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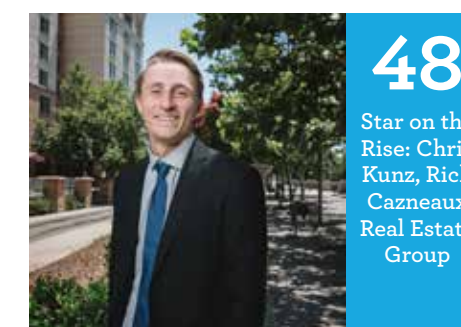
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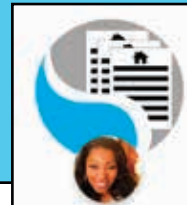
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▶ publisher's note

I love the fall. Since I have kids in school, to me it is the true "New Year." Summer is wrapping up, and with that comes structure, and routine, and schedules. The air cools, rhythms fall back into place, and for me at least, there is so much anticipation and optimism that lies within the fresh start of a school year. It's the perfect time to set new goals for the year ahead.

Others of you may see fall in a different light. It is actually approaching quarter four, after all. The beginning of the END of the year and thus that ticking clock on all your goals for 2021 may be sounding a bit louder in your head these days.

Either way, this month has me thinking about the way we set goals. A year at a time, broken even smaller into four quarters, and then into weeks after that. There is PROFOUND wisdom in setting out goals like this.

But ... what about the long game? What about the bigger picture? What

are you building, and what are you passing on? Mentorship plays a huge role in this kind of decades-long goal-setting, and this month we get to tell the stories of two agents who are working alongside each other as they ask and answer those questions in their business. Our Cover Story feature, Rich Cazenaux, and our "Star on the Rise," Chris Kunz, have a trusted mentor/mentee relationship that is enviable and inspiring.

And it has me thinking of so many of you that we have interviewed over the last two years that also know this secret and are putting it into practice. Not only early on in your careers when you likely sought a mentor for yourself, but also now, as you look behind you to offer wisdom and support to the next generation. Hearing your stories, seeing the relationships you form with the teams you build and the

people you invest in, there may be a million different models for HOW you are passing on your legacy. But there is no doubt in my mind that this community of Top 500 values giving back to the real estate community in this way and also knows how much there is to GAIN from this sort of abundance mindset. I'm honored to witness it month after month and thrilled to get to shine the spotlight on one incredible example in this month's issue. I hope you enjoy reading and are inspired as well!

As always, thanks for being here and a part of THIS community. You truly are the best of the best.

Cheers,  
Katie



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# TOP 10 QUALITIES OF A GOOD MENTOR

## 1 WILLINGNESS TO SHARE SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, AND EXPERTISE.

A good mentor is willing to teach what he/she knows and accept the mentee where they currently are in their professional development. Good mentors can remember what it was like just starting out in the field. The mentor does not take the mentoring relationship lightly and understands that good mentoring requires time and commitment and is willing to continually share information and their ongoing support with the mentee.

## 2 DEMONSTRATES A POSITIVE ATTITUDE AND ACTS AS A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL.

A good mentor exhibits the personal attributes it takes to be successful in the field. By showing the mentee what it takes to be productive and successful, they are demonstrating the specific behaviors and actions required to succeed in the field.

## 3 TAKES A PERSONAL INTEREST IN THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP.

Good mentors do not take their responsibility as a mentor lightly. They feel invested in the success of the mentee. Usually this requires someone who is knowledgeable, compassionate, and possesses the attributes of a good teacher or trainer. Excellent communication skills are also required. A good mentor is committed to helping their mentees find success and gratification in their chosen profession. Overall good mentoring requires empowering the mentee to develop their own strengths, beliefs, and personal attributes.

## 4 EXHIBITS ENTHUSIASM IN THE FIELD.

A mentor who does not exhibit enthusiasm about his/her job will ultimately not make a good mentor. Enthusiasm is catching, and new employees want to feel as if their job has meaning and the potential to create a good life.

## 5 VALUES ONGOING LEARNING AND GROWTH IN THE FIELD.

Mentors are in a position to illustrate how the field is growing and changing and that even after many years, there are still new things to learn. Anyone that feels stagnant in their current position will not make a good mentor. When starting out in a new career, people want to feel that the time and energy they spend learning will be rewarded and will ultimately provide them with career satisfaction. Good mentors are committed and are open to experimenting and learning practices that are new to the field. They continually read professional journals and may even write articles on subjects where they have developed some expertise. They are excited to share their knowledge with new people entering the field and take their role seriously in teaching their knowledge to others. They may choose to teach or attend classes to further develop their knowledge and skills. They enjoy taking workshops and attending professional conferences provided through their membership in professional associations.

## 6 PROVIDES GUIDANCE AND CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK.

One of the key responsibilities of a good mentor is to provide guidance and constructive feedback to their mentee. This is where the mentee will

most likely grow the most by identifying their current strengths and weaknesses and learning how to use these to make themselves successful in the field. A good mentor possess excellent communication skills and is able to adjust their communication to the personality style of the mentee. A good mentor will also provide the mentee with challenges that will foster professional development and a feeling of accomplishment in learning the field.

## 7 RESPECTED BY COLLEAGUES AND EMPLOYEES IN ALL LEVELS OF THE ORGANIZATION.

Ideally mentees look up to their mentors and can see themselves filling the mentor's role in the future. Mentees want to follow someone who is well respected by colleagues and co-workers and whose contribution in the field is appreciated.

