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# TABLE OF CONTENTS



06

Index of Preferred Partners



08

Meet the Charlotte Real Producers Team



09

Publisher's Note: Happy Holidays!



10

Power Team: Sunset Properties Group



16

Partner Spotlight: Amber Ireland, Twist-n-Shout Balloons



22

Rising Star: David Wishon



28

Cover Story: Jim Bramhall



32

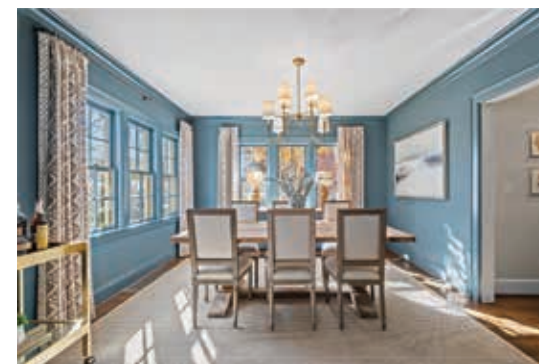
Home Matters: Hosting Holiday Guests



35

Top 200 Standings

Cover photo courtesy of Kelly Klemmensen.



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If you are interested in nominating REALTORS® to be featured in the magazine, please email [Wendy@KristinBrindley.com](mailto:Wendy@KristinBrindley.com).

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Dear Charlotte Real Producers,

## Happy Holidays!

I'm your new publisher, Kristin Brindley. I enjoyed meeting many of you at the Winter Mixer on December 1st and hope to meet many more of you in the coming months as my team and I begin heading up *Charlotte Real Producers*.

As you know, it is a badge of honor to be a Real Producer. Receiving this publication means YOU are in the top .05% of the industry in your market. Congratulations!

Our mission at the Kristin Brindley Team is to Connect, Elevate, and Inspire our Real Producers communities. I've had the pleasure and privilege of starting near the very beginning of Real Producers, founding DC Metro Real Producers five and a half years ago, Northern Virginia four and a half years ago, Richmond Real Producers just a year ago, and Long Island Real Producers coming soon. I'm excited to now bring our experienced and successful team to Charlotte Real Producers, as well, and look forward to learning about you, your market, your challenges, and your goals. Each community we serve is unique and has its own personality!

We are excited to hear your opinions on what you would like to see in the magazine and with events in the coming year ... content, event themes, locations, and, of course, who you would like to see featured. How may we uniquely serve our Charlotte Real Producers

community? Scan the QR code below to give us your thoughts!

Wish you and yours a very happy holiday season!



Your publisher,



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**KRISTIN BRINDLEY**  
ENTREPRENEUR, CONNECTOR, PUBLISHER

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Did you accomplish your 2022 goals?





# SUNSET PROPERTIES GROUP

## Lakeside Living

power team  
By Eli Pacheco

Photo by Ashley Reed Photography



Lake living has an easy, breezy feel. Sunset Properties Group, with eXp Realty, is the team that can help clients discover and experience it.

Stephen Pierce and Justin Boston fused their love for the lake with area expertise. Sunset Properties Group blossomed from a friendship, and was bolstered by an affinity for watersports.

“At a point, we decided to link up and put our heads together to create something we could both build,” Stephen says. “We wanted to bring other like-minded agents together to work alongside us.”

Stephen and Justin sought top producers who were strong and self-producing — agents who shared similar lifestyles, goals, and a desire to help people. The operation of two became a team of 11 in less than three years.

Justin had a career in motorsports before starting Sunset Properties Group. He’d been in town for a few years in pursuit of that career before he turned to real estate. In the beginning, he felt he had quickly reached a ceiling, working as a single agent in the Charlotte market.

“You can only do so much in a day,” Justin says. “With our team, I have teammates who I can call to help my client when I may be tied up or out of town. We want to make it a fine-tuned experience for our clients. We can use our teammates’ experience uptown, in South Charlotte, and at the lake. We can reach out to one of our team members who might have more experience there to assist in our transactions.”

Sunset Properties offers a white-glove experience and showcases the

community. It is their mission to inspire a positive, lasting impact by cultivating a spirit of collaboration, innovation, and integrity.

