to make every client’s buying and selling experience a positive one, to the best of his ability. Now, with 31 years of experience under his belt, his knowledge, coupled with his passion for helping others, allows him to create solutions aimed at helping people obtain their goals and succeed in any type of market. “I love helping people achieve their goals and their dreams,” he said. “I help them create wealth through real estate, and it’s helping them leave a legacy for their family.”



Zen started his 10-year-old son Hayden playing hockey at age 3 (inside the house with foam pucks), and today is assistant coach for his roller hockey and flag football teams.

Photo by Andrew Bramasco

“

GRATITUDE IS THE BEST ATTITUDE.

In addition to using his experience and expertise to guide clients over every hurdle in their real estate transaction, Zen, as a strong man of faith, takes comfort in knowing that everything is in God’s hands at the end of each day. “If I have clients of faith, then we have that conversation, and we pray for God to make it happen or not make it happen, whatever is in His will,” Zen said. “It gives me good peace of mind because this is a crazy business, and I think that’s where having a faith-based team and being a believer in God is important.” One of Zen’s favorite scriptures is, “For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). He added that Keller Williams Realty was founded on putting faith and family before business, a company culture that he enjoys.

Another aspect of his business, and perhaps one of the most important, is Zen’s passion for mentoring, whether it be other agents or first-time buyers or sellers. “I have the heart of a teacher,” he said. “We work with a lot of first-time buyers and first-time sellers, and I just love teaching them and educating our clients throughout the process.”

Zen’s desire to reach out and lend a helping hand stretches far beyond the doors of the brokerage. On Sundays, he attends Saddleback Church and regularly helps with organizations and events, including Second Harvest Food Bank and Toys for Tots. Zen has helped struggling families in his community, and his team gives back by donating a portion of each closing to charity.

While Zen has worn many hats throughout his life and career (Realtor, advocate, teacher, friend), none of them hold a candle to his most important role of all: father to his one and only son, 10-year-old Hayden. On any given evening or weekend after work and school, Zen and Hayden can usually be found attending some kind of sporting event or even holding a sporting event of their own inside their home (indoor hockey, anyone?). Zen is an assistant coach for Hayden’s roller hockey and flag football teams and said he thoroughly enjoys seeing his son grow and flourish as an individual and teammate. “We started when he was three years old playing hockey inside the house with foam pucks and sticks, and we still play to this day. We still battle it out, but now it’s a lot more intense, and the puck goes a lot faster,” Zen says, laughing. “When Hayden started playing hockey, he didn’t know how to roller skate, so it’s been amazing watching him transform. Several seasons, Hayden has led the league in scoring, so it’s just awesome watching him play, coaching him, and being part of that.”

In life, Zen leads by example with his team, his clients, and within his community. He feels very blessed to have one of the top teams with Keller Williams nationwide, along with amazing friends and family. Two things in life that Zen genuinely believes are that you must first give to receive, and that “Gratitude is the best attitude.” With those two life lessons, faith, passion, and hard work, everything else will take care of itself.



Zen has a passion for giving back, and regularly helps with charitable organizations and fundraising events. (Shown here at last year’s Doggie Photo Day and with Hayden at the Halloween Pizza Party.)