## 8 SETS AND MEETS ONGOING PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GOALS.

A good mentor continually sets a good example by showing how his/her personal habits are reflected by personal and professional goals and overall personal success.

## 9 VALUES THE OPINIONS AND INITIATIVES OF OTHERS.

A mentor who values others is also someone who works well in a team environment and is willing to share his/her success. A good mentor appreciates the ongoing effort of the mentee and empowers him/her through positive feedback and reinforcement.

## 10 MOTIVATES OTHERS BY SETTING A GOOD EXAMPLE.



**One thing I learned over the years is being an agent is a full-time job if you want to serve your clients well.**

When I discovered my second love, Real Estate in 2009 I became licensed, and I tried to be a part-time agent along with being a kick-ass full-time Controller. I loved both but after 10 years, I knew when I started my firm that I had to make a decision and I decided that my clients would have exceptional service, so I chose one.



So, I thought why not become a referral agent and turn my first love of numbers, combined with my knowledge of personal finance, business and real estate and Coach my fellow agents in their business and assist them with internal accounting problems, implement the Profit First method which would have a HUGE impact on their cash flow and profitability while leading them to a path of financial success.

Agents are super busy I know firsthand, but what I also know from being a Controller at a company that grew close to 20 million in annual revenue in 10 years is that one of the most important aspects of the business owner is knowing the numbers.

**Do you know your numbers?**

**Do you have an internal accounting problem that needs to be fixed?**

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# DARCIE STRATTON

*Darcie Stratton and Taffy Maurer Real Estate Team, eXp Realty*



## ▶▶ profile

By Ruth Gnirk  
Photos by Rachel Lesiw, Indulge Beauty Studio

### THE HAPPY, HUMBLE HUSTLER

Darcie Stratton lives, works, and plays in joyful *achiever* mode. As a teen, she was an equine vaulting Olympian. As an adult, Darcie courageously started her real estate career during the 2008 crash, and she worked tirelessly to help clients find hope and even happiness. Always striving for excellence, Darcie recently completed negotiation mastery training from Harvard Business School. Whether she's at work or play, Darcie dreams it and believes it, then she works hard to achieve it.

Darcie grew up in the hustle and bustle of a large equestrian center in Rio Linda. When she was five, she saw riders performing gymnastics on top of a moving horse, and told her mom she wanted to learn to do that. And she did! Darcie devoted herself to excellence in vaulting and had the privilege of performing for President Clinton at the 1996 Olympics. That same year, Darcie was awarded the Breyer Award for her exemplary character and sportsmanship.

Her life was forever shaped by the lessons she learned in her youth

about hard work, integrity, and teamwork, as well as the friendships she made with other horse-lovers. Darcie and many of her friends still ride horses together weekly, and they participate in performances and community enrichment events through her friend's non-profit organization *Wild Heart Ranch* ([whranch.org](http://whranch.org)).

As a young adult, Darcie continued to apply what she had learned as she set goals and worked hard to accomplish her desires, with excellence. She served her community as a mortgage lender and as a seventh-grade English teacher. However, as she and her husband started expanding

their family, they wanted to find a way for Darcie to bring in income without having to be in an office from nine to five.

Who says you can't have your cake and eat it too? Darcie stepped into the bright new world of real estate in 2008, with her smile, goals, and baby carrier in hand. She sold eight homes that year, and her first deal was a foreclosure. "I learned during a rough time for families and for the economy," she recalls.

"I didn't have a 'happy seller,' one who wasn't short selling, until my third year in real estate," shares Darcie. That client

walked away with \$12,000 in equity. Today, Darcie's sellers are walking away with \$1,200,000 in equity. "It's been a beautiful journey!" she says.

Darcie appreciated her team but wanted to live her dream. When her mentor of 14 years told her about a cloud-based brokerage that rewarded diligence with stock, Darcie knew this was her next vertical move. Five years ago, she teamed up with eXp Realty. The business model and tools available through eXp are helping Darcie and her family get closer to their dream of owning a 100-acre cattle ranch.

As Darcie started growing exponentially, she invited her mother, Taffy Maurer, to join her. Taffy is a contractor's wife, and was a teacher for 26 years. Darcie says that she and Taffy balance each other out nicely. With both of them working as a team there is organization and structure as well as warm hospitality, and there is a balance between planning and spontaneity. When things are getting tense, Darcie jokingly tells clients, "Don't make my mom use her 'teacher voice!'"

A big part of Darcie's journey as a REALTOR® has been invested in ●●●



...

building relationships, starting at home. She loves being able to run with her husband, and spend time camping and enjoying outdoor activities with their boys, now ages thirteen, ten, and six. She treasures their rides to and from school, and takes advantage of teachable moments. "Being a REALTOR® doesn't bring me freedom, but it does bring so much *flexibility!*" smiles Darcie.

Darcie also values the relationships that she is able to build with clients. "My favorite part of being a REALTOR® is building excellent relationships that turn into friendships with my clients," Darcie says. "I love overcoming obstacles, as I believe there is *nothing* we can't overcome! I love seeing people have a vision and dream, and then watching it happen for them."

Darcie is also passionate about creating professional, excellent working relationships with other REALTORS®. "I believe having the ability to persevere, being an excellent communicator, and having a 'can do, win-win' attitude helps everyone achieve and even surpass their ultimate goals in the transaction. I believe attitude is everything. Putting out positivity, goodness, and grit has made my career extremely successful."