“We want to show them a slice of Charlotte they didn’t know,” Justin says. “We sought motivated, high-producing agents. They get clients what they’re looking for, advocate for them, and continue to help them after the closing date. We do not disappear from our clients. It’s a relationship, not a transaction.”

Working with Stephen, Don Savage came up with a dream home for himself and his wife. Stephen is a friend Don’s who he’s gone mountain biking with and who helped Don and his wife enjoy a smooth homebuying transaction. Expertise in dock rules and regulations and licensing permit transfers helped.

Justin Boston (left) and Stephen Pierce (right) are team leaders of Sunset Properties Group. (Photo by Ashley Reed Photography)





“Stephen had a wealth of knowledge that was much needed,” Don says. “The seller’s REALTOR® was not a lake expert, and it showed. Stephen, in a nice way, had to coach them on some things. That helped build trust and rapport between the seller’s Realtor and our Realtor.”

Jenelle and Steve Nemeth turned to Justin as a referral. Jenelle says it couldn’t have run smoother with his team.

“They were professional and meticulous, and their response time was unbelievable,” Jenelle says. “They had a professional but friendly demeanor. That made us feel comfortable, reassured, and at ease to ask any questions.”

That work vibe is a reflection of bliss away from work.

Stephen lives in Sherrills Ford, on Lake Norman’s north side, with his wife, Faith, and three boys. Brecken is 6, Baker is 4, and Brooks is 4 months. They’re building a house, planting roots, and even getting Brecken out on a wakeboard.

“We enjoy this growing community,” Stephen says. “We enjoy time on the water, anchoring up, and chilling out with the kids. That’s when we’re not driving around to every kind of sports thing they’ve got. The family’s my highest priority, so we’re together quite a bit.”

Justin and his wife, Megan, met on a blind date years ago and married last year. Children are in the plans. They’ve built a house in Cornelius, where they live with their two boxers, Trapper and Knox.

“We have a group of friends that grew up with us in Maryland and Virginia who have also made Charlotte home,” Justin says. “It’s a cool, tight-knit group of

“We want to show them a slice of Charlotte they didn’t know.”



Photo by Kelly Klemmensen

friends. We like hanging out on our pontoon boat on Lake Norman. In the summer, we’ll travel. In the winter, we take trips all the time for snowboarding, one sport we both love.”

The team has had a strong start and is still growing. Sunset Properties Group would love to expand to the rest of North Carolina and South Carolina, and they currently serve most of the Interstate 77 corridor, from Rock Hill to Boone.

“It always comes back to the family. To have a fulfilling life that’s worth living,” says Justin. “It comes down to having a reason to get out of bed and strive for more. To have the drive to want to



Justin and Megan Boston with their two boxers, Trapper and Knox (Photo by Jessie Walker Photography)

do more, and be a better person for your loved ones,” he says. “It doesn’t matter how much money anyone makes if you’re not happy.”

Stephen says enjoying life with minimal stress is vital. “Building a business that allows me to enjoy the things I love to do with my friends and family is a priority,” he says.



Stephen and Faith Pierce with their sons Brecken and Baker (Not pictured: baby Brooks, born in summer 2022)

“We needed to distinguish ourselves a little bit,” Stephen says. “We focus on sharing our passion for this area with our clients. I want to become good friends if we aren’t already. We can help them enjoy life at the lake, uptown, wherever. We focus on lifestyle and the housing that matches that style.”



Photo by Kelly Klemmensen



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partner spotlight

By Eli Pacheco  
Photos by Kelly Klemmensen



# AMBER IRELAND & TWIST-N-SHOUT BALLOONS

## A New Twist on “Welcome Home”

You might have been gifted with some of Amber Ireland’s work to welcome you to your brand-new home. Amber owns Twist-N-Shout Balloons, a Waxhaw-based company she began as a gig to make tips as a teenager at area restaurants. Amber’s company has since grown into a sought-after amenity for new home sales.

Twist-N-Shout now creates “Welcome Home” garlands of balloons and other media. “I’d seen on Instagram that balloon artists were doing it here,” Amber says.

Twist-N-Shout worked with Boundary Real Estate on gifts for new buyers when they come home. Amber can create big, personalized balloons that say, “Welcome Home!” with the homeowners’ names on them.

“I can’t even count how many ‘Welcome Homes’ we’ve done together,” Amber says.

