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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|--|---|---|
|  05 Meet The Team |  06 Preferred Partners |  10 Rising Star: AJ Del Rosario Jr. |
|  16 Profile: Christa Nielsen |  22 Flashback Favorite: David Oliphant |  27 Cover: John Shroyer |
|  33 2022 SVRP Event Calendar |  34 Event Recap: Top Agent Secrets to Luxury Real Estate |  36 Event Recap: Real Estate Agent Developers |



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Founder & Publisher



Amy Felix
Editor



Teresa Nora Trobbe
Photographer



Ewa Samples
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Nicole Wright
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Zach Cohen
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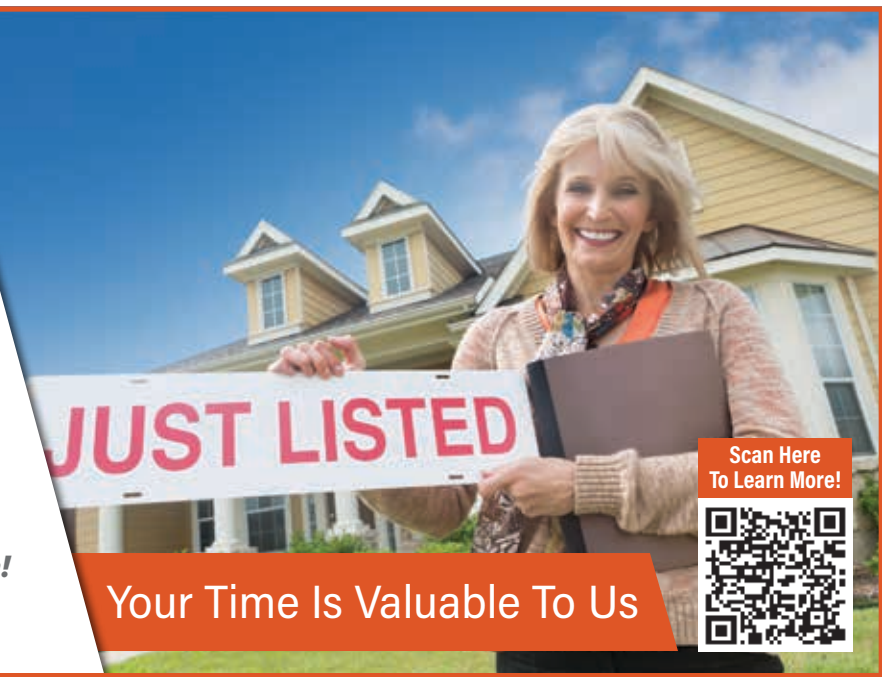


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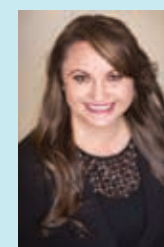


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AJ

Del Rosario Jr.



BREAKING BARRIERS

▶ rising star

By Zach Cohen
Photos By Ewa Samples, www.maytheartbewithyou.com

AJ DEL ROSARIO'S COWORKERS HAVE GIVEN HIM AN APPOPOS NICKNAME: THE BALL OF ENERGY.

From the moment AJ enters a room, his energy is palpable. He's vibrant, positive, and magnetic. AJ believes that in real estate, as in life, being authentic and genuine is the key to connection and success.

"I love bringing an essence, a sort of energy. I want to bring an energy that lights the room up. And I do that every day," AJ beams.

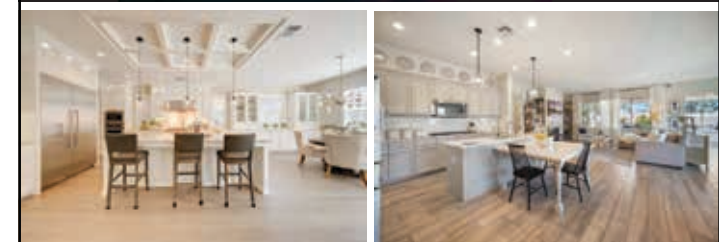
After only a year in real estate, AJ has proven that he has what it takes to hang with the top agents. His electrifying nature and all-in approach drove him to close 19 transactions in his first year, laying the groundwork for what AJ hopes will be a long career.