As she impacts her community, Darcie applies the same mindset. She serves on the Loomis Basin Education Foundation, strongly supports the Penryn PTC, and she loves to support her friend's nonprofit "Shine With Purpose" (shinewithpurpose.today). "Anything with kids and animals, I'm there!"

Darcie is grateful for her friends and mentors who push her to the next level, in real estate and in life. She strives to encourage them to succeed, too. Together, they lift each other up. Darcie and fellow REALTOR® and friend, Cyndy, have teamed up to create inspiring and informative video interviews and events. They call themselves *Your Humble Hustlers*, and they share their videos on social media to connect with their community and beyond.

Recently, Darcie and her fellow "Humble Hustler" decided they needed to grow professionally and that they wanted a new challenge. So they enrolled in Harvard Business School's negotiation mastery training. They helped each other not only survive, but thrive as they actively participated in negotiation experiences with people from several different countries.



Darcie used to think that to be a successful REALTOR® a person had to be a bulldog and drive a Mercedes. She has learned that she simply has to be herself. She uses kindness and grace when dealing with clients, and drives her diesel truck to million-dollar estates without batting an eye. She knows who she is, and is confident in the

knowledge, skill, experience, and authenticity that she brings.

As a REALTOR®, Darcie knows that her function is not simply to be a tour guide as her clients look at homes. She takes the time to learn who her clients are, and the dreams they want to accomplish, then she helps them learn to collect data and evaluate their opportunities. She doesn't ask them to do anything she isn't willing to do herself. She steps into the role of counselor and guide with ease. Sometimes she teaches, coaches, and advises clients, but most often she listens and helps clients discover ways that they can begin achieving their goals.

Darcie holds herself to a high standard, and ensures that she is doing the right things for the right reasons. "I do what I do because I enjoy it, not because I have to do it." She maintains her hopeful, positive attitude, and believes there's nothing that can't be made right. Darcie shares, "I have had three bad days in 13 years, but they were *all* fixed."

As a former teacher, Darcie has some encouragement for those who are struggling in school and wants to give hope to their parents as well. "We live in a beautiful country where you can do anything you set your heart to. I love seeing out-of-the-box kids. They are the ones who are going to own their own business someday and be *phenomenal*. When I see these spunky, self-employed adults with short attention spans thriving at their job and doing what they're meant to do, I think to myself, "They must have been hilarious to teach in the classroom setting!" It's full circle!"

Darcie wants to encourage those who are wrestling with happiness, purpose, or fear: "Surround yourself with people who you want to be like. Fuel your mind and heart with goodness, positive vibes, and moments that fuel your soul. Have mentors, even if they're secretly just your friends, and learn from them. To all my fellow dreamers, let's keep shining bright, and encouraging the world around us to go after their wants and their goals."

**DARCIE**  **TAFFY**  
*Stratton* *Maurer*  
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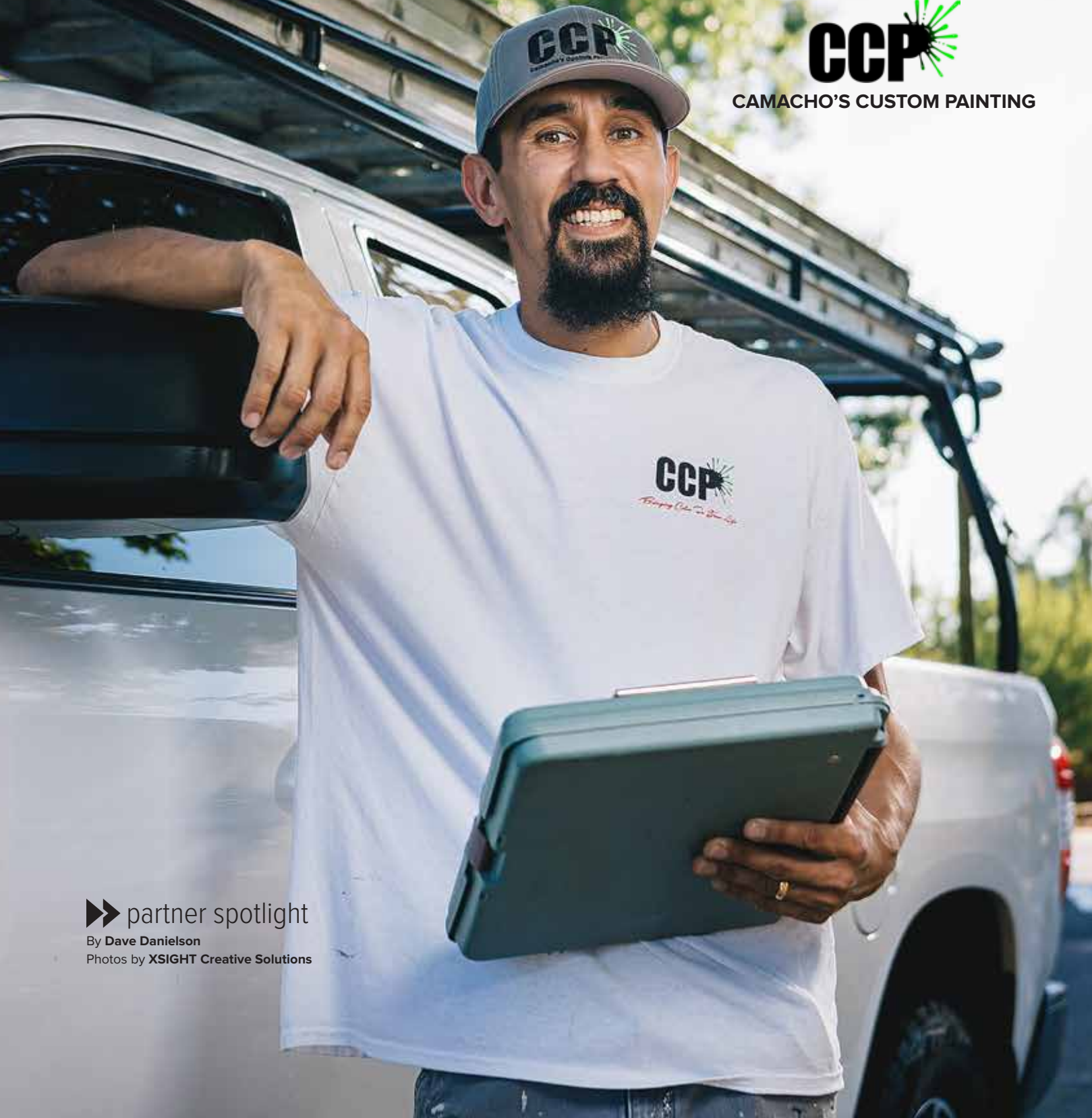