Kristen Bernard is team leader/owner of EmpowerHome Team Charlotte with Keller Williams Southpark. She met Amber a few years ago as a referral for a 40th birthday surprise.

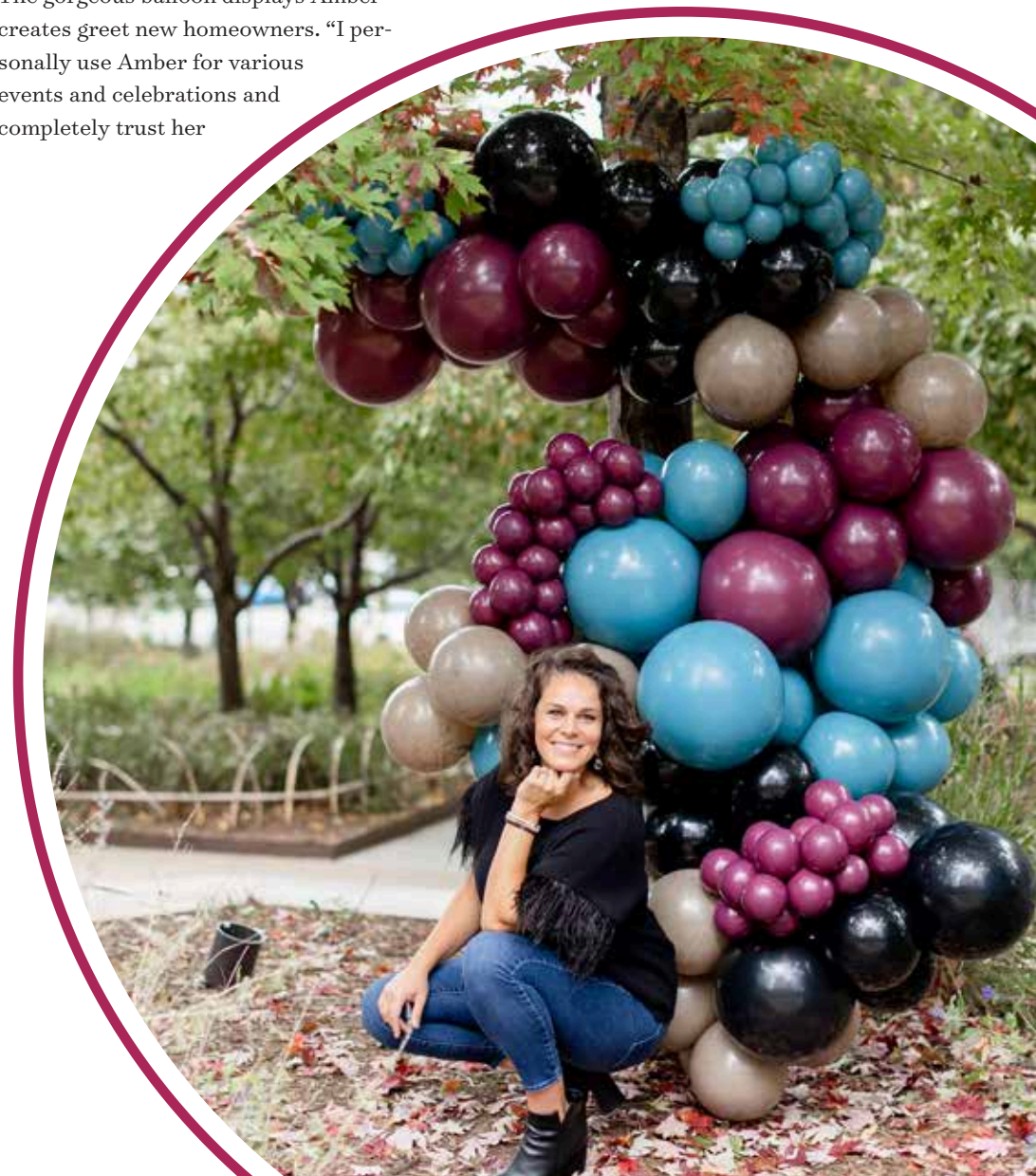
“She was extremely prompt, communicative, and so kind when she came to set up,” Kristen recalls. “We began forming a friendship/relationship and began brainstorming how I could use her services to help my real estate business stand out from the crowd. She is now our go-to resource for our buyer clients who purchase a home with us here in the Charlotte metro area.”