CLIMBING THE LADDER

Prior to becoming a real estate agent, AJ spent seven years in supply-chain management.

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“A completely different avenue to where I am now,” AJ laughs.

After getting his degree in supply chain and operational management, AJ believed he’d spent a lifetime in that field. But, his cousin, Mitch, who is also a successful agent, influenced AJ’s career path.

“I realized I wanted to be out meeting clients, not behind a desk. I wanted to be somewhat of a performer and give positive energy that I was unable to do at my previous jobs. I wanted to be less corporate and more connected,” AJ explains. “My cousin influenced my decision, and I made the jump into real estate.”

AJ began his real estate career with two values at the forefront: positivity and accountability. Alongside the genuine joy for life he brings to every interaction, AJ brings an unmatched sense of responsibility and accountability. That’s one of the gifts he takes with him from his previous line of work.

“What I have done is hold myself accountable,” AJ says. “We meet with tons of clientele. I’m about outperforming expectations. There may be a standard of how an agent should be, and I want to be beyond that.”

FOR THE JOY OF LIFE

AJ aspires to continue to generate a buzz around his work – and the joy of owning a home. His clients love the energy he brings to transactions, and he’s become adept at creating fun, enjoyable experiences.

“I love bringing smiles to people’s faces, whether they’re having lunch with me or were doing a real estate transaction. It makes me relatable to my clients.”



As AJ steps into year two, his vision continues to grow. He’s willing to break the norms in favor of authentic relating.

“I heard one time that there are no rules in real estate. I want to transcend beyond the casual norm. I want to be the agent that isn’t so black and white. I want to be someone that doesn’t

always wear a suit and tie, be personable, but still have the background of knowing exactly what I’m doing.

“I never want to lose track of what got me here. I’m at a point in my life where I’ve had an epiphany in what I like to do. Life is beautiful. Life is amazing. I love what I do.”



“ I NEVER WANT TO LOSE TRACK OF WHAT GOT ME HERE. I’M AT A POINT IN MY LIFE WHERE I’VE HAD AN EPIPHANY IN WHAT I LIKE TO DO. LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL. LIFE IS AMAZING. I LOVE WHAT I DO. ”

FUN FACT:

At home, AJ has a budding love for cooking. One of his long-term desires is to become a chef.

“I really enjoy cooking, though I’m not that good at it (yet). I take a lot of time learning how to cook things that are exciting, and I’ve always wanted to own a restaurant. I always had that thought of having those regular customers that you give them their regular order. I think that’s one of the sweet things in life.”





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CHRISTA NIELSEN



Christa Nielsen knows the challenges of this path all too well. After working in the tech scene for eight years, Christa stayed at home with her two children from 2012 to 2017. When her youngest entered school, however, she set out on a new career adventure.

“When they were no longer home, that was the time for me,” Christa says. “For five years, I was able to stay home with them and be Mom. I was really able to serve them in that way.”

In August 2017 — the same month her youngest child started school — Christa launched her real estate career.

“When I decided to go into real estate, it was due to a multitude of things. I have a passion for my community. I’ve always served my community, always taken it upon myself to grow the space I live in. I believe in where I live and want to support local businesses, restaurants, and charities. I have a passion for homes and design. I thought it was something interesting prior to getting into real estate. And, lastly, real estate allowed me to be a mom and still be present in my children’s lives. I needed to find a way to have that quality of life.”

Finding Her Rhythm

As a Bay Area native, Christa effectively leveraged her sphere of influence to achieve early success. She also found she had a knack for marketing, which she had held an interest in since her days in the tech industry.

FINDING BALANCE

Raising young children and balancing professional life is a task that requires more of parents than ever before. Parents are not only responsible for supporting their children financially; they are responsible for offering the physical, mental, and emotional support that are vital to the health of a growing being.