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The company was founded by Gilbert and Amanda Camacho in 2013. From its very beginning, Camacho's Custom Painting was built on a spirit of belief and quality.

"We started this business with \$5 in our bank account. At the time, Gilbert had been doing painting but wasn't getting hired for what he was worth and the quality work he was doing," Amanda remembers. "So we decided to start our own business."

Camacho's Custom Painting handles a full range of interior and exterior painting jobs on both the residential and commercial side.

Through time, the company's results have grown steadily — based on its stellar reputation.

"We've always maintained our business through referrals. Our reputation and quality of the work we provide is the calling card of what we do," Amanda points out. "In fact, for each house we do in a neighborhood, we usually end up getting five additional referrals from the same area."

#### **ABOVE AND BEYOND**

People recognize the difference and the drive that Camacho's

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Custom Painting has to go above and beyond.

“That starts from the moment someone requests an estimate,” Amanda says. “Gilbert shows up and has a great customer service mindset, so people feel very comfortable with Gilbert being inside their homes.”

Their reputation definitely precedes them in a very good way.

As Amanda says with a smile, “One compliment we recently received from a new customer was when they said, ‘It would be stupid not to call you, because you’re recommended so much by the people in our area. We didn’t want to be the only neighbor who didn’t use you!’”

While Camacho’s Custom Painting is expanding, quality remains a central, driving force in all the work that the company does.

“Gilbert is always on the job and does all of the estimates himself, so he is very hands-on with each of the jobs we work with,” Amanda explains.

#### REWARDING LIFE

Gilbert and Amanda enjoy sharing the same path in life and business together.

“It feels so good to be serving people, working hard, and putting in the effort that we can 100 percent take pride in as our own business. We’re building a legacy that hopefully we can pass on to our children,” she says. “Leaving that legacy is very important to us. Gilbert was born in Mexico. He came here, became an American citizen, and started his own business. That means a lot.”

Away from work, Gilbert and Amanda enjoy spending time with their children — their 14-year-old son, Anthony, and their 9-year-old daughter, Ava.

In their free time, they have a passion for camping. Gilbert, Anthony, and Ava also enjoy hunting together. In addition, they look forward to time with their dogs and being with their friends.

They have a real love for their community, as well. In fact, Amanda is President of the Citrus Heights Chamber of Commerce.

Those who have the chance to work with Camacho’s Custom Painting appreciate the genuine care and value they receive in the process.

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# Bernadette AUGUSTINE



▶ celebrating leaders

By Chris Menezes  
Photos by Rachel Lesiw, Indulge Beauty Studio

Augustine & Associates ReMax/Gold

## Fighting Irish

If there's one quality Bernadette Augustine has that has contributed to much of her success in life, it's moxie. Her determination, grit, and adventurous spirit could not be deterred, despite whatever challenges she encountered in life, even as a child.

One of eight children growing up in Dublin, Ireland, Bernadette went to an all-Irish-speaking school, which was extremely strict and a bit harsh. She was told that she would never amount to anything!

Determined to pave her own path and strive for something more, Bernadette excelled in sports as a young adult and earned money babysitting, tutoring, and coaching tennis. She obtained a work visa during college, which allowed her to travel and work in Boston over the summers as a nanny.

"I loved America immediately. I knew America was where I needed to be and was determined to make it back," she says.

After graduating college as a PE teacher and teaching for one year, Bernadette (then 21 years old) and a friend decided they were going to quit their jobs, leave Ireland, and hitchhike across North and South America. They flew into New York, where they worked their way down the coast to Florida and continued their adventure further south to Peru, Bolivia, Argentina and Brazil.

In Rio, Bernadette became a tour guide, giving tours to mostly Americans, loved it and quickly learned her job was all about the customer. With an opportunity to work in Los Angeles for a travel company, Bernadette met her husband, David, while training for the L.A. Marathon. Work brought them to the Bay Area, and when their son was born, they moved to Sacramento.

With a newborn child, Bernadette resolved to stay home for the first five

years of his life. When she returned to work, she found herself seeking another adventure. Intrigued by homes and the real estate business, she decided to obtain her license and joined Lyon Real Estate.

"Entering real estate was a very easy decision," she says. "I never believed there was a problem that could not be solved. I knew how to take care of people, how to keep them engaged and excited during the process, how to negotiate, and how to manage expectations."

