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