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A portrait of Chris Walker, a middle-aged man with grey hair, smiling and wearing a dark suit jacket over a light-colored shirt. He is standing outdoors with a blurred background of a waterfront and buildings.

CHRIS
WALKER

Setting the Bar High

AGENT SPOTLIGHT
MARK ELMASRY

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT
PHILIPPE HELLER

THE REAL ESTATE INSPECTION COMPANY

OCTOBER 2021

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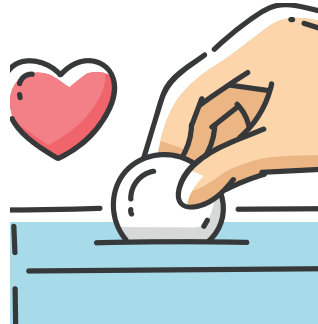
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If you attended our last event, you know it's a party you don't want to miss! We'll have live entertainment, catered food, photographers onsite, and the best networking among top Real Producers in all of South OC!

For those of you who are new to the *South OC Real Producers* family or who couldn't make it last time, be sure to pencil us in for November 2nd — we are thrilled to have you!

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» cover story

CHRIS WALKER

Setting the Bar High

By Lindsey Wells

...

CHRIS WALKER has always had a passion for customer service and a philosophy for doing what's right. Real estate had always been in the back of Chris's mind. "I've always been intrigued by it," he says. "I began seeing real estate as a huge opportunity. I saw other real estate professionals having success in it, and I thought that with some of the values and things that are important to me, I could venture into real estate and make a very strong impact on the people I was fortunate enough to work with."

Before he turned his focus to real estate, Chris was a district manager with Starbucks Coffee Company for 10 years. Starbucks was growing by leaps and bounds and on its way to becoming one of the most respected brands in the world. During his tenure with Starbucks, Chris polished his skills of building relationships, anticipating the needs of his customers, and his acute attention to detail.

In 2004, Chris took the marketing and communication skills he had mastered as a district manager and applied them to his exciting new real estate career. Early on, Chris was recruited onto a team by a top producing, well-respected agent. He found great success and was an integral part of the team for six years until venturing back out on his own. He joined Coldwell Banker Realty four years ago and worked as a solo agent for a year before finding the perfect opportunity to form his own team.

Now, the Walker Real Estate Group proudly includes Chris and two other agents, plus support staff. Chris loves the opportunity to partner with his teammates, Daniele Smith and Lisa Harano. He enjoys the camaraderie and team spirit from working with such talented individuals. He also expresses that he appreciates the opportunity to be a part of their real estate journeys and loves to see their growth and development as the team grows stronger.

Walker Real Estate Group (from left to right: Lisa Walker, Lisa Harano, Chris Walker, Danielle Smith). (Photo by WASIO faces)



The Walker Family (from left to right: Chadwell, Brendan, Lisa, William, Chris). (Photo by Sharon Williams Creative)

If I'm making decisions that don't support the things that are important to me, it's going to catch up with me very quickly. So I try to act with the highest level of integrity and values with every decision I make.

Over the past 17 years, Chris has woven specific nuances into his business that can't be found on any real estate exam but are invaluable when operating in the real world, and, as a result, his bar for integrity and professionalism is sky-high. "My reputation is the thing that's most important to me. San Clemente is an amazing beach community, and it's also a small town," Chris says. "If I'm making decisions that don't support the things that are important to me, it's going to catch up with me very

quickly. So I try to act with the highest level of integrity and values with every decision I make." Chris often says, "It's a long life in a small town."

While he has solidified his reputation as a respectable and recognizable agent, Chris is never complacent. He is constantly seeking ways to improve. Every morning, Chris says he wakes up with the mindset that he is unemployed. This mindset seems to keep him focused on making sure that he

...

is actively engaged with his customers and ensuring that all his transactions get the attention they deserve while continuing to foster relationships in his community. With that in mind, Chris also shares that he starts each day by focusing on the most essential part of his life: his family.