Bernadette realized early on that her clients were the heart and soul of what and why she does what she does. When asked early in her career about how she became successful so quickly, she responded, "I listen to agents that are amazing, lay low, mind my own business, work by referral only, and one transaction at a time."



...

Bernadette's strong work ethic and creative determination towards problem-solving is inspired by her father and is one of the driving factors of her success. After years of making a name for herself at Lyon Real Estate, Bernadette was approached by leadership at RE/MAX, wanting her to join the brokerage and form a team. The first phone call she made was to Keri Sternberg, friend and teammate, and thus Augustine and Associates was born. In time, Sharon Sanborn, Dana Gray, Melissa Shrout, Stacey Friedman, and Claudia Niedzielski joined. Bernadette has built a versatile team, each with their own strengths, but who share the same core values and commitment to helping people.



"We have the most amazing team of women," Bernadette says. "It's easy to feel a dose of gratitude every day. The ability to navigate, negotiate and collaborate in a highly competitive market is very satisfying. We are all incredibly supportive of each other and treat each other as equals. They inspire me to be better every day. Being able to give back and see others succeed is a joy for me."



"Each team member brings a unique strength in a variety of skill sets," Bernadette continues. "From an attorney, an MBA, a master's in marketing, a property manager, mentor, and home stager, all are very dynamic and highly experienced. Collectively we have the resources to support each other in a way as individuals we would not. Having the RE/MAX brand behind us is a great asset."



Bernadette and her team support a number of nonprofits and are very involved in their local community. The entire team supports RE/MAX Gold's Children's Miracle Network, as well as other charities, including Child Abuse Prevention Center and Arden Park Youth Triathlon.

As Bernadette continues showing everyone exactly what she's made of, she will continue to inspire and help as many people as she can to find their own moxie in life and succeed.



*"We are all incredibly supportive of each other and treat each other as equals. They inspire me to be better every day."*





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# SUMMER EVENT 2021

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## HIGHLIGHTS

**Sacramento Real Producers** celebrated our Summer 2021 Event back in June at High-Hand Nursery in Loomis! We braved the heat to enjoy a beautiful evening together in a remarkable outdoor setting. In addition to enjoying one another's company and catching up with friends, we came together to support and raise funds for Child Advocates of Placer County.

Thank you to our Title Sponsor, BlackPine Communities, for hosting us, XSight Creative Solutions for capturing all of the magic, Aura Design Co. for their event design work, Premiere Home Staging for their elegant patio arrangements, and all our Event Sponsors for making the night such an incredible success! Enjoy the pictures from the evening and make sure to catch us at our next event in the Fall!



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BlackPine’s Founder, President, & CFO, Michael Paris, garnered nearly three-decades worth of homebuilding experience before launching BlackPine Communities in 2010. As a valued Partner of *Sacramento Real Producers*, we are grateful for Michael’s partnership in sponsoring our Summer Event.

“We are so proud to be partnered with Michael Paris and BlackPine Communities,” shares Katie MacDiarmid, Publisher of *Sacramento Real Producers*.

Not only are they bringing beautifully crafted communities to this region, but their partnership with *Sacramento Real Producers* speaks volumes about their desire to work WITH the Top Real Estate agents of the region instead of independent of them.

I hear from agents I interview all the time how rare and valuable it is to find that collaborative perspective from a home builder. We are thankful for their support and involvement in this platform as we continue to elevate the entire Real Estate experience in Greater Sacramento!”

To receive priority updates, please join BlackPine’s guest list by registering online at [www.BlackPineCommunities.com/Contact](http://www.BlackPineCommunities.com/Contact)