This monumental task asks parents to find a new way through the world. Before having kids, they may have been able to focus solely on their professional and personal growth. With children in tow, the game changes. Parents are asked to find creative ways to build a career, raise children, and care for themselves.

•••





Over the past four years, Christa has proven she has what it takes to be a successful agent — and a present mother.

“I have no complaints and everything to be grateful for in this business. I started with my hustle. I grew from zero. You get into this business, learn everything to pass a test, and then are left feeling, ‘I don’t know what I’m doing.’ I had to figure that out, and I did,” Christa says. “I was lucky because I was so present in my community already. I had a very strong sphere of influence here. I worked that to the best of my ability. The rest was pure hustle. I figured out how to market myself, how social media worked, and how to advertise.”

Finding Her Balance

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing restrictions threw much of the world into disarray. Like many parents, Christa was faced with the reality that her children would be attending school remotely. This unique situation encouraged Christa to get more in touch with balance.

Early in her career, Christa often heard a version of the same



type of advice. Those around her didn’t believe that setting effective boundaries was possible, and it took Christa until 2020 to learn that it was, in fact, a possibility.

“When I got into the business, I was acting in an older way,” Christa reflects. “I didn’t have the confidence to create boundaries. But I

didn’t believe that. I thought there was some space to be a modern parent in this world, conduct business, be present for your clients and for your family. That was important to me.”

Christa was determined to find a way to balance. With the support of her husband, Braden, Christa doubled down on her biggest commitment — her family.



“There is space to serve everyone,” Christa says. “2020 was a unique situation. My kids were home distance learning. I doubled my business in 2020. I did it while being very transparent that my kids are home, and this is important to me. I knew I could do it because there was no other option. It was a reality check for me.”

Today, Christa continues to bring the same level of transparency into her business and her life. She’s learned to be honest with her clients and family, and she’s learned when to ask for help.

“Hold onto your values, and don’t change because of the expectations of the industry. That’s the number-one piece of advice I would give because the business will always come.”

Words of Wisdom:

“
**HOLD ONTO YOUR VALUES
AND DON’T CHANGE BECAUSE
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DAVID OLIPHANT

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Originally printed in July 2019
By Zach Cohen

The Path Less Traveled

“One of my mottos is I always try to say yes more than I say no.”

When David Oliphant showed up in Paris, France, at 19 years old, he was awestruck by the architecture, the people, the food, and the culture. David grew up in Reno, NV, in a family of five boys — all of whom stayed in his hometown as adults. Europe proved to be quite the change of pace.

“Everything was so different,” David recalls. “That is what sparked in me — we’re all different as people. We all want the same things ... but we’re all so different. I became so fascinated by that.”

Since first leaving Reno for a year in Europe, David has centered his life on taking the road less traveled. Rather than following a laid-out path, he’s made a habit of listening: What do I want or need right now in my life? He’s lived in cities around the world, from San Francisco to Seattle, Washington, D.C. to Chicago, Paris, France, to Lake Tahoe. He and his partner now call Northern California home and enjoy everything about living coast side.

FINDING HIS WAY HOME

After his year in Europe, David landed a job as a flight attendant and then another as a cruise director on a cruise ship. He eventually moved into the hotel business.

“I stayed in the world of travel because I loved it,” David reflects. “Then I put my feet back on the ground after going around the world a couple of times.” After landing in Vegas, David got into the trade show and expo business.



“We had a great, exciting life in Vegas, but then we started hating it,” David admits. “We leased our houses bought a 40-foot motor home and spent a year driving around the country just to figure it out. We knew that this next move would be our last move for a while, so we wanted to move where our people were, and we didn’t know where that was.”

After a year on the road, David and his partner landed in Half Moon Bay. They never left.

“We had also worked really hard for a really long time. I’m 56 now. At this age, I’ve seen people really unhappy in their lives, their career, their relationships, or die at an early age. I was not going to be the person to do that. To take a year off wasn’t downtime. It was a launching point to figure out where is that solid ground where I want to start working again. That was 10 years ago.”

