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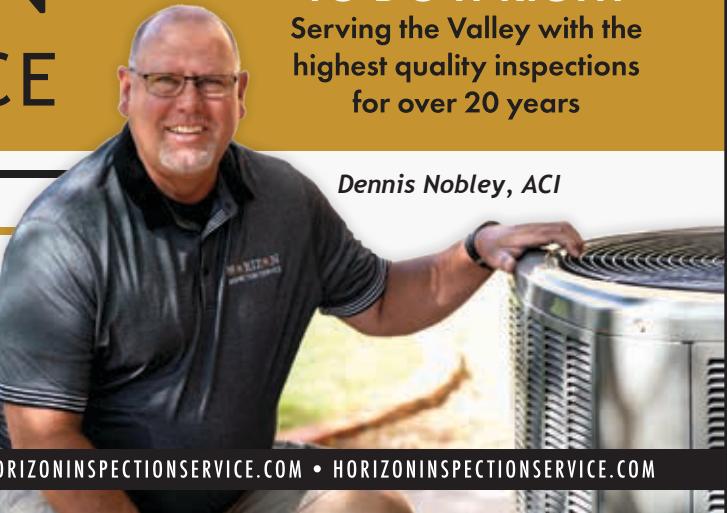
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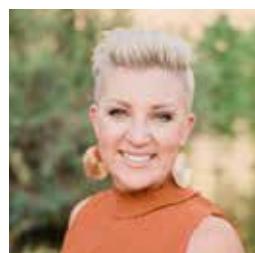
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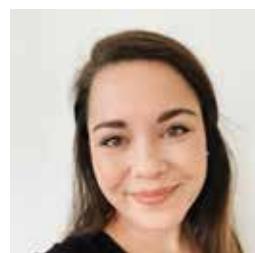
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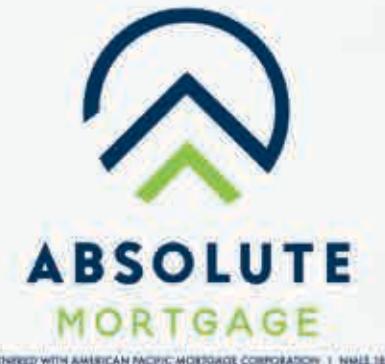
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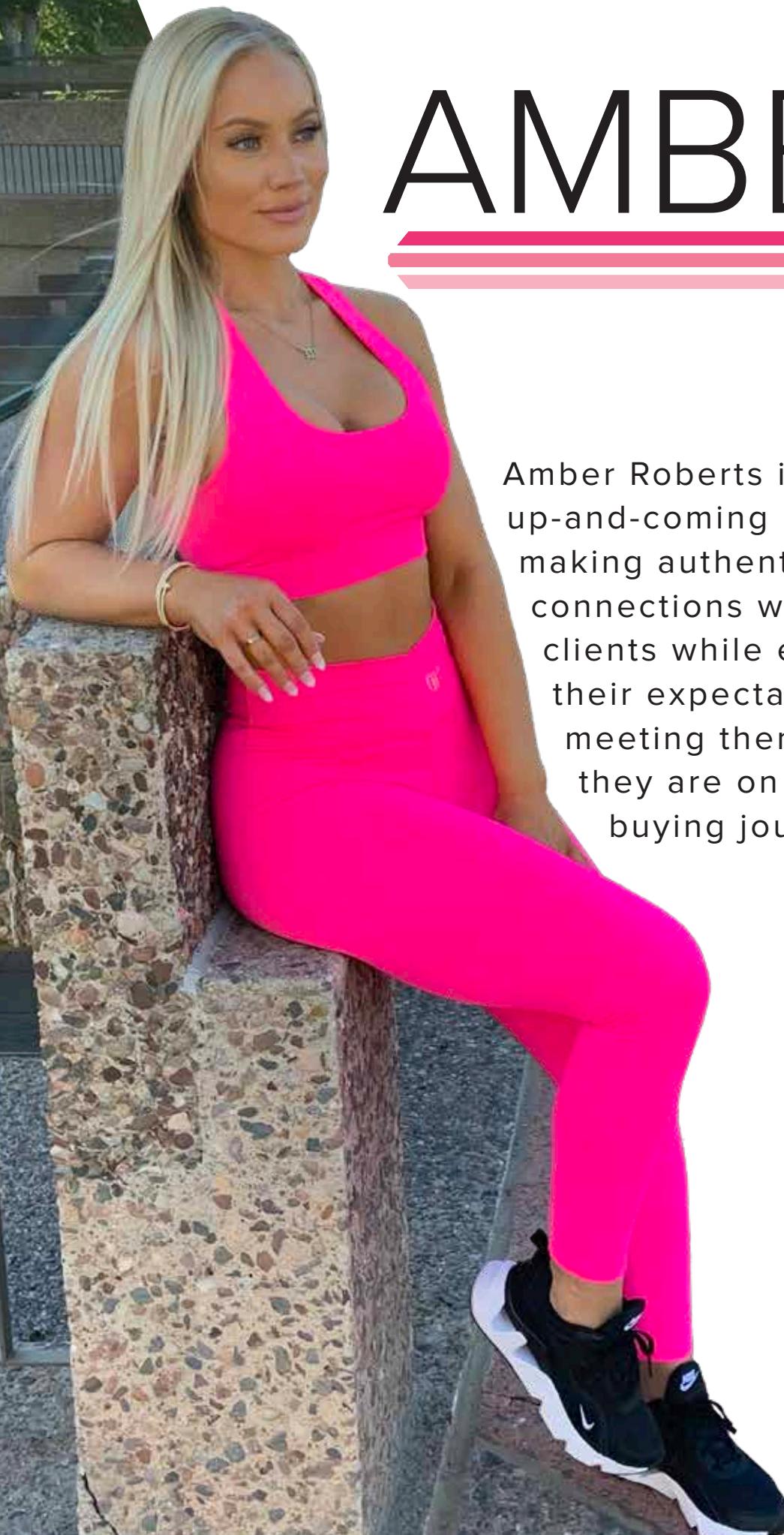