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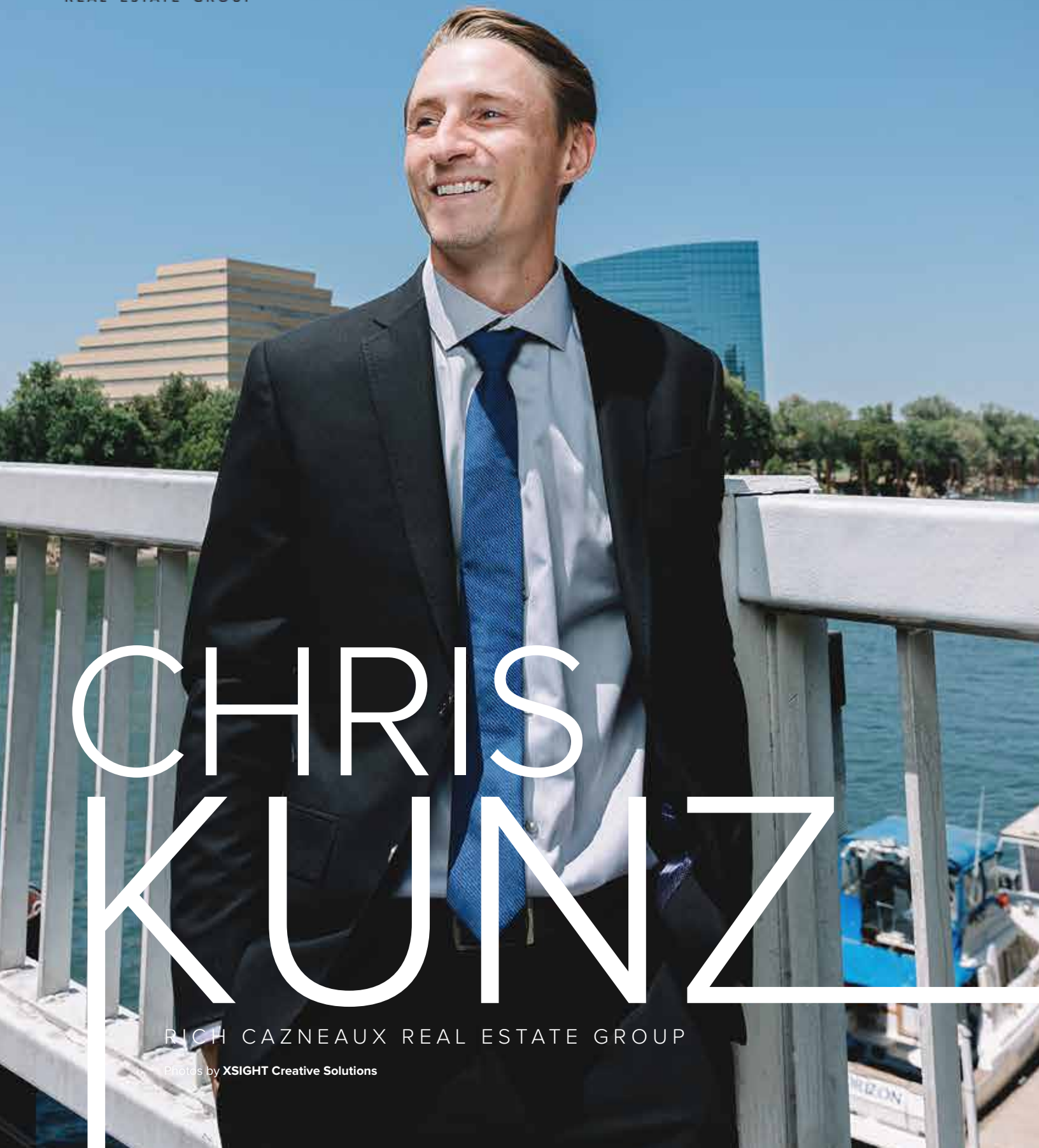


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▶▶ star on the rise

**RICH  
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# CHRIS KUNZ

RICH CAZNEAUX REAL ESTATE GROUP

Photos by XSIGHT Creative Solutions



*Meet Chris Kunz of the Rich Cazneaux Real Estate Group with Coldwell Banker. Following a career selling solar panels, Chris is now in his sixth year as a REALTOR® with many achievements under his belt – including the Coldwell Banker “30 Under 30” in 2018, the Coldwell Banker International President’s Elite 2020, and Masters Club 2016-2021.*

Born and raised in the Pocket area, Chris has called Sacramento home his whole life and invests in the community around him. In his free time, he volunteers as a coach for the North Natomas Little League. In addition, he is an active member of the 20-30 Club Sacramento No. 1, which serves disadvantaged youth throughout the Sacramento area. They throw a myriad of events, including an annual Holiday Party at the UCD Pediatric Cancer Center and a packing event for those transitioning into foster care.

As Chris continues to put in the work, learn from his mentor, Rich Cazneaux, and take great care of his clients, you can be sure this “Star on the Rise” is putting his mark on the Sacramento real estate industry.

**What are you most passionate about right now in your business?**

I love helping people set roots in my hometown. When I was growing up here, there wasn’t much to say about Sacramento. As we have seen the city grow immensely over the last decade, I am finally starting to hear things about this city that I have felt all along. I have always loved living here, and I can’t see myself living anywhere else, so being able to help people set roots in this town, especially the first-time homebuyers, drives my passion for this business.

**What has been the most rewarding aspect of your business?**

Buying or selling a home is not always an absolute necessity, but when it is an absolute necessity and we deliver, that is always what feels most rewarding. Clients that need to

be closer to family for health reasons, distressed sales, and helping close friends and family creates an emotional connection for me, and I find that very rewarding.

**What has been your biggest challenge as a realtor? In entering the industry?**

At first, I considered my age to be a challenge. Getting into real estate at 23 meant that I needed to prove myself in other ways. I hadn’t bought a house then and was so green to the industry that I had to learn everything from the ground up. In the end, I think that my tenacity and determination to make something of my career choice allowed me to overcome those challenges and insecurities. In the end, regardless of the REALTOR®, it’s about putting in the hours, and the more you put in, the more you get out. Now I’d say my biggest challenge



...

is finding ways to get offers accepted in this crazy market, but I personally enjoy that aspect. It allows me to get creative in the way I structure offers, and it allows me to separate my clients from the competition.

**How do you define success?**

I think success lies in working hard. It's intrinsic to me. There was a period a few years ago where I didn't receive a paycheck for six months. I would make phone calls day after day, trying to track down clients or contacts that I had lost touch with. I would do open houses every weekend, sometimes four in the same weekend, trying to meet new people and get my name out, and yet it was not translating into closed escrows. And yet, I still didn't feel like I was failing. All of the phone calls and prospecting that I did during those six months allowed me to have one of the most prosperous quarters of my career coming out of it, and that served as a platform for me to jump off of to really upstart my career. I still get referrals from the folks that I spoke with during those six months, and that is why I see success as the work that you put in. I am just grateful that it eventually, finally translated into closed escrows.