The gorgeous balloon displays Amber creates greet new homeowners. “I personally use Amber for various events and celebrations and completely trust her

creativity and ideas,” Kristen says. “I know when working with her, my clients will be more than satisfied, and her professionalism is unmeasured. Seeing her small business grow over the past few years has been extremely exciting and rewarding from the sidelines.”

More partnerships followed. Along with Keller Williams, Vantage Realty and Henderson Ventures also wanted Amber’s creations.

...





...

Use began to expand, too, for client appreciation parties and the like. "REALTORS® are a huge part of my client portfolio," Amber says. Not bad for a hobby that started with a balloon book she got for Christmas when she was 16.

#### Looking for Something New

After college, Amber worked in the beverage industry and was a stay-at-home mom for two years. She wanted to get back into the workforce ... and then COVID-19 hit. But business boomed anyway. (Remember how people started celebrating things by drive-by?)

"Balloons took off," Amber says. "People still wanted to celebrate, so we did drive-by baby showers. With the holidays coming, people want to celebrate, and balloons are a great way to do that."

Balloons work great for events such as trunk-or-treat. The opportunity hooked Amber. She invested in tutorials and classes. Twist-N-Shout Balloons became an LLC in January 2021. "In two years," Amber says, "it's grown into something truly special."

Amber's business is versatile. Her small team does a lot of custom work, adding details other than balloons. "I've put my own twist on it, if you will," Amber says. "I tell my clients, 'If you can think of it in balloons, I can make it happen.'"

#### Finding the Sweet Spot

Amber and her husband, Chris, have two boys, Colton (5) and Cash (3). She has met small-business owners and mompreneurs along the way. They also seek fun things to do in Charlotte for children. Amber works weekends but finds ways to find a happy balance between work and life.

"That's the sweet spot," Amber says. "I've done the whole corporate thing. That was great, and you could make a

ton of money. You get the corporate card and car. Owning my own business is difficult, but I love what I do."

The evolution continues. Twist-N-Shout offers grab-and-go options for your convenience. If you're a business owner and meet Amber, she's up for collaboration to benefit both businesses.

"I love partnering with people," she says. "If there is any way that I can help build their business, I'm interested. That's something that has helped me grow my business. I've been able to grow through word of mouth."

As a sprawling city, Charlotte has neighborhoods with a small-town feel. Those dynamics work well for a business such as Twist-N-Shout. Amber is always looking to help others grow too. She'll try to offer at least two vendors every time someone asks for a quote. Do you need a florist or a photographer for that? She knows someone.

Partners have become clients, and clients become friends.

"It's about letting people know," Amber says. "Saying their names in a room goes a long way."



Need a stylish Welcome Home? Give Twist-N-Shout a call at 980-406-6655 or visit [TwistNShoutBallooning.com](https://TwistNShoutBallooning.com).

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If you can think of it in balloons, I can make it happen.