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► rising star

# AMBER ROBERTS



Amber Roberts is an up-and-coming realtor making authentic connections with her clients while exceeding their expectations by meeting them where they are on their buying journey.

## DREAMS FROM THE SMALL SCREEN

Even though Amber Roberts and I only talked for a short period, her genuineness was obvious. She's easy to talk to because she immediately feels like an old friend I hadn't talked to in ages. She has a clear, natural ability to connect with you, which makes me certain all the hype and recognition she's received over the last couple years is more than deserved.

One example of her authenticity is when I asked her what drew her to real estate in the first place. She paused before launching into the truth behind her intentions. "To be honest," she starts, then says with a laugh, "I love the show Million Dollar Listing." She was living in Los Angeles at the time and spent countless nights watching this series and something clicked for her. "I always thought it was so cool," she says. "And then I would drive through the hills of Los Angeles and see all these houses and the architecture. I mean, there are so many houses out there, so I was like, 'Well, I want to be like the people on Million Dollar Listing, so I jumped into real estate. Family wasn't in real estate. Friends weren't in real estate. I kind of just followed that show.'

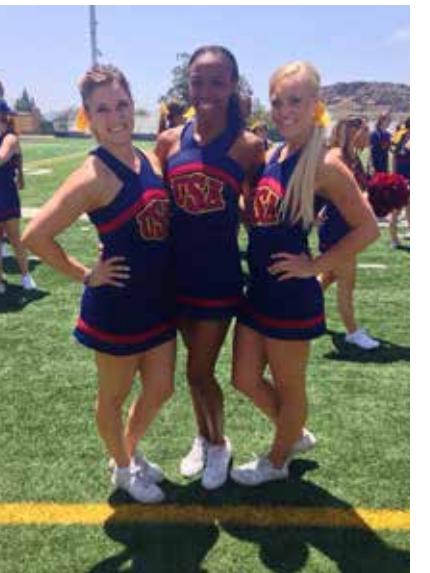
She admits all this knowing it's a little silly, but in the end, it's the true story of her beginnings in real estate and I can appreciate her honesty in telling us that.

## A CHEER, A FLIP, AND A TRAGIC EVENT

Amber was born and raised in Arizona, attending college first in Flagstaff and then transferring to ASU. She was a media communications major, looking to go into broadcasting for either sports or celebrity news, which is what took her to LA in the first place.