**To what would you attribute your rapid success in the industry?**

My friend and mentor, Rich Cazneau, in addition to the support team he has established. We have an INCREDIBLE Director of Operations in Megan Matheny, and our Transaction Coordinator Nancy Manlapig is second to none. I cannot say enough good things about them all. We have had others step into the role of Director of Operations, so I would be remiss to not acknowledge them as well. They all teach me different things, not only about the business itself, but how to relate to people and the perspective that they have in the industry. Rich, as the leader of our team, has taught me everything I know about this business. He is a master at his craft, and I find myself awestruck even still



1. The 20-30 Club hosting their annual Holiday Party for the children at the Cancer Center at UC Davis.
2. Celebrating our team success with our team and most trusted vendors/partners.
- 3 Spending time coaching up the TCU Frogs for North Natomas Little League.
4. Chris Kunz and his mentor, Rich Cazneau.

**What are your future goals and your plan for obtaining them?**

I would really like to continue investing in real estate. My brother is a general contractor (TDK Construction Co), and together we purchase and flipped our first home in the midst of the pandemic last year. I love the idea of transforming properties and would love to continue doing that, as well as investing in buy-and-hold properties to one day afford myself a level of financial freedom. I also have a goal of maintaining a reputation in this industry as someone who treats people the right way, is moral, ethical, and true to their word. I feel that is the more important goal of the two, because the amount of integrity one holds will open up opportunities that may have never been realized before.

**What advice or recommendations would you give to agents just starting out?**

Find someone to learn from, and be their shadow for as long as they'll let you. Make sure you find someone who aligns with your personality and the style of business you would like to emulate, all while understanding that you need to be able to put your own twist on things to personify your own business. Secondly, do your best to remove your emotions from transactions. Your job as an agent is to control the process appropriately, and the more emotional you get, the less control you'll have.

watching him manage transactions and find ways to add the most value to our clients. I admire him more than he knows and more than I will ever give him credit for.

**What sets you apart?**

I am a tenacious worker. I understand that there are other people in this industry that want the same thing that I am working towards, and there are some that may even be willing to work harder than I am in order to obtain it, and that motivation allows me to provide a premium level of service to my clients and constituents. Especially considering I want to be in the real-estate business long-term, I understand the value of treating people ethically, whether they are other agents or clients that I work with, and that also plays a big role in my business, and opens up lots of opportunities for referrals from folks who know I have their best interest in mind at all times.

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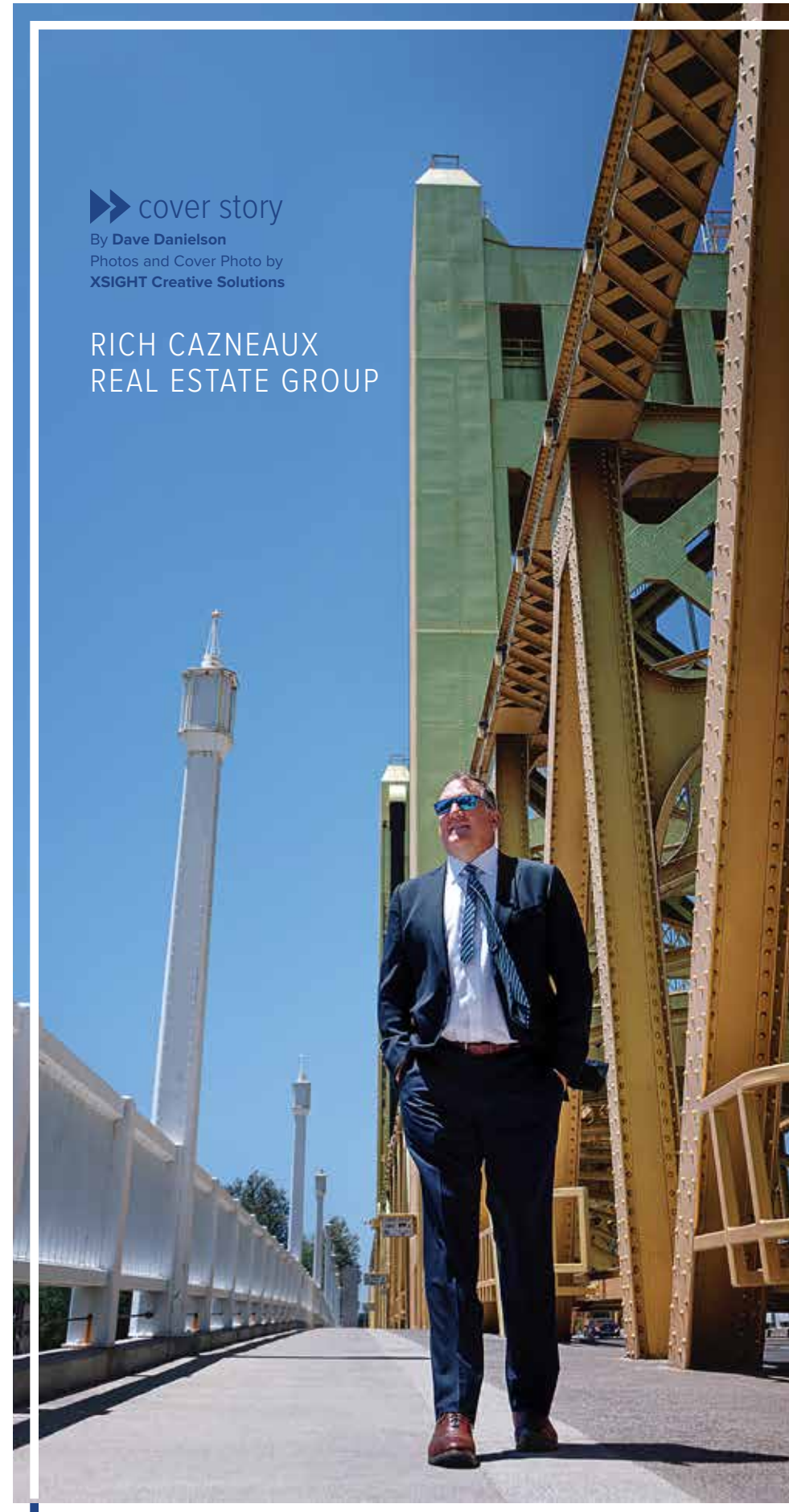
# Rich Cazneau