—Amber Ireland,  
Owner Twist-N-Shout  
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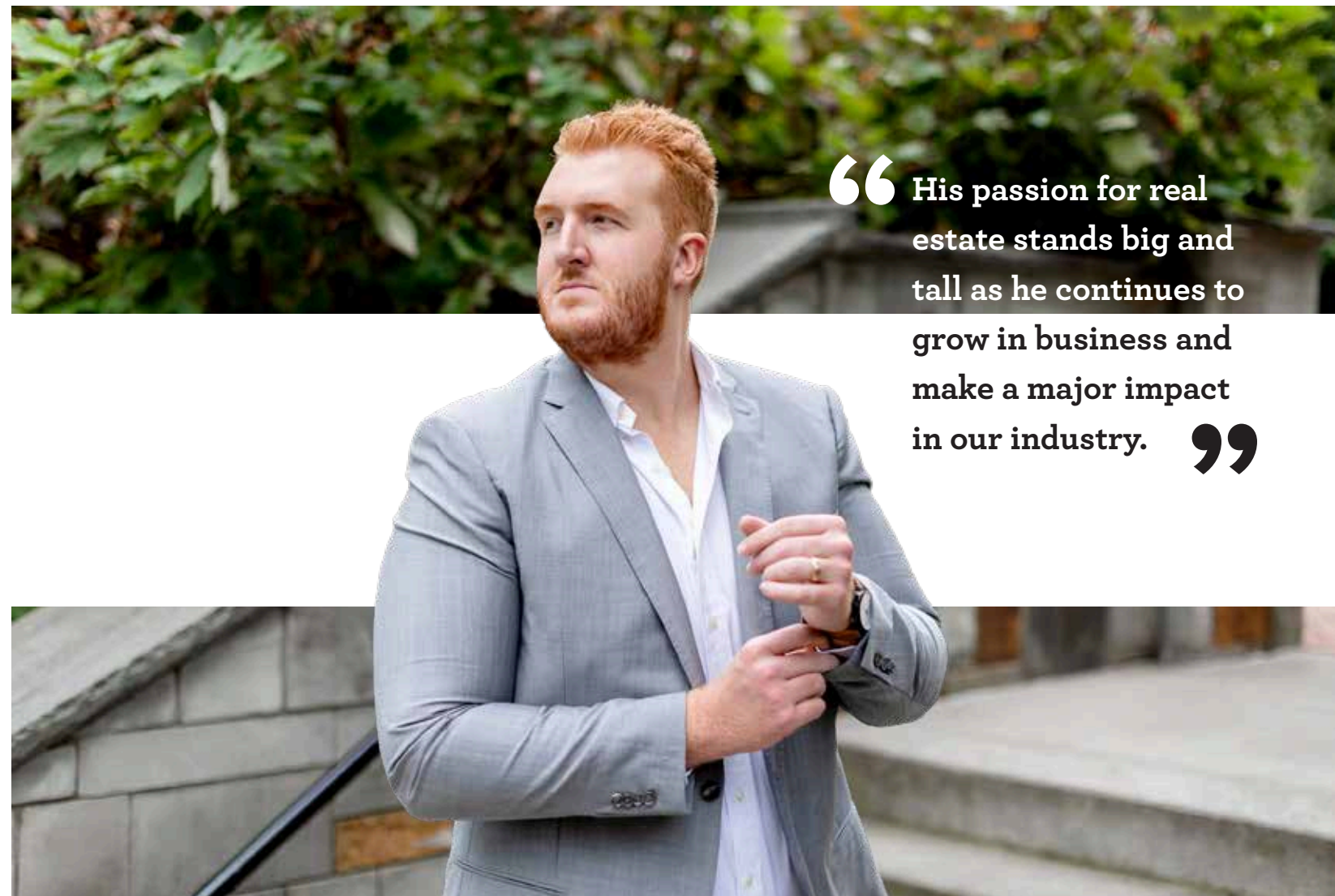


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By Eli Pacheco  
Photos by Kelly Klemmensen



“His passion for real estate stands big and tall as he continues to grow in business and make a major impact in our industry.”

Most REALTORS® need help to “get on up there.”

Not so David Wishon. He started this thing in rare air. Not just because of his height — at 7 feet, 2 inches tall, he’s easily Charlotte’s “Biggest Realtor.” It’s also because of his methods, confidence, and knack for drumming up business as quickly as an uncontested dunk. Before you ask, yes, he did play basketball. At 7’2”, David sets a high bar... And yes, he’s the guy to look (up) to for your next real estate transaction.

Koren Bowman is the owner of KU Real Estate Group. She considers David one of the top agents from their market center. She says he’s the biggest Realtor in North Carolina, not just Charlotte, But there’s more to him than that.

“I realized his heart was much bigger,” Koren says. “His passion for real estate stands big and tall as he continues to grow in business and make a major impact in our industry. I am proud to be in business with David, and I know he is a true gem to all of us.”

Christy Ross has known David since he joined the Keller Williams Premier office in 2019. She helped guide him in those early days, from training to developing his business. He came in with grand plans for real estate, Christy says.

“I was there to make sure he remembered that plan,” she says. “His passion for helping people, not just in real estate, and his drive to succeed are his strengths.”

David grew up in the Charlotte area, attending Concord High and First Assembly Christian before embarking on an elevated basketball career. First stop: Fork Union (VA) Military Academy, where he developed into a top prospect in basketball.