Starting in middle school and going through college, she participated in competitive cheerleading and gymnastics. I asked how these skills translate to being a real estate agent. "I feel like learning new skills within

cheerleading or gymnastics, how it's not going to be easy, and you just have to work at it until you master that skill," she explains. "Again, it's just putting in that hard work and knowing that nothing comes easy."



“ it's just putting in that hard work and knowing that nothing comes easy.

Photo by Red Hog Media

I don't want to go MIA on my clients or have them think I'm just trying to get the deal done. I'm there to help them and guide them through the process.



Photo by Red Hog Media

Hearing Amber talk, you can tell she has a deep understanding and appreciation for life. During her freshman year of high school, Amber's boyfriend was in a tragic bus accident while attending a snowboarding trip with some of his friends. Unfortunately, they all lost their lives that day and this event rocked Amber's world.

"To lose someone super close to you that early — I think that changed the way I looked at life," she tells me. "It was crazy, but it made me realize you need to love everyone as much as you can. I feel like even though it was a really hard moment in life when I now look back and think, 'As long as I can love everyone.' I can embrace those moments I have with people," she pauses for a moment. "I think it makes life a little more special."

#### AN AUTHENTIC SINCERITY

Amber brings authentic positivity to her business and yearns to make sincere connections with the people she helps sell and buy homes. Her overall goal in this industry is to bring a human quality to her work, essentially treating people like people opposed to numbers on a spreadsheet.

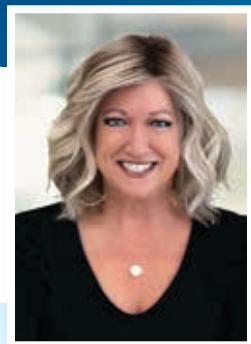
"I know real estate is very transactional and some agents just want to close the deal," she explains. "When I got into [real estate] it was Covid, so it was like, 'Should I even get into this business? Is it even going to be a good market?' People were thinking the world was going to shut down, so it was rewarding to help my clients fulfill their goals, as well as getting them top dollar for their home and making a smooth transaction for the buyers and sellers." When we get down to it: what's Amber's key to harnessing this success?

"It's being genuine," she says without having to think about it. "Understanding [your clients'] needs and helping them out through

the process. It's communicating with them, making sure they know I'm there working for them. I don't want to go MIA on my clients or have them think I'm just trying to get the deal done," she expands. "I'm there to help them and guide them through the process."



She's made strides in the last two years and doesn't show any signs of slowing down. "Now it's building my business whereas before it was a lot of leads that came through my brokerage," she says. "I'm branching off and using the referrals I got from those leads." Considering the drive Amber embodies coupled with her optimistic approach to life, the future is bright, and the road is wide open. She's more than capable of achieving all the goals in front of her.



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# DANNY KALLAY

## THE REALTOR WITH A KIND HEART

While I interviewed Danny Kallay, Courtney Hoover — his transaction coordinator and assistant — couldn't help but speak up about her boss's character. "[Danny's] been able to build a huge book of business just by being a good person," she says. "He's nice and he's persistent about staying in front of people he cares about and creating those relationships. I think that's been vital to his success."

Apart from being a good person, I wondered what magic Danny uses to make sales, and the answer surprised me because it's, well, not really anything else. "I'm not a pushy salesperson," Danny tells me, talking about his 25-year career. "I'm a relationship builder. I build relationships and I build trust." This core business approach not only brings him a lot of success, but also allows him to go to sleep every night knowing he's abiding by his principles.



“

**DANNY LOVES TO  
WORK. THE FUTURE IS  
THAT HE CAN DO THIS  
FOR YEARS TO COME.**

## NOT BUILT FOR SCHOOL

Danny dropped out of college after three semesters and immediately took the plunge into real estate, getting his license in 1998. He was upfront about his distaste for school, but when I asked if he chose real estate because he couldn't see himself tethered to a desk and wanted the freedom of meeting clients all over town, he was quick to correct my assumption.