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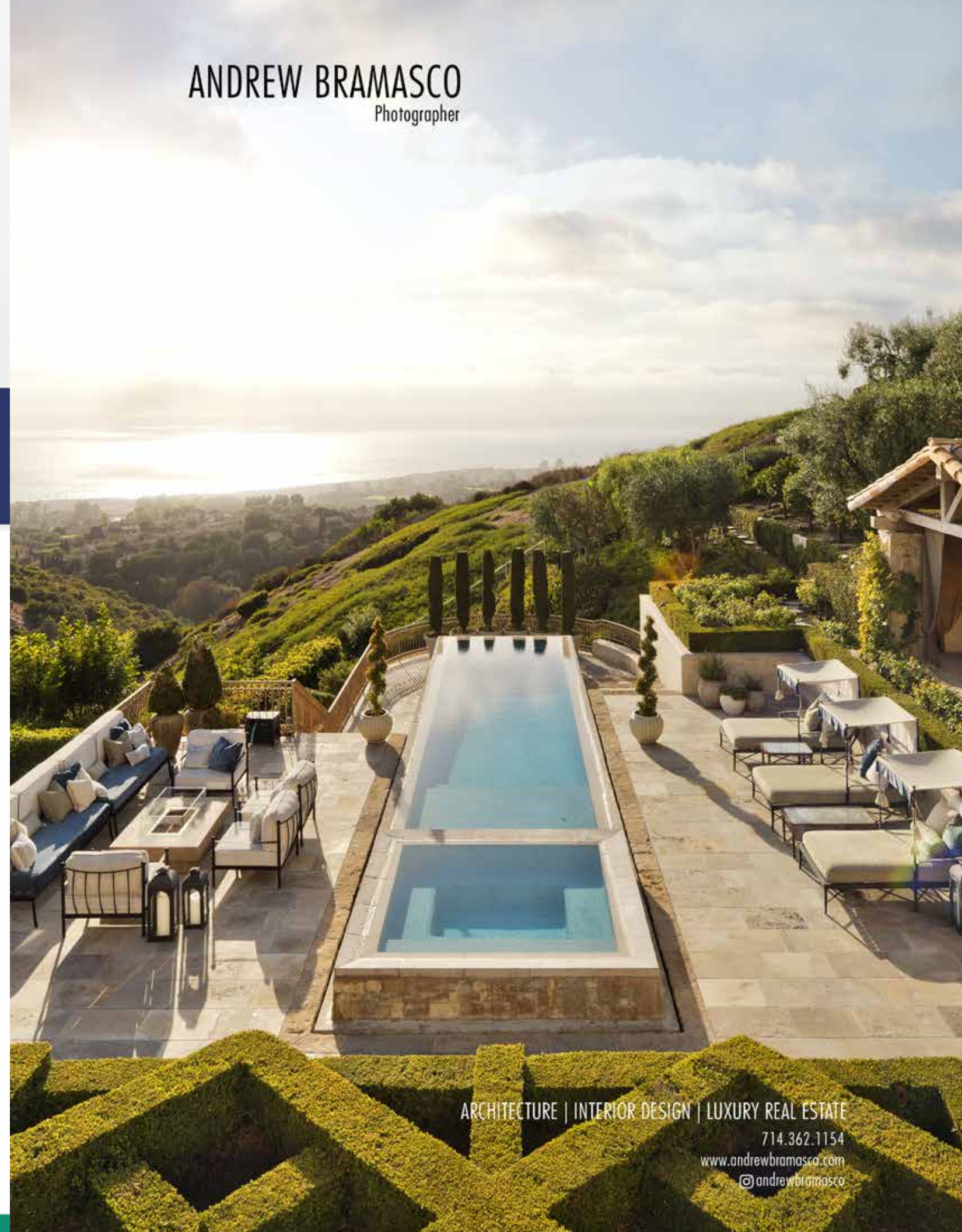
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people to be competitive, especially in a multiple-offer situation," JJ says.