Tulsa University offered him a full scholarship, so off he went to hoop for the Golden Hurricanes. He then transferred after his freshman season to play at the College of Charleston for three years and earned his bachelor’s degree in business administration.

From there, it was on to Lipscomb University, where he played with his brother for a graduate year while completing a master’s degree in business. David appeared bound for a

...



pro career when open-heart surgery changed those plans. Although fate changed his path, nothing could shake his determination to not only succeed but to help others along the way. He transitioned into a life of coaching ... and became a Realtor.

“There’s always been something about houses for me,” says David, who still coaches AAU basketball and mentors young players. “I’ve always been interested in it. I saw that a good bit of the world’s billionaires have a vast real-estate portfolio.” On becoming a real estate broker, David says, “It can be a little scary going into it because there’s no salary, and it’s 100 percent commission.”

Twenty-plus years of experience as an athlete and in team settings had given David the base he needed to grow in another direction. Just like he did with

applying himself in the gym, David could see that whatever work he put into real estate, he could get out of it.

“I saw limitless income,” David says. “I’m not afraid to put the work in.”

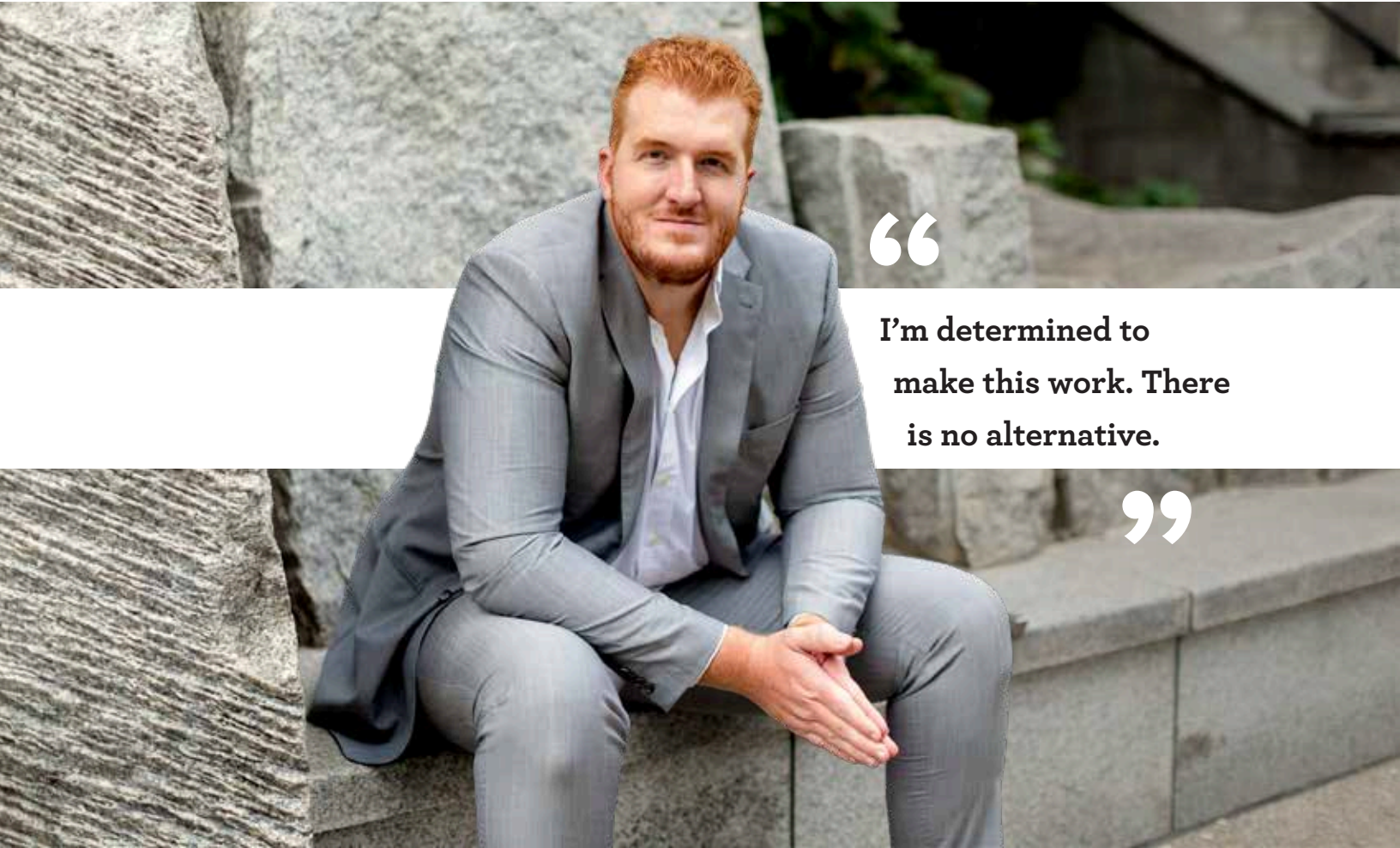
David racked up only two deals in his first year. His mindset? Undeterred. “It’s all about working and planting those seeds,” he says. David rebounded the next year and was poised for his first big listing — for \$350,000. “At the time, I thought that was big,” he says. That year, though, was 2020. He was about to go under contract when everything shut down. No shots fell for a couple of months, and he considered switching career paths.