Chris and his wife, Lisa, have been married for 26 years and have three sons, Chadwell, Brendan, and William. A father figure was lacking in Chris's life growing up. For that reason, he continually aims to set an excellent example for his boys. Chris strives to demonstrate for them the value of hard work and doing what is right. Real estate is an excellent field in which to apply these ideals. Chris says,



Photo by Sharon Williams Creative

"You are constantly challenged with difficult decisions in the real estate industry, and from day one of business, I set out to create a foundation of practice that this business has nothing to do with me; rather, it is all about the people I serve."

When asked how he stays motivated and excited about this business, Chris said, "In my 17 years in this business, no two transactions have ever been the same. There's a certain complexity that comes along with every single transaction; I enjoy that. It keeps us on our toes, and it's never boring! I tell my team all the time that if it weren't challenging, we wouldn't have work. If it were easy, we would be the next industry engulfed by the internet. If it weren't so challenging, people would just go out and do it themselves. This ever-existent complexity of a real estate transaction is why we can go out and earn a very good living. Every market has its own set of challenges, and we need to embrace them positively in order to properly represent our clients."

You are constantly challenged with difficult decisions in the real estate industry, and from day one of business, I set out to create a foundation of practice that this business has nothing to do with me; rather, it is all about the people I serve.



Chris Walker and his wife, Lisa, have been married 26 years. (Photo by Sharon Williams Creative)

It's not all work and no play for Chris, though. He enjoys spending time in his hometown of San Clemente, socializing with friends, a good backyard barbecue, and is always up for a game of pool, bocce ball, or a game of corn hole. "I describe myself as a pretty simple person," Chris says. "My happiest time is with family and our amazing friends." But, Chris says that the majority of his time outside of real estate is spent with his wife and his boys. "We love to banter and laugh, share a great meal, and truly enjoy each other's company."

Chris would love to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have made an impact in his life and those he has had an opportunity to work with in his 17 years as a real estate professional. Chris appreciates and cherishes all of these special relationships.

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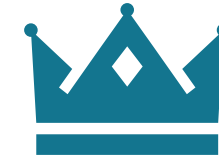
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By Lindsey Wells | Photos by WASIO faces

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” Benjamin Franklin’s eloquent way of suggesting that investing a small amount of time into preventing a problem will save you time—and, in this case, money—in the long run. We’re talking about home inspections. Having your house in the hot seat can be daunting for both buyers and sellers. As the housing market grows more competitive by the day, eager buyers and motivated sellers are tempted to waive the home inspection to close deals faster. Sure, that is an option. But

knowledge is power, and knowing the condition of the *biggest investment you’ll probably ever make* could save you loads of cash and headaches in the future.

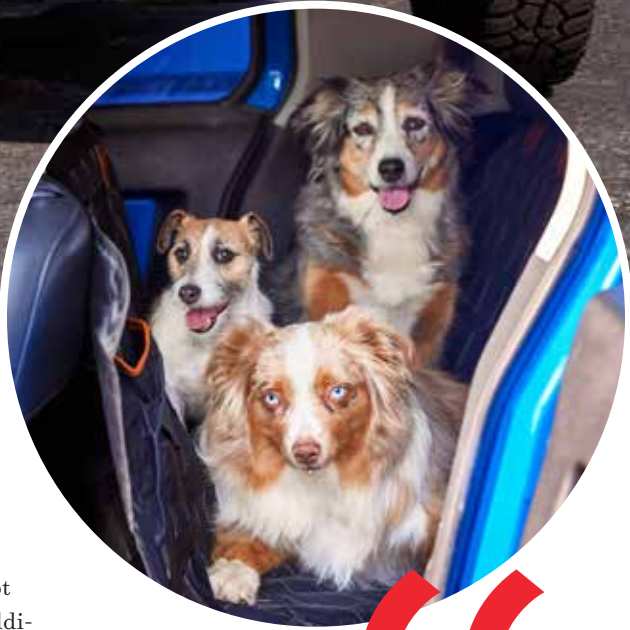
Cue The Real Estate Inspection Company. Since 2004, The Real Estate Inspection Company has provided its clients with comprehensive home and commercial property inspection services.