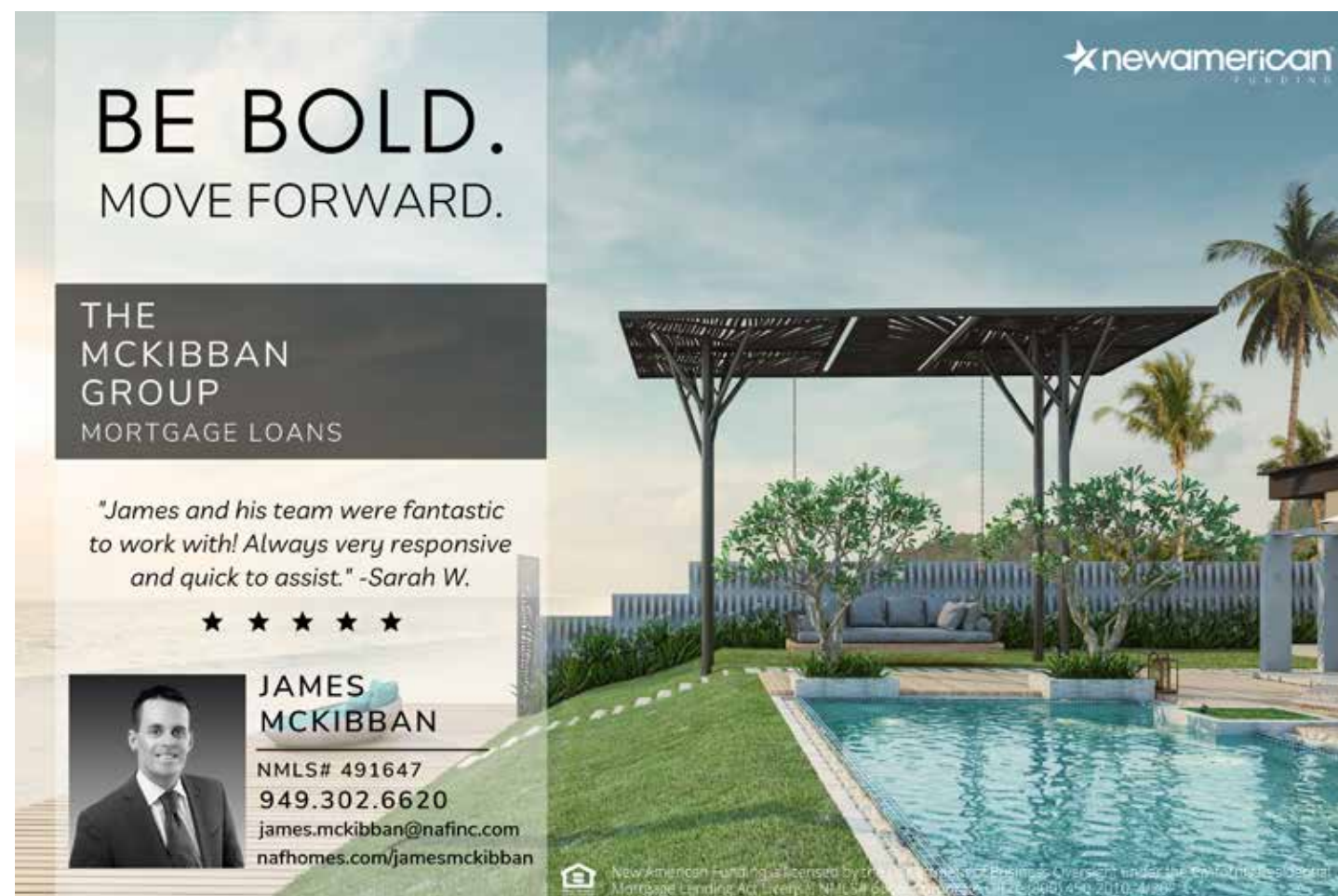
Another thing that makes this group special is its execution; everything is done in-house, including the docs, funding, underwriting, and processing. When choosing the Mazzo Group, at CrossCountry Mortgage, for lending needs, consumers aren't forced to sacrifice the speed with which their loan is processed. Simply put, JJ Mazzo, at CrossCountry Mortgage, runs a small company within a larger one, reporting only to the CEO, allowing the group to do things others just *can't*. And the

partner spotlight ◀◀

By Lindsey Wells
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JOHN STURDEVANT

REACHING THE PINNACLE OF SUCCESS

It was 1994. John Sturdevant was in his last semester of college at UC Riverside, taking a course in Real Estate Finance, when it suddenly became clear which career path he was destined to take. He simultaneously considered a career as an architect; yes, that line of work would allow him to deal directly with homes and structures, something he was indeed interested in, but the thing that intrigued John even more than that was the financial and problem-solving aspects of real estate. After college, he moved to Orange County, studied on the beach for his broker's license, and became licensed in 1995. Fast-forward 25 years, and John Sturdevant is now a top-performing broker for Regency Real Estate Brokers.