THE PATH OF REAL ESTATE

“I’m a nurturer at heart. I wanted to make sure people were well cared for in whatever business I got into... It meant being in a business with integrity,” David says. He desired a career that he could work as he got older, where he could avoid commuting and could live in a place he loved.

Real estate checked all the boxes.

In 2014, David dove into real estate headfirst. He went through the APR Masters Program, and his

business got off the ground quickly. By year three, he really started hitting his stride, and in 2018, David was ranked the number-one Independent Agent at the Coast, both in volume and units sold (not part of a group or team, results per the San Mateo County MLS for 2018).

“My time taking care of people in the sales environment has been 30 years. That piece I got to take with me,” David explains. “I knew how to represent a brand, and how to pound the pavement and build a business.”

David brings his ever-creative, outside-the-box attitude to everything he does. For example, he drives a 1968 Volkswagen Bus to all of his open houses. He had a local graphics company enlarge a photograph of the coast and wrap his bus in the image. He pulls up to his open houses in the classic ride, surfboards loaded on top.

“People just remember the bus,” David says with a smile. “These relationships that are grounded in the right thing started to take place.”

“[Real estate] was just the right business for me. It combined my love for people, my business knowledge, marketing knowledge, and my love for the coast. It collided it all together.”



EMBRACING CHANGE

“I had no fear about [change] at all. Zero. I search out change. I love that.”

David’s love for change continues into the present. After more than five years with Alain Pinel, he is now opening his own coast-side real estate office, Ocean Blue Real Estate (oceanbluere.com).

David brings the unique mindset that he’s gained throughout the journey of his life to everything he does. He doesn’t define himself by being a real estate agent but rather by being a human being. Taking care of himself is his first priority — so that he can then take proper care of his clients.

Yoga is a huge part of David’s life; he’s taught Hatha for a decade.

“Every time I finish a class, I think, ‘I can never stop doing this, regardless of how busy I am.’ It not only helps me recover, but it helps me show up as a calm resource the next day to the people I’m trying to help.

“Are we doing the things that help us be present in our lives, and care for ourselves and the people around us? Are we taking that time to be prepared to show up instead of showing up, then hoping we get that time to take care of ourselves? To me, it’s been flipped. There’s a lot of backward thinking.”

David suggests that if we took care of ourselves every day, it would allow us to show up in a different way. It sounds simple, but he recognizes that we lose track of caring for ourselves — and that affects everything we do.

After living along the coast for 10 years, David has firmly planted his roots in the community that he has come to love and call home. He’s active in local charities and donates a portion of every sale to a local senior dog rescue called Muttville.

“Community is what helps us all thrive. We have to take care of our communities to be a committed part of a group of people trying to live together.”

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In 1977, Jimmy Carter was inaugurated as President of the United States, the original *Stars Wars* movie was released in theaters, and the Bay Area real estate market was remarkably different than it is today. That was also the year John Shroyer started his real estate career.

“When I started in real estate, there were no answering machines. If you didn’t get a hold of someone on their house or business phone, you didn’t reach them,” John remembers. “A two-bedroom, one-bath house in San Carlos in 1977 cost \$75,000. That same house is \$1.75 million 44 years later.”

Suffice it to say, John has seen more than your average real estate agent. He’s been through the downturns in the early ‘80s and ‘90s, the booming economy of the early 2000s, the Great Recession, and now, the ever-unique market of today.

Beginnings

In college, John painted houses to earn money. He ended up connecting with a real estate broker, who encouraged him to get his real estate license.

“I, of course, knew nothing about real estate but the basics at that time,” John reflects. “But I had a really good work ethic



as a young person, and this broker took a liking to me. I’ve always been outgoing and friendly, and the broker recognized that. As he got to know me, he said I should think about a career in real estate. He said he’d hire me if I got my license.”

Within a year, John took that broker up on his offer. He was officially licensed on his 21st birthday.

“It was very interesting. I came to the office in jeans and a flannel, ready to go, but in 1977 that wasn’t going to work out. The broker said, ‘John, do you have a minute? You need to go buy a suit and tie,’” John remembers with a laugh.