"No, I have a learning disability. I have dyslexia, so school was hard for me. I spent my whole life in school trying to find a way to make it easier, so I'd build these relationships to have people help me," he explains. "In high school, I'd buy carbon paper and have someone take notes, then I would take one piece and they'd take the other piece," he continued. "I found ways around being bad at school by building relationships with people to help me out. And that just kind of grew — and not being afraid to tell people that I was dyslexic, getting over those fears of having people think differently of you." This skill in his personal life naturally evolved and grew as he got older, ultimately benefiting him so much in his professional journey.

## HELPING PEOPLE EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

Throughout our conversation, Danny continually pushed the spotlight away from him, telling me about how it's the people he works with that matter. In and out of a professional capacity, Danny is seemingly always willing and ready to help people in whatever way he can. A game he plays with himself is trying to connect people — if someone is looking for help with something, he'll wrack his brain for the perfect person to fill the role.

So, after talking for twenty minutes, I wasn't shocked to hear he has been an active member of the Chandler Compadres since 2014. "We raise money for a lot of the kids' charities in Chandler," he tells me. "Everything we raise we give away. It's 100% donated to the cause."



The Chandler Compadres organization hosts events throughout the year, raising upwards of two million dollars to give to local charities focused on helping children in the area. Danny also helps out with a huge soccer club. Three of his kids participate in competitive soccer — which feels like a full-time job in itself — but this organization has 25,000 soccer players to keep track of and help reach their full potential. This all speaks to his authenticity of helping others. Outside of his work, in his free time, Danny continually finds himself at the service of others.

#### A FAMILY AFFAIR

When Danny stopped going to college, he already knew what he wanted to do: real estate. His dad had been a new-home salesman for over twenty years at that point (in fact, he just retired five years ago, clocking in close to forty total years), so Danny grew up inundated with the business, getting an insider's look at the process.

“

**I FOUND WAYS AROUND BEING BAD AT SCHOOL BY BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE TO HELP ME OUT. AND THAT JUST KIND OF GREW — AND NOT BEING AFRAID TO TELL PEOPLE THAT I WAS DYSLEXIC, GETTING OVER THOSE FEARS OF HAVING PEOPLE THINK DIFFERENTLY OF YOU.**



There was just one minor hang-up: Danny didn't want to sit at open houses five days a week. He wanted to be out with people, getting to know his clients and building authentic friendships throughout his workday. Easy fix — his dad told him to skip the new-sales role and go into resell. When I asked about the future, Danny seemed to be at a loss. “I don't know, honestly.” Courtney piped in again. “Danny loves to work,” she says. “The future is that he can do this for years to come.” Even though we were on the phone, I could hear him crack a smile, knowing he agreed. Danny's daughter Abby is also following in his footsteps, having recently gotten her license. “She was born in 2001 and now she's joining the business,” he says. “She's very personable, she's very good. That moment of having my first kid and now she's working with me — it's pretty surreal.”

From his dad to him and now to his daughter, there's something special about when Kallays and real estate come together and it's no question that the future is bright.

