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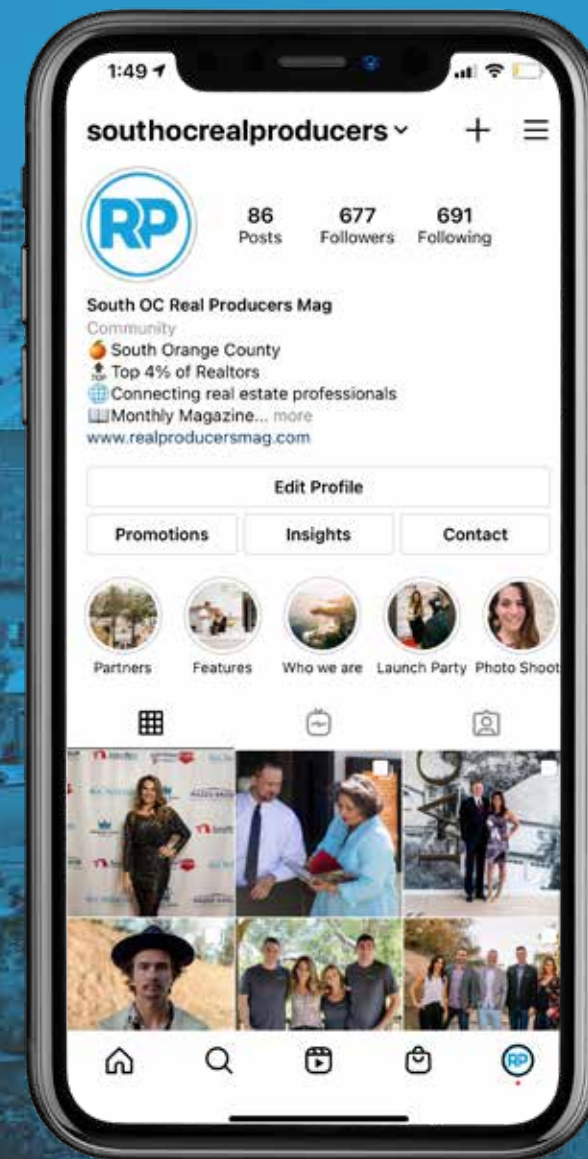
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Anything is Possible

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While Hailey Potok always knew she was meant for a profession in sales, real estate sales never entered her mind until her parents began selling their home. “I heard the stories back and forth about their transaction, and everything that was going on, and I just knew right away that I needed to get my license and be involved in it,” she says. That was five years ago, and the rest is history.

Before real estate, Hailey graduated from USC and was managing a team doing marketing and sales for a boutique company working with fortune 500 retailers such as Walmart and CVS. When the real estate bug bit her, Hailey admits she hesitated at first. “At that time, I already had three kids, and I had just found out I was pregnant again,” she says. As soon as the thought came to Hailey, she quickly began studying between kids’ naps and late at night when the kids were asleep in order to pass the real estate state exam. “I was about to have my fourth, and I thought, ‘OK, now’s a great time,’” Hailey says, laughing. Hailey was determined to

prove to her children that anything is possible. Within only a couple months of deciding to take the exam, she received her license and was thrilled.

Now, Hailey is an agent with Pacific Sotheby’s Laguna Beach. To say she has excelled in the industry would be an understatement. Based on mainly referrals alone, Hailey has quickly become a well-known agent in the Orange County market, and one of the top in her office. “I think there are very few things that you do in your life where you never think to look down at your watch. When I’m working, I never care what time it is. I could be working all day, and not even realize it,” she says. “It’s just a part of me at this point; I love the entire process from start to finish. I love getting people into the homes of their dreams and helping them sell their homes that they have put so much love and pride into. Most people’s biggest asset in their life is their house, and I’m so proud to be a trusted part of that process. I feel blessed to find a true passion in real estate.”