“I’m determined to make this work,” David told himself. “There is no alternative. I love this already. So I kept grinding.”

Dan Callahan was David’s BIC for three years at KW in Kannapolis. He knew David as a diligent worker and a skillful negotiator. His greatest value came from something even more important...

“Even when he’s at his busiest with real estate, he always has time to stop and help other agents,” Dan says. “In addition, he also coaches youth basketball, and he never misses an opportunity to give back to the community through volunteer work.”

And just like a shooter working his way out of a slump, David kept grinding. He’s humble about actual figures, but he’s set for a volume roughly 73 times what he did as a rookie. That’s an all-star type of leap. “I don’t want to sit stagnantly. I want to keep growing, year by year, and improving,” he says.



“  
**I’m determined to make this work. There is no alternative.**  
”



It’s not unusual for David to see one of his protégés lighting it up on TV in a big-time game — and texting or messaging with his former players afterward. “It’s funny, because players I coached my first year are starting to graduate from college,” David says. “And now, they’re hitting me up and asking me about getting into real estate because they see what I’m doing with it and where I’m taking my business. It wasn’t too long ago I was that guy who had just graduated, trying to figure out a career path, so it’s awesome to see and to still be able to help my guys even if it’s not on the court.”

Going inside to the big man for a big score is never a bad idea.

Rising Star David Wishon is a REALTOR® with Keller Williams Realty.

David’s family is also growing. He and his wife, Alana, are expecting a daughter. David says they spend lots of time together watching reality TV shows and programs on Bravo. “She begs me to watch them with her,” he says. “For her, I’ll do it.”

David and Alana enjoy the bar and brewery scene in Southend and Lake Norman. Their dogs, Nala, Margo, and Raleigh, keep them plenty busy. The Wishons head to the beach when they can, with family places in the Myrtle Beach area. It’s a good life he’s achieved without a true mentor. Rather, David has collected many coaches’ tidbits he’s encountered here and there, which have shaped him and outlined his work ethic.

In his commitment to giving back, David regularly helps with Habitat for Humanity and coaches with Team Curry, run by NBA star and local Steph Curry. In the past six years, David estimates he’s helped 50 kids earn full-ride scholarships to college — and a lot more at the D1, D2, and NAIA levels. “He is always willing to support other agents in the office, and he jumps in to help when the office does volunteer events,” Christy Ross says. “He also coaches AAU basketball to help young men strive for their dreams.”





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# JIM BRAMHALL CONNECTIONS

Jim Bramhall didn't exactly follow the common REALTOR® curriculum. Not from the son-of-an-agent angle. Not from the tried-something-different-for-fun perspective. No, Jim began compiling his contact list in about the ninth grade or so, when his dad packed up the family and moved from Carbondale, Illinois, to The Point, an affluent community in Mooresville, near the lake. The rest was history.

"I had a big platform of referrals and people connections," Jim, now with Costello Real Estate & Investments, says. "I decided to go into real estate and put my contacts and connections to work. From there, it's been off to the races."

Jim's race has run on a much different track from other agents too. Case in point: when

COVID-19 hampered much of all businesses, Jim's took off. From his view, the opportunities were still there. Real estate still needed to change hands. So he was there for it.

"Most people saw COVID as a big negative," he says. "I capitalized on it. I won."