As an independent agent, John is less concerned about his sales volume and more concerned with the satisfaction of his clients and building and maintaining long-term relationships with them. In fact, that's what drives him to get up every day and continue, in addition to his genuine love for the industry. "Every day, I wake up with a new idea, a new solution, a new problem to solve, and it keeps me going," John says. "One thing that feeds the inner architect in me is helping people envision what a home can be. I see the boxes when I view a home and how to deconstruct them in a manner more suitable to my client's lifestyle and current trends. I love helping people create their dream home, as well as helping them make the appropriate, cost-effective improvements to maximize their

profit when selling or leasing a property. Past clients call me all the time to ask my input before they make changes to their homes."

Although he has been in the business for a quarter of a century already, just 10 years ago, John started surveying his clients to gauge customer satisfaction, a very meaningful and eye-opening experience. He said it was at that point that he felt like he'd reached the pinnacle of success in his career so far. "Just seeing how happy and satisfied my clients were and what a good job I was doing for people, I was really happy with that," John says. "This is a fun business. It's a new challenge every day; different people, different transactions, different houses, but the biggest thing for me is the satisfaction I get from seeing how happy my clients are."

agent spotlight ◀◀

By Lindsey Wells
Photography by Andrew Bramasco

...



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THING FOR
ME IS THE
SATISFACTION I
GET FROM SEEING
HOW HAPPY MY
CLIENTS ARE.”

...

Though he is mostly focused on his business right now, sometimes working 16 hours in a single day, outside of work, John has been an avid traveler for over 10 years and enjoys immersing himself in different cultures. “It opens your eyes up a lot to the way other people live and their beliefs, and I like that. Whether it’s a fancy place or a not-so-fancy place, maybe a more dangerous place, I like visiting everywhere. I have friends from all over the world now, and it keeps me open to everyone,” he said. Of all the destinations he has visited during his travels, John said his favorite so far has been Spain. “It’s just the way that they live. They have a late night there; you eat dinner late, you go out late. Even if you go out in the street in Barcelona, you’ll see kids playing at midnight. They’re very relaxed, they have great food, and it’s just a nice lifestyle, where you’re not stressed out all the time. The ability to travel is a great gift.”

Here at home, John enjoys the simple things: a walk on the beach or a hike in the hills around his house and lifting weights at the gym. At the time of this writing, in late May, gyms were closed due to COVID-19, and John was eagerly awaiting their re-opening. “That’s one thing I can do: I can go lift weights, and it takes off a lot of the stress of the day. When you’ve had a frustrating day at work, you can go in there and take a little time for yourself and exercise, and it feels good,” he said. “I’m fortunate enough to live near good hiking trails and beach trails, so I do a lot of hiking. I love the outdoors; I grew up in Portland, Oregon, in a small town outside of the city, so I’m used to being outside all the time.” John also has a dog, Oliver, the protector of their home, with whom he spends a lot of time.

John says he hopes to be remembered as someone who always did the right thing for his friends and family. In addition to helping almost all of his friends out with their home purchases and sales, John has a tight-knit relationship with his mother, sister, and two nieces, whom he loves and takes care of as if they were his own. “I just like to make sure that all of my friends and family have a good home and that they’re comfortable,” he said. “That’s what it’s all about.”

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KATIE GOULD

Cesi Pagano
& Associates
KELLER WILLIAMS REALTY

By Lindsey Wells

Fifteen years ago, South Orange County native Katie Gould immersed herself in the real estate industry and began working with Cesi Pagano and her top producing team, Cesi Pagano & Associates, at Keller Williams. As Cesi's executive assistant, Katie has been instrumental in helping to grow the business while creating smooth systems for both the team and their clients.