## ► cover story

By Dave Danielson  
Photos and Cover Photo by  
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#### A MATTER OF TRUST

The role you fulfill through your work with clients carries a sacred weight with it. Each day, you demonstrate your value and help them reach the closing table.

Rich Cazneau is one of those who excels at making that journey with his clients at a very high level. But beyond the numbers and accolades lies much more.

As Team Lead of the Rich Cazneau Real Estate Group with Coldwell Banker, Rich serves the needs of those around him first. For him, it's a matter of trust.

“Our tagline is *It's About You*. We put our clients first, and rather than saying yes automatically, we aren't afraid to say no. I feel that our role is to be consultants rather than salespeople,” Rich explains. “Sometimes it's right to sell. Sometimes it's not. In this business, you can never want it more than the client does. If you do, that's when you start making bad decisions.”

#### EARLY MOVES

Rich's real estate career began 19 years ago. But his story started as a young boy, born and raised in Marin County, with his parents, sister, and brother.

“My parents had retired to Santa Rosa, and I transferred to Sacramento State in 1989,” Rich recalls.

After graduating with a degree in organizational communications with an emphasis in business, Rich turned his internship with PacTel Cellular into a major ground floor opportunity with a

•••





“We are really good at setting expectations up front. If you don't set those expectations up front, they lose faith and they don't think you're their advocate. We set expectations and we deliver on what we say we're going to deliver.”



As he thought about his next steps, Rich's mind went back to one of his first interests.

“It ended up being about chasing my passion. I had taken shop class from 7th through 12th grade with metal shop and auto shop,” he remembers. “One of my best friends had opened a construction company when we were young. I had helped him with bigger jobs. I really enjoyed building and taking on those projects, so I started doing a few flips.”

There was something about the tangible aspect of the business that called to him.

“I was really tuned into the real estate market and I enjoyed every piece of it ... seeing all the homes from the 20s and 30s. I always saw something new architecturally. I find that to be intriguing and being able to appreciate the quality of the building that was done back in the day.”

It was all starting to add up for Rich.

“I knew I had a passion for building, sales, and the neighborhood and I made the decision to jump in. Kathryn Metcalf was the REALTOR® I met. I had the knowledge and sales skills. So I reached out to her about partnering and she and I created a fantastic seven-year partnership off a handshake. Neither of us deviated from it for seven years.”

**ACHIEVEMENT AND GRATITUDE**

The signs of success have continued to grow over time. That level of achievement is something Rich is quick to share with his team of three professionals and his brokerage.

“Coldwell Banker has been super great to me through the years, including



company that eventually became part of the Verizon organization.

“I got a great opportunity to get involved with a booming business at an early stage. When I left years later, I had 120 direct reports,” he says.

**TAKING A NEW PATH**

It's an understatement to say that Rich had thrived in his role in

corporate America. Yet he felt it might be a good time for a change.

“I loved Verizon, but I was going to have to move to go to the next position or go lateral, and I'm not really a lateral guy,” Rich says. “I didn't want to move cross country for two years and then need to move again and again to keep advancing.”





my Broker, Mike Lippi, who is very supportive. On our team, our Director of Operations is Megan Matheny. Our Buyer's Agent is Chris Kunz and our Closing Coordinator is Nancy Manlapig," Rich says. "On our team, we're all high-energy grinders. At the same time we have a lot of fun and look after the best interests of our clients."

A strong house is built with a sturdy foundation. In the same way, a solid working relationship with clients is based on a strong framework.

"We work with someone's biggest asset, and you have to really handle it appropriately. As part of that, it's very important to set good expectations with either your seller or buyer and keep them informed with good communication," Rich emphasizes. "We are really good at setting expectations up front. If you don't set those expectations up front, they lose faith and they don't think you're their advocate."

We set expectations and we deliver on what we say we're going to deliver."

That same mindset of giving your best starts at home.

"It's one of the things we teach our kids. We have this sign in their bedroom that says, 'Work Hard, Be Kind and Amazing Things will Happen.' That's what I've always tried to do," Rich says.

Rich and his wife, Donna, treasure time they have with their three sons — Kyle, who is starting his sophomore year at Oregon, Will, who is a senior in high school, and Jack, who is a freshman in high school.

In their free time, Rich and his family look forward to time spent at Clear Lake, boating and wake surfing. They also look forward to snow skiing, fishing, and golfing.

When it comes time to give back to the community, Rich has a big place

in his heart for local schools and youth sports programs, including Little League.

#### SPARKING SUCCESS

Those who get to know and work with Rich appreciate his high-energy fairness, his competitive spark and his love of negotiating the best outcome possible.

"I'm always working for my clients' best net number," Rich says. "The thing that I hope people always think about is the fact that they know we're looking out for their best interests."

There's no doubt they do. Those who have the opportunity to work with Rich and his team know that they're going to be taken care of. It's a matter of trust.

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