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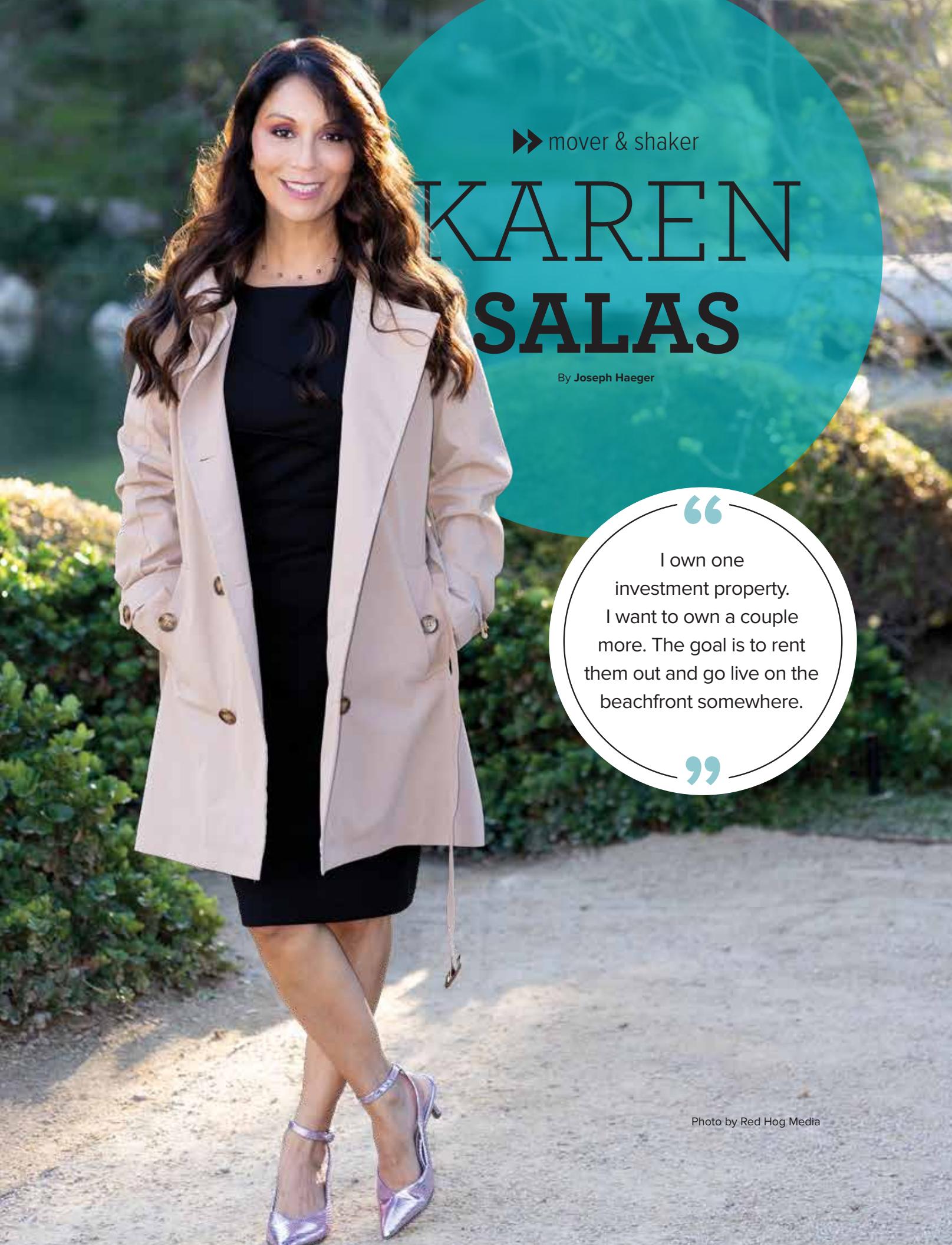
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## ► mover & shaker

# KAREN SALAS

By Joseph Haeger

“ I own one investment property. I want to own a couple more. The goal is to rent them out and go live on the beachfront somewhere.

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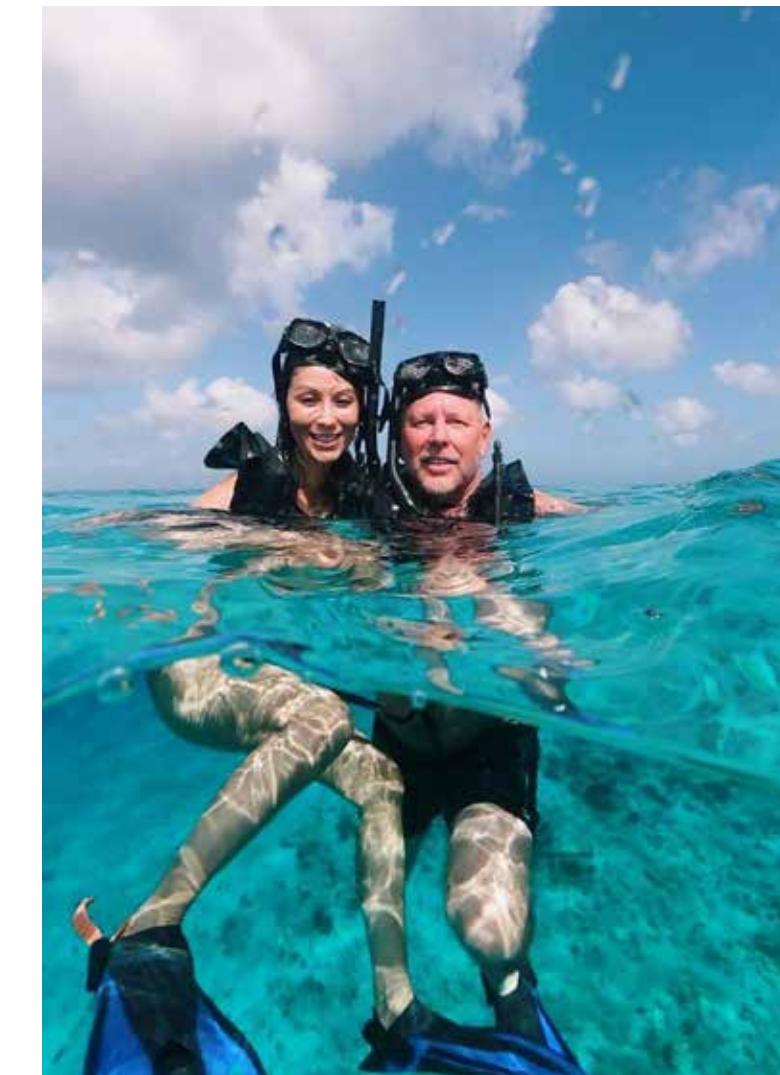
## MEETING KAREN SALAS