It all started with Philippe Heller. After college, Philippe entered the corporate world and worked for a

few big-name companies, including SDG&E, GE Power Systems, Cox Communications, and Time Warner Communications. While the experience he gained during this time was invaluable, Philippe eventually began to feel the effects of corporate burnout and knew he had to get out. “I think this is a common story for a lot of home inspectors—I reached a point where I wanted the time, freedom, and flexibility to branch out on my own,” he says. So, equipped with his background in technology, Philippe started a home inspection company in 2004.



When Philippe Heller and his wife Tonja are not busy running The Real Estate Inspection Company, they often head to the hills for adventures with their dogs. (Photo by WASIO faces)



The business quickly gained traction. Philippe recruited his now-wife, Tonja, to help him with the administrative and behind-the-scenes duties. Before that, Tonja had graduated college with a child development degree and was pursuing a career in early childhood development. By 2006, Philippe and Tonja were married and working side-by-side to build what would eventually become one of the largest and fastest-growing home inspection companies in Southern California.

While all home inspectors have the same goal—to uncover defects and provide buyers and sellers with the information needed to understand

the condition of a property—all home inspection companies are *not* created equal. The Real Estate Inspection Company goes several steps further than your average inspection company to not only report defects but provide additional information about your home or property that isn't often found on a traditional inspection report.

The quality of services provided by Philippe and the company's team of professional inspectors are more high-end than that of a basic inspection company. Phillippe explains, "Imagine this: the building code to build a house has a minimum set of standards. So you can build a house to code, but it's a very basic home."

That's a key part of our training with our home inspectors: to be **empathetic with the buyers.**

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"But with a luxury home, those basic building codes are exceeded by a large margin. They have nicer baseboards and cabinets, nicer electrical configuration, that kind of thing. If you consider that same analogy when thinking about inspection companies, as a high-end inspector, we do a lot more than just your basic home inspection."

In addition to pre-listing and buyer home inspections, The Real Estate Inspection Company offers sewer scope inspections, mold, and indoor air quality testing, pool and spa inspections, thermal imaging, aerial roof inspections, and training for REALTORS®.

When Philippe and Tonja were first getting started in the company, the home inspection industry was still in its





The Real Estate Inspection Company, which Philippe Heller founded in 2004, now inspects more than \$3 billion worth of real estate every year.

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infancy and didn't involve much technology. What propelled The Real Estate Inspection Company to the top of the game was how it embraced technology and introduced thermal imaging, online scheduling, and the latest reporting software to its clients. That same innovation is still applied today. Furthermore, the company continuously provides ongoing education to its inspectors, each of whom is a certified member of the

International Association of Certified Home Inspectors (InterNACHI).

While the use of state-of-the-art technology certainly sets this company apart, what drives it home for clients is one small yet powerful component: empathy. "That's a key part of our training with our home inspectors, is to be empathetic with the buyers," Tonja says. "We're about building relationships with these

clients. We're not just another home inspection company that's trying to sell you our tools and technologies. Now, don't get me wrong, we have some cool tools and technologies. But the most important thing is that we're human. There's such a high level of stress when it comes to buying or selling a home and being a Realtor. We want our clients and Realtors to know that we get it."



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Marbella Country Club

A LUXURY LIFESTYLE OASIS IN SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO

By Lindsey Wells



A famous Spanish philosopher once said, “The earth has music for those who will listen.” If that’s true, Marbella Country Club is playing a symphony. Carved into the lush San Juan Capistrano hills, this club embodies the Mediterranean elegance and beauty by which its design was inspired while boasting premier modern amenities and upscale conveniences. Whether stopping in for a round of golf at the award-winning course or attending a special event in one of six private banquet spaces, Marbella Country Club is sure to create an experience that won’t soon be forgotten.

Located just across from the stunning Mission Basilica, Marbella Country Club’s architectural design complements the rich history surrounding

it. Once you’ve gained entrance into the gated community, manicured lawns and grand scenery lead the way to Marbella’s 50,000-square-foot clubhouse. Charming Spanish-style furnishings serve as a welcoming centerpiece for dining, hospitality, and socializing.

The clubhouse features an array of facilities and amenities, including two cocktail lounges; an elegant, formal dining room, serving Continental and regionally-inspired cuisine with friendly, white-tablecloth service;

and a men’s grill, offering a delicious assortment of more casual fare in a comfortable, family-friendly ambiance.