It was more about being there for people in need rather than taking advantage of a situation.

There's a reason Jim's never had to buy advertising, hunt for leads, or schmooze at the Chamber of Commerce. He entered real estate with a base of 300-plus warm referrals. An affluent base. One that, like Jim, networks and does business.

...

»» cover story

By **Eli Pacheco**  
Photos by **Kelly Klemmensen**

“ I decided to go into  
real estate and put  
my contacts and  
connections to work.  
From there, it’s  
been off to the races. ”







Jim Bramhall is a REALTOR® with Costello Real Estate & Investments.

Jim is confident. Straightforward. You can tell it when you first talk to him. This South Iredell High alumnus has a type A work ethic and a casual tone. At his heart, he's a connector, and that is what's worked for him — from working as a project manager in construction to owning an Amazon bookstore to delving into publishing with his brother, Tom, with N2 Publishing. All along, it's been about connections. More specifically, connecting those connections.

"It's how I made my way," Jim says. "It doesn't mean I'm better. It worked for me. It's about where our parents put us, and that's what I'm attributing it all to. They didn't want their kids to grow up in a bad neighborhood. As a result, I met all our successful neighbors — CEOs, NASCAR drivers, and people on the move. There's nothing warmer than that."

Jim and his partner, Amy, have an 8-year-old son, Connor. They ride dirt bikes, four-wheelers, and snowmobiles together.

Jim is living a good life through tons of hard work. He'll be the first to admit he didn't know a thing about real estate when he came in fresh out of the publishing business. Then, he wound up as Rookie of the Year.

Jim realized that, to maximize his income potential, he had to take a chance and strike out on his own. His work with Costello has been perfect for him, and he's a great match with John Costello.

Having grown up around the lake for half his life, Jim is intimately familiar with lake living, and encourages people to

contact him if they'd like to know the value of their home and discuss opportunities to buy or sell their residential or investment properties.

With a possible recession looming, Jim is still working hard, doing everything needed to make the sales and connections to keep his base happy and coming back for more.

"I like the hunt — the accomplishment of getting it done," he says. "I don't like sitting stagnant; I'm much happier getting it done. There's nothing quite like closing day."

“ I like the hunt. The accomplishment of getting it done. I don’t like sitting stagnant. I’m much happier getting it done. ”





Does hosting guests for the holidays seem like it will require an overwhelming amount of preparation? You could spend the entire holiday season worrying over the comfort of your guests. Or, by following a few simple suggestions and planning ahead, you can spend time relaxing and enjoying the festivities and their company!

Tidy Up Outside

Make your guests feel welcome by creating an inviting atmosphere before they even come inside. Designate space for your guests to park. Check to make sure your house number is easy to see, even at night. Free your driveway, sidewalk and front access of any clutter that may be unsightly or cause guests to trip. Last, ensure your home's exterior is well-lit for guests arriving after dark.

Tidy Up Inside

Make common areas in your home, such as the entryway, living room and kitchen, feel inviting by decluttering them. Put away any shoes, jackets, toys or mail. Make sure to thoroughly clean your kitchen and bathrooms, as these rooms are sure to get quite a bit of use by your guests.



# HOSTING HOLIDAY GUESTS

By Shauna Osborne and Megan Weatherly Lynn

Think Like a Guest

When preparing for company, think of what you may need if you were the guest. Provide clean sheets and towels as well as extra pillows and blankets. You may also provide extra toiletries in your guest bathrooms, such as toothbrushes, soap and shampoo. Have extra toilet paper and a plunger stocked in all bathrooms so that everyone can avoid any potential embarrassment.

A few days before having houseguests, inquire about favorite snacks and drinks and stock up on those items as well as coffee, tea, creamer/sugar and simple breakfast items, like cereal, milk, juice, fruit and granola bars.

Communicate

Do any of your guests have circumstances that require specific accommodations, such as allergies or difficulty climbing stairs? Be sure to ask these questions ahead of time to prepare well and make everyone feel safe and comfortable. When your guests arrive, be sure to communicate any information that may be helpful to them, such as how to operate thermostats and any itinerary or time-sensitive plans for their visit.

Taking the time to clean up, communicate and prepare ahead of time can make the difference between a stressful holiday season or treasured time well spent with family and friends.

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