After graduating from college, Katie worked for a landscape designer who had a growing business in South Orange County. Since joining Cesi and her team, Katie has found the opportunity for growth and the diversity in day-to-day activities while assisting clients with their real estate needs to be among the most rewarding aspects of her career. When asked to describe her job using just one word, Katie replied, "Fulfilling."

"I love hearing the success stories from the clients and the team members after a successful closing on a home," she said. "Cesi is amazing at what she does, and she trusts me to get my job done. Cesi has worked hard to build an amazing business filled with awesome team mem-

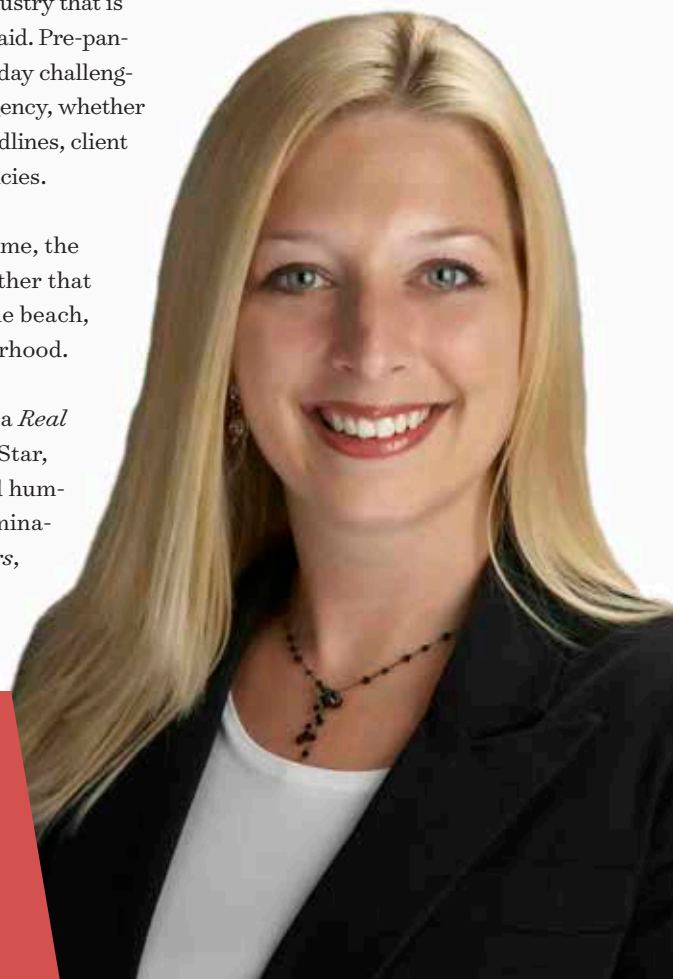
bers, fantastic clients, tremendous mastermind groups, and great coaching. All of this has contributed to my growth within the team, as well as in my life, and helped position me where I am today."

Katie admits that balancing work, family, and home has been a challenge for her during the COVID-19 pandemic as she works from home, alongside her husband and their two sons, who are home-schooled due to the pandemic. "I am thankful that I have a career that allows me to work from home, and to be in an industry that is thriving during these times," Katie said. Pre-pandemic, real estate brings the day-to-day challenges of juggling priorities based on urgency, whether it's closing deadlines, marketing deadlines, client needs, or other time-sensitive urgencies.

When they can enjoy some downtime, the family enjoys being outdoors, whether that means hiking, camping, going to the beach, or just playing around the neighborhood.

As for being nominated by Cesi as a *Real Producers* Behind-the-Scenes All-Star, Katie said she is truly honored and humbled. "Thank you, Cesi, for the nomination, and thank you, *Real Producers*, for the opportunity."

"After working with Cesi for so many years, I am so grateful for every opportunity and everything that I've learned from her and this industry," Katie added. "I continue to have so much respect and admiration for her and the way that she does business, the way she manages her clients, the transaction, and the way she truly cares for her clients and her team members."



Do you work with someone who truly makes a difference in the industry, in your business, or in your office? To nominate them as a Behind-the-Scenes All-Star, email michele.kader@realproducersmag.com.

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