John bought that suit and tie, but he quickly realized that if he was going to have to act like the rest of the agents around him, he wouldn’t be long for the business. Instead of leaving real estate, he made a bold choice.

“There was all this typical real estate salesmen rhetoric. I thought, ‘Maybe this isn’t for me. But I decided to do it on my own terms, and that meant being myself. So that’s how I started my career.’”

John believes that while it may have taken him longer to get his career off the ground, his commitment to authenticity allowed him to build a lasting business.

“It was the best approach for me, and people appreciated it. I took the opposite approach of the sales classes that were popular at the time.”

John found enough success in year one to purchase a home of his own. That purchase (and the debt that came along with it) inspired him to take his career to the next level. His motivation increased, and so did his commitment to success.

“I had to be self-motivated. I had to work. I put my mind to it and said, ‘I’m going to make this a career.’”

Through the Years

John believes that to be successful in real estate, you have to work hard — and work hard he has.

“The harder the work, the luckier you get. This completely holds true,” John says.

By 31, John had three kids and had been in real estate for a decade. His sphere began to expand, and his reputation was established.

“I created my own image of jeans and a flannel shirt, which at the time was not the norm. I found people were more comfortable with you if you weren’t suited up, and they liked and trusted you more. At least the people

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I worked with anyway. I tended to attract like kinds.”

Today, John remains one of the top agents on the Peninsula, and he does business with the same commitment to authenticity as he started his business with.

“I see people that aren’t sure how to be. My advice is always just be you. Don’t be anyone else. Don’t be phony. People see through that. It takes a lot of effort to succeed in real estate. It’s not a business for everyone. I’m pretty easygoing, but you have to be driven, like people, and never compromise your values. You really do. You have to want to do it.”

On the Future of Silicon Valley Real Estate

John has seen the industry shift and morph over time, and one of the most significant changes has been the prevalence and reliance on technology. Rather than being scared by the prospect of technology taking over the role of real estate agents, John is excited about the opportunities to leverage technology.

“Technology has changed this business dramatically and made it so much more efficient and professional. I do more business than I ever have at this stage of my career, and I have more time off than I’ve ever had. I chalk that up to technology. It’s a game-changer. As technology has continued to grow, it has freed us up.”

John has seen peers and those around the industry worried that technology would eliminate the need for agents. The concern is not a new one, yet John disagrees with this sentiment. He believes that a good real estate agent will always provide value within a transaction.

“Things don’t always go smoothly, and we’re there to manage that for them. I don’t see anything changing,” John says.



Despite the record-breaking housing costs in the Bay Area, John also doesn’t see the Silicon Valley market slowing down anytime soon. He believes it’s one of the most robust markets in the country — and that, going forward, it will continue to be.

“We live in a very unique area here. There is really no place to build here, so there is limited supply and huge demand. The demand is tremendous on people wanting to be here. I see that demand is going to stay. Obviously, markets change; they ebb and flow, but throughout my entire

career, with the exception of a few years in the early ‘80s, early ‘90s, and the 2008-2012 downturn, the market has been very strong, and it will remain so.”

Words of Wisdom:

“I see people that aren’t sure how to be. My advice is always just be you. Don’t be anyone else. Don’t be phony. People see through that. It takes a lot of effort to succeed in real estate. It’s not a business for everyone. I’m pretty easygoing, but you have to be driven, like people, and never compromise your values. You really do. You have to want to do it.”

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Phil Chen is a top real estate agent in the highly competitive area of San Mateo County. He is a former professional skateboarder and has been featured in numerous magazines and TV shows. He is a successful real estate agent who has helped many clients find their dream homes. He is a community leader and is involved in many charitable organizations. He is a role model for many young people who are interested in real estate.

Phil Chen is a top real estate agent in the highly competitive area of San Mateo County. He is a former professional skateboarder and has been featured in numerous magazines and TV shows. He is a successful real estate agent who has helped many clients find their dream homes. He is a community leader and is involved in many charitable organizations. He is a role model for many young people who are interested in real estate.

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