When Karen Salas first picked up the phone, she had such a warm and welcoming presence that I immediately felt comfortable talking to her. “It’s funny because when people see me at a social gathering, I’m very fun,” Karen says. “I love to dance and I’m not shy. I’m a good time. But I’m not fun when I’m working. I’m very serious when it comes to my business, and I demand respect when it comes to my sellers and my buyers. VIP all the way.”

Karen wants to exceed her client's expectations and even when things don't go their way, she wants them to trust that she has done everything possible for them. She is someone in their corner willing to fight for their interests no matter what.

## A SALES HISTORY

“I’ve always been in sales,” Karen tells me. She dropped out of college when she was promoted to catering manager after just three months of working as a secretary. From there, she worked for different cellular companies and a marketing company. Whatever her job has been, it has always involved working directly with customers. This all helped set her up for success within the real estate industry, but her stint in a retention center taught her the most important skill.



“[This] was the last place that they would go and at that point, we would do everything in our power to save their business,” she says. “They hated us and didn’t want anything to do with us, so I got to learn a lot of tools about being quiet. Let the person vent about whatever they’re upset about, agree with them that yes, they’re valid in being angry, and once you do that, it calms them down.”

Real estate clients generally don't get upset enough to cuss out their realtor, but this experience taught Karen how to set expectations, listen to someone's desires and concerns, and then help carve out a path forward with a level head. This experience taught her how to approach every situation with a level head.



## A PERFECTLY TIMED TRANSITION

In 2005, Karen realized that babysitters were raising her kids. No job was worth missing out on their childhood, so she started making plans to move careers. A friend of hers suggested real estate as a possibility, even taking her out for lunch with people in the business. The whole gig sounded so alluring that she got her real estate license without much thought.

"I'm so glad I made the change when I did," Karen says. "That was in May of 2005 and in November, my oldest son was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. We were in the hospital for a week. It was a life-changing experience," she continues. "After that, I had to be so involved in his life. It took up a lot of my time. I probably would've gotten fired if I stayed at my previous job because I would've had to miss so much work."



Looking back on it, this was a blessing, but at the moment, it was added stress. She wasn't only learning all about nutrition and food ingredients — she was also trying to learn and master a new career. And then in 2007, the market crashed.

The real estate business was showing itself to be a struggle, and Karen ended up having to take on another full-time job in 2011. This hurdle didn't stop her from continuing to renew her license and close a couple deals a year. She had a stellar foundation from the start, then continued to keep her skills sharp through a downturn, before jumping back in when the market got hot in 2016.

## LOOKING AHEAD

Karen has been with Majestic Realty Group for the last year. She loves working with them and is delighted at the company's dedication to elevating the real estate industry. "They're going to be disrupting the market with their technology very soon," she says. They've partnered with a prop-tech company to develop technology that makes the buying and selling process easier and more affordable for consumers.

Beyond that, Karen is hoping to retire in the next four years to enjoy life to its fullest. "I own one investment property. I want to own a couple more," she tells me. "The goal is to rent them out and go live on the beachfront somewhere."