Members and their guests have access to the club’s six lighted tennis courts, pickleball court, Junior Olympic-size swimming pool, and toddler pool. In addition, the renovated Marbella



“We can do intimate events where it’s just 10 to 15 people, like private dinners, baby and bridal showers, and birthday parties all the way up to golf tournaments and large-scale corporate meetings and fundraisers.”

Wellness & Fitness Complex is complete with state-of-the-art fitness equipment and personal trainers, an ongoing schedule of fitness and aerobic classes, and a spa.

The club wouldn’t be complete without its championship golf course, the artistry of which came from the iconic design team, Jay Morrish and Tom Weiskopf. The par 70, 6,608-yard course was crafted in the old style, leaving the terrain completely natural while lush stands of trees frame the fairways. Golfers can bask in the picturesque views of the Rancho Mission Viejo hills in the distance while sparkling lakes and waterfalls create strategic diversity perfect for the game of golf.

After a massage or a round of golf, men’s and women’s locker rooms are available and equipped with a sauna and steam room. The club also has a fully stocked pro shop featuring a wide variety of golf and tennis equipment and apparel.

Members of Marbella Country Club have full access to the privileges and intangible benefits that can only be obtained through private club membership. Marbella’s membership

director, Sabrina Thon, stands ready to assist with all membership inquiries. Visit the club online or call 949-248-3700 ext. 11 to learn more or schedule a tour.

Marbella Country Club is unrivaled in its ability to create specialized, one-of-a-kind weddings and special events that reflect each individual’s style. Kaile Watters, Marbella’s event sales director, oversees all events held at the club, which offers both indoor and outdoor spaces to choose from. “We can do intimate events where it’s just 10 to 15 people, like private dinners, baby and bridal showers, and birthday parties,” Kaile explains, “all the way up to golf tournaments and large-scale corporate meetings and fundraisers.”

Every event, regardless of size, is underscored by Marbella’s signature, personalized event-planning service. “We are pretty much all-inclusive, aside from any personal decor, like flowers, things like that. The catering goes through us, and we provide tables, chairs, linens, glassware, plate wear, and of course servers and bartenders are included,” Kaile adds. All private events have a max capacity of approximately 230. Call 949-248-3700 ext. 14 to reach Kaile.

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Year-End Giving

By Shauna Osborne and Elizabeth McCabe

As the year comes to a close (but before too much holiday madness descends), it is the perfect time to think about year-end giving. Particularly in the midst of a lingering pandemic, we can help those in need – important every year but now crucial for many nonprofits struggling to balance increased demand and decreased support – and, meanwhile, save on taxes. Year-end giving is a win-win!

Support Nonprofit Organizations

Charities and nonprofit organizations often rely solely on donations to fund their missions. Interestingly, half of all nonprofits in the U.S. receive the bulk of their funding during the last quarter of the year, according to Charity Navigator. Make the final months of the year count through giving; resolve to help feed the hungry, find cuddly animals new homes, or support unhoused populations ... whatever cause is near and dear to your heart.

When you do, be sure to keep a record of your donation. Taxpayers are required to have a bank record or some sort of written receipt from the charity, which has the name of the organization, the date, and the amount of the contribution. Other acceptable records include bank statements, credit card statements, or canceled checks. Even payroll deductions can be used (just keep your pay stub or W-2 wage statement).

Additionally, the 2020 CARES Act allows you to take a \$300 deduction for cash donations to qualifying organizations, which must have a charitable, educational, religious, literary, or scientific purpose and be classified by the Internal Revenue Service as tax-exempt, even if you don't itemize.



Donate Clothing and Household Items

Take time to clear out the clutter and give to others this holiday season. Do you have gently worn clothes or functional household appliances, furniture, furnishings, or electronics that you no longer use and that could benefit someone else? Why not donate them? If your charitable donation is worth \$250 or more, be sure to include a receipt (or written acknowledgment) from the charity, with a description of the items.

Don't let this holiday season pass you by without giving to those less fortunate. After all, **'tis the season to be generous!** In doing so, you will help others and help yourself when April 15 rolls around.

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