Hailey built her real estate brand from the ground up, by herself. Now, as a team leader of The Potok Group, Hailey’s passion lies in ensuring her clients have positive memories from their home-buying experience. “I think the thing that makes me the most passionate is knowing how I make them feel at the end of the transaction. I want my clients to feel fulfilled by the end of the transaction in every way. I don’t want them to just love the house they purchased or be happy with the price we got for their home; I want the overall emotion to be positive. My team and I are always there for our clients to help every step of the way,” Hailey says. “I think that’s how we differentiate ourselves from other Realtors.”

The Potok Group truly is a one-stop shop. “We help with everything from staging, to handyman work, painting, minor construction, whatever the home needs. We pride ourselves in our fresh perspective



Hailey Potok, of Pacific Sotheby’s International Realty in Laguna Beach, started in real estate with three children and one on the way, and has excelled, becoming one of the top agents in her office. (Photo by Bodie Kuljian)

My goal is to start getting a couple more people on the team and growing The Potok Group as a whole.

Then, once that happens, just establish a bigger brand name for myself and for the team members.



Photo by Bodie Kuljian

•••

of the market, and our proven marketing and sales plan to achieve success every time,” Hailey says. “One of the key team members is Bridget Waldman. It is rare to find people like her in an extremely competitive industry, with real estate knowledge and very similar values. When The Potok Group does transactions

with other agents, it’s easy. We don’t play games. We understand that the secret in the industry is that we all do want what’s best for our clients. We all want the same thing in the end: a smooth transaction for both sides.”

Hailey’s future is looking bright. “I don’t know whether I’ll open my own brokerage right now, but I do see a bigger team in the near future,” she says. “My goal is to start getting a couple more people on the team and growing The Potok Group as a whole. Then, once that happens, just establish a bigger brand name for myself and for the team members.”

Hailey and her husband, Jared, have been married for 12 years. With Jared being a mortgage lender, the couple has great knowledge of the industry as a whole. They have four beautiful children: Brayden, 10, Austin, 8, Collin, 6, and Sadie, 4. Hailey said she is asked all the time how she keeps herself so composed as a working mother of four. “Being a mom is probably the hardest job ever, but I’m also a businesswoman, which is what I’ve always wanted to be. That, in itself, is one of the most important things I want to teach my kids. ‘This is what hard work is, and this is how it pays off. You get to go on vacations, and you get to go to nice colleges,’ only by working hard. My family is the driving force behind what I do.”

Hailey’s high energy and positive attitude will continue to push her to achieve all her goals and continue doing what she loves so much, Real Estate.



The Potok Kids (Sadie, Austin, Collin, and Brayden) and family Double Doodle, Luka.



Hailey Potok (left) with key team member, Bridget Waldman (right). (Photo by Jack Randall)



Photo by Bodie Kuljian



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Tara Johnson & Bernadette Kerkes

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▶ partner spotlight

By Lindsey Wells
Photos by Bodie Kuljian

Serving Clients with a Personal Touch

Tara Johnson,
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“We want to make sure that every single client that trusts us with their real estate transaction knows how valued they are once they partner with us.”

If your profession is in the real estate industry, chances are you're familiar with what escrow is. While all escrow companies essentially exist for one primary purpose—to help facilitate the home buying and selling process—Escrow Options Group is living proof that not all escrow companies are created equal. What sets this group of professionals apart is the level of service they provide and the dedication to standing behind everything they do.

Escrow Options Group has been serving the needs and meeting the expectations of thousands of home buyers, sellers, and investors throughout California since 2005. With 12 offices in five different counties, clients can enjoy the convenience of having locations all across Southern California. And, because Escrow Options Group employs professionals who speak multiple languages, a broader spectrum of clients can take advantage of their services.





In June 2020, Escrow Options Group merged with Everest Escrow and kept the Escrow Options Group name. The company's president, Tara Johnson, takes pride in how the company handled the merger and looks forward to serving clients in bigger and better ways. "The fact that we took two separate entities, two separate cultures, different staffs, and were able to successfully merge all of that during a time where many escrow companies were afraid

they weren't going to make it through COVID speaks volumes. We were able to flourish."



Tara has been working in escrow for over 20 years. Her passion for helping people and maintaining a positive company culture are two of her biggest motivators. Escrow Options Group is just as

invested in its employees as it is its clients. "There are a lot of escrow companies out there that don't recognize their people or their accomplishments," she says. "That's huge for me, and that's something different that I brought to Escrow Options Group that we were already doing at Everest Escrow.



People like being rewarded and being recognized on their birthdays and anniversaries. Small gestures go a long way. I always say that I love what I do and who I do it with because it's true. I really, really enjoy all of the people that we work with."

As for Bernadette Kerkes, Escrow Options Group's VP of Marketing and Business Development, she also brings over 20 years of experience in escrow to the table. For Bernadette, it's all about the hustle. "I love building relationships and really getting to know all of our clients on a personal level versus treating them like they're just a client," she says. "To

I love building relationships and really getting to know all of our clients on a personal level versus treating them like they're just a client.



me, they're a business partner, and they turn into friends and sometimes even family. I love the atmosphere that we've built at Escrow Options because it, too, feels like a family. When more than 50 percent of your day is spent at work, it's always great to have a family-type feel in a nice environment to work in. I also love being creative and innovative in my space, which many escrow companies don't do a lot of. We've been fortunate enough to be able to create and innovate the way escrow is being seen, and I like being part of that."

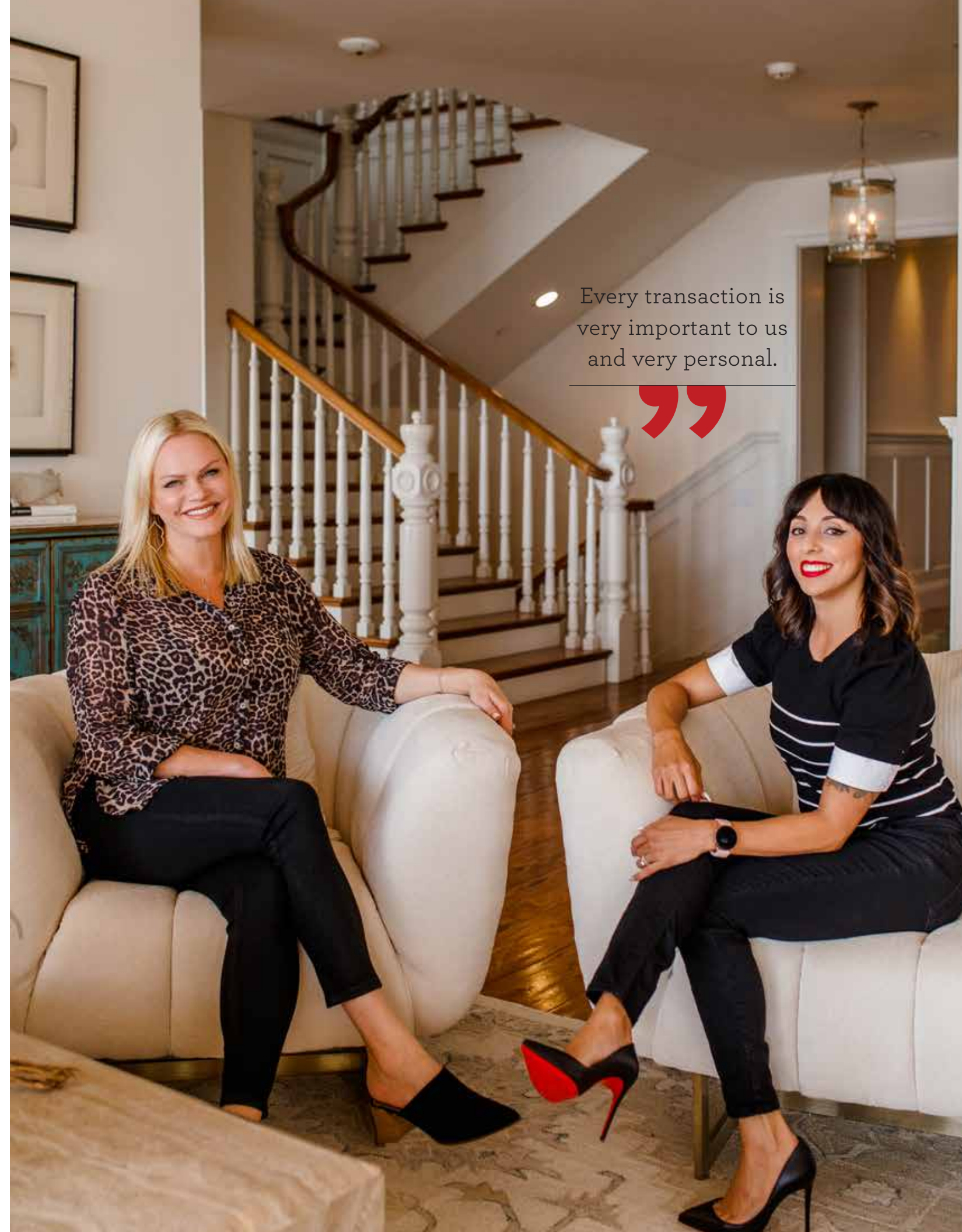
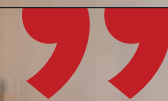
The professionals at Escrow Options Group know that no client or transaction is the same. While other companies may operate like an assembly line, Escrow Options Group prides itself on placing a personal touch on each transaction.

"We are the complete opposite of the assembly-line way of doing business, where you have a different person touching your file as it goes through each step. Our escrow officers are hands-on. Do they have assistance? Absolutely, but the escrow officer has that file the whole way through. You're not just a number with us; you're not just a file. Every transaction is very important to us and very personal," Tara says. "We treat every single escrow personally. We've perfected our craft and we have an array of services in addition to just doing escrow that we can provide to our agents. We strive to make sure that the entire transaction, from start to finish and beyond, is extremely smooth and very convenient for them and their clients."

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HOLLY Mckhann

House Flipper Turned REALTOR®



agent spotlight

By Lindsey Wells
Photos by Bodie Kulian

Holly Mckhann, of RE/MAX Coastal Homes, once had a podcast called Secrets to Real Estate Investing and went by the handle “Hard Hat Holly.”

Meet the Realtor who has flipped over 200 houses in the last ten years.

For years, real estate agent and entrepreneur Holly Mckhann has balanced her career with being a mother of four. Holly started out as a CPA at Ernst & Young before earning her MBA in finance. She jokingly says she took a “break” from work by having four kids and focusing on them full time before she and her husband, Scott, a civil engineer, realized their mutual interest in fixing and flipping investment properties. While becoming licensed to represent their transactions in selling the homes they had renovated, she fell in love with retail real estate. The couple is still involved in flipping houses today on a smaller scale, but Holly’s primary focus is on her clients and turning their real estate goals into reality.

Holly and Scott have flipped over 225 houses. The knowledge that comes with that, coupled with her experience in the finance industry, has certainly given her an upper hand when it comes to advising her clients.

“One of my strong suits is my knowledge of construction and renovation since I’m still actively flipping,” Holly says. “I have an extensive list of skillful contractors to help both my buyers and sellers with whatever improvements they need. Recently, one of my clients wanted a complete renovation of their newly purchased home before moving in, and one of my contractors did it in just four weeks for them. New kitchen, new bathroom, new flooring, new paint — the whole house in only four weeks!”

If sellers feel their home is outdated, Holly can help them analyze what improvements to the home will give them the best return. “My vendors can make updates at the best prices to help them make the most money on their sale,” she adds. “I treat my clients’ money as if it were my own — what would I do if I were flipping this house? Buyers watch HGTV and want a completely fresh and updated home, and I’m just the person to deliver that experience.”

Holly’s former experience as a CPA enables her to advise her clients on issues they should discuss with their own accountants and lawyers. She is also a landlord and

“

I TREAT MY CLIENTS' MONEY AS IF IT WERE MY OWN — WHAT WOULD I DO IF I WERE FLIPPING THIS HOUSE?

Buyers watch HGTV and want a completely fresh and updated home, and I'm just the person to deliver that experience.

... investor, which gives her insight and perspective on what investors experience and need in order to maximize their returns and minimize taxes.

Holly is happiest in her job when she's helping others. "Just in the last week, as a buyer's agent, I won out over 14 other offers on one house and over 10 other offers for a different client. I treat my clients as if they're family, and I feel it's my calling to help as many people as I can."

Holly once had her own podcast, called Secrets to Real Estate Investing. Her alias was "Hard Hat Holly," and she wore a pink hard hat. There are 135 episodes still up on iTunes, all with great stories of successful real estate investors.

Holly and Scott have four adult children: Michael, 27, Milana, 24, Max, 21, and Mason, 19. Max and Mason attend Stanford University and are on the track team as throwers. Michael and Milana have already graduated from college and are leading their own successful lives. Recently empty-nesters, Holly and Scott can often be found treating clients to dinner, paddle boarding, and taking walks on the beach.

Holly never dreamed her career path of accountant to mother to house flipper would lead her to become a Realtor, but she couldn't be happier.



Holly and Scott McKhann have a longstanding interest in buying, fixing, and flipping properties and have flipped over 225 houses to date.

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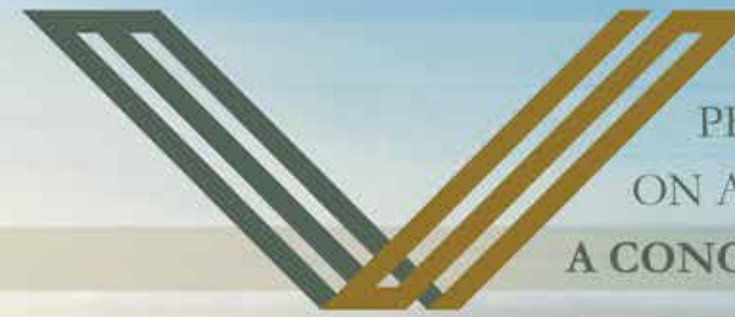
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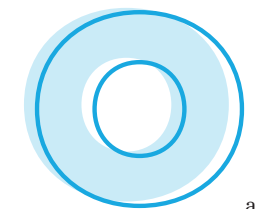
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South Orange County Real Producers'
**WOMEN IN REAL ESTATE
CELEBRATION**



On May 18th, we held our amazing *Women in Real Estate* event. We were excited about the turnout and appreciate all our Real Producers and industry partners who came out to Whitestone Restaurant in Dana Point to help us honor and celebrate some incredible women. It was wonderful to get together and see everyone again!

A special thank-you to Thomas Pellicer for the beautiful photos and to Bowman Media Group for videography at our event. And most of all, a big thank-you to our wonderful event sponsors, Katie DiCaprio, of Corner Escrow, and April Georgeson, of The Real Estate Inspection Company, who made our special gathering possible. We couldn't do it without you!

We look forward to getting our *Real Producers* community together again soon. Keep an eye on your inbox for your exclusive invitations!

For information on *South OC Real Producers* events or if you are interested in being featured in the magazine, email michele.kader@realproducersmag.com.

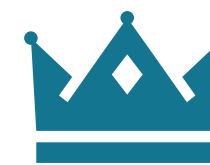








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Katie DiCaprio, of Corner Escrow (right), with Michele Kader, Publisher of *South Orange County Real Producers*. (Photos by Thomas Pellicer)

A THANK-YOU FROM OUR EVENT SPONSOR



KATIE DICAPRIO
Corner Escrow

Dear Michele and South OC Real Producers,

I wanted to express my gratitude for the opportunity to participate and for being asked to sponsor the amazing *Real Producers' Women in Real Estate* event at Whitestone Restaurant on May 18th. It was an honor to support this wonderful event, gathering as a community to celebrate the accomplishments of the incredible women in real estate in South Orange County!

Thank you very much to the REALTORS® who came out and attended the event. It was great to connect with so many of you, especially since we all have not had much opportunity to socialize in the past year. If I didn't have a chance to say hello personally, I will try and reach out to each of you individually in the coming weeks. And I hope I'll have an opportunity to see you at the next *Real Producers* event!

Please feel free to contact me at (949) 303-0515. I look forward to meeting you!

With gratitude,

Katie DiCaprio
Chief Marketing/Operations Officer
Corner Escrow



April Georgeson, of The Real Estate Inspection Company (left) with Helena Noonan, of Compass (right). (Photos by Thomas Pellicer)

A THANK-YOU FROM OUR EVENT SPONSOR



APRIL GEORGESON
The Real Estate Inspection Company

Dear Michele and South OC Real Producers,

It was a great pleasure sponsoring the *Real Producers' Women in Real Estate* event at Whitestone Restaurant in May and helping celebrate so many wonderful, inspiring business women!

I love being part of this *Real Producers* platform and enjoyed getting to meet so many of you at the event! We really appreciate all the agents who took the time out of their busy schedules to join us for some fun and to gather together as a community.

I hope to see you all again at an upcoming event. In the meantime, please think of The Real Estate Inspection Company for any of your and your clients' inspection needs. I am always available, and we are here to help! Please don't hesitate to give me a call at (800) 232-5180.

All the best!

April Georgeson
Growth Supervisor
The Real Estate Inspection Co.



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FAQ

By Michele Kader

ABOUT THIS MAGAZINE



If you just made the 2021 Top 500 producers in the South OC list and are new to our publication, you may be wondering what it's all about. "FAQs About This Magazine" answers the most commonly asked questions around the country regarding the Real Producers platform. My door is always open to discuss anything regarding this community — this publication is 100 percent designed to be your voice and to connect, elevate the industry, and inspire!

Q: Who receives this magazine?
A: The top 500 agents in South OC. We pulled the MLS numbers (by volume) from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020, in South OC, cut the list off at number 500, and our new 2021 Top 500 distribution list was born. This magazine is free exclusively to the top 500 agents in the area each year. This year, the minimum production level for our group was \$12.9 million in 2020, based on data reported to MLS.

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Q: What is the process for being featured in this magazine?

A: It's really simple – every feature you see has first been nominated. You can nominate other REALTORS®, affiliates, brokers, owners, or even yourself! Office leaders can also nominate REALTORS®. We will consider anyone brought to our attention, because we don't know everyone's story, so we need your help to learn about them.

A nomination currently looks like this: You email us at michele.kader@realproducersmag.com with the subject line, "Nomination: (Name of Nominee)," and explain why you are nominating them to be featured. It could be they have an amazing story that needs to be told – perhaps they overcame extreme obstacles, they are an exceptional leader, have the best customer service, or they give back to the community in a big way. The next step is an interview with us to ensure it's a good fit. If it all works out, we put the wheels in motion for our writer to conduct an interview and for our photographer to schedule a photo shoot.

Q: What does it cost a REALTOR®/team to be featured?

A: Zero, zilch, zippo, nada, nil. It costs nothing, my friends, so nominate away! We are not a pay-to-play model. We share real stories of Real Producers.

Q: Who are the preferred partners?

A: Anyone listed as a "preferred partner" in the front of the magazine is a part of this community. They will have an ad in every issue of the magazine, attend our quarterly events, and be a part of our online community. We don't just find these businesses off the street, nor do we work with all businesses that approach us. One or many of you have recommended every single preferred partner you see in this publication. We won't even meet with a business that has not been vetted by one of you and "stamped for approval," in a sense. Our goal is to create a powerhouse network, not only for the best REALTORS® in the area, but the best affiliates, as well, so we can grow stronger together.

Q: How can I recommend a preferred partner?

A: If you have a recommendation for a local business that works with top REALTORS®, please let us know! Send an email to michele.kader@realproducersmag.com.

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