Because she loves traveling so much, I'm sure that will also be a part of her post-work life. When I asked her if there was any specific place she wanted to visit she didn't hesitate. "Yes, there's a lot!" she exclaimed. "I still haven't seen the northern lights, the Great Wall of China. I want to go to Tokyo and Greece."

The world is waiting, and her dreams are on the horizon, but for the time being, she's thrilled to help others achieve their own dreams of getting into the perfect home.



I love to dance and I'm not shy. I'm a good time. But I'm not fun when I'm working. I'm very serious when it comes to my business, and I demand respect when it comes to my sellers and my buyers.



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# MATT ASKLAND



ALAMEDA MORTGAGE

## Matt Askland is a mortgage lender, leading a team at Alameda Mortgage Corporation with a focus on sharpening, preparing, and teaching the next generation of real estate professionals.

### GROWING A BUSINESS

Matt Askland has been a mortgage lender for 23 years, and over those two decades, he's picked up a thing or two. He's the branch manager at Alameda Mortgage Corporation and credits much of his success to the focus he puts into running his business professionally. "When

we structure and focus on what's important for the day, we're more effective on whatever that is," Matt says, talking about how he designates certain days of the week to specific tasks, like managing leads, database upkeep, and communication. This all ties back to creating a more efficient and nurturing business.



That's my approach: look at someone's business and ask, 'How can I make this better? How can I help elevate this? What's your weakness?'

### IT ALL STARTED IN NASHVILLE

After Matt graduated from college in Arizona, he moved to Nashville and started bartending. He spent five years there, and one of the guys he met early on suggested he get into the mortgage business. It was truly as simple as that.

When I asked him what the pitch was that initially got him interested enough to pursue this prospect, Matt told me there wasn't one. "Really no pitch at all. [The guy] said, 'Have you ever thought about checking out the mortgage business?'" And that was it. Matt was already looking for something to do long-term, as opposed to the bartending gigs he found himself at. He got hired at a company that recruited anyone with a college degree and worked his way through their training program.

"I've always been a math and numbers guy, and I enjoyed the training, so I stuck with it," he tells me. "The first two years I worked in what we call a re-fi shop, where you're hammering the phones trying to get people to refinance their mortgage. A couple of years after that, I realized I didn't want to just be doing refinances — I wanted to work with realtors and home buyers, so I got into the purchase world, and yeah, here we are."

### AN EARNED RESPONSIBILITY

For the first five years Matt was in the lending business he continued bartending for the added financial security. Eventually, he decided to throw his whole self into the business and focus 100% on the mortgage world. Even then, he was able to transfer skills he learned from the hospitality industry: "You learn how to deal with personalities, multi-tasking, and just becoming a people person," he says. He had a knack for the work and his business grew. He continually learned and carved out better paths for the people he employed. Now, Matt enjoys being in a coaching role for the up-and-coming generation.

"That's my approach: look at someone's business and ask, 'How can I make this better? How can I help elevate this? What's your weakness?'" he explains. "My approach that's different is finding the weakness in a realtor's business — and we all have weaknesses — and then seeing how I can improve on that."

It extends past the partners he works with too, hitting close to home. Matt spends time coaching his own team, helping them develop their own business approach while they, in turn, help support his. Taking it even another step further, Matt himself is in a program. "I'm actually professionally coached myself," he says. "I get coached by The Core — they coach realtors and lenders across the country. It was the program that gave me some structure and encouragement to build a team." The team aspect was a no-brainer because, throughout school, Matt found himself on the gridiron playing football. "I've always been team-oriented," he says. "Being part of a team and growing up in sports, it felt natural."

### ON THE HORIZON

During this moment in Matt's career, he's past the overbearing hustle that comes with the early days of breaking



into a new industry. He's far more concerned with the connections he's already made and focusing on nurturing them to their full potential.

"I want to continue to develop quality relationships that my team can help support and be able to do what I do and not work as hard," he explains. "I don't think I'm ever going to retire, but I'd like to spend my days continuing to coach and lead the younger generation. It's managing the business

I built, managing the relationships we have, and continue to have fun with those referral partners."

Matt has a great core base of business, and it feeds him in all markets. Above all, it allows him the ability to continue to teach young people, which ultimately makes the job more fun — and if you're dedicating your life to a career, the least you can hope for is a bit of fun while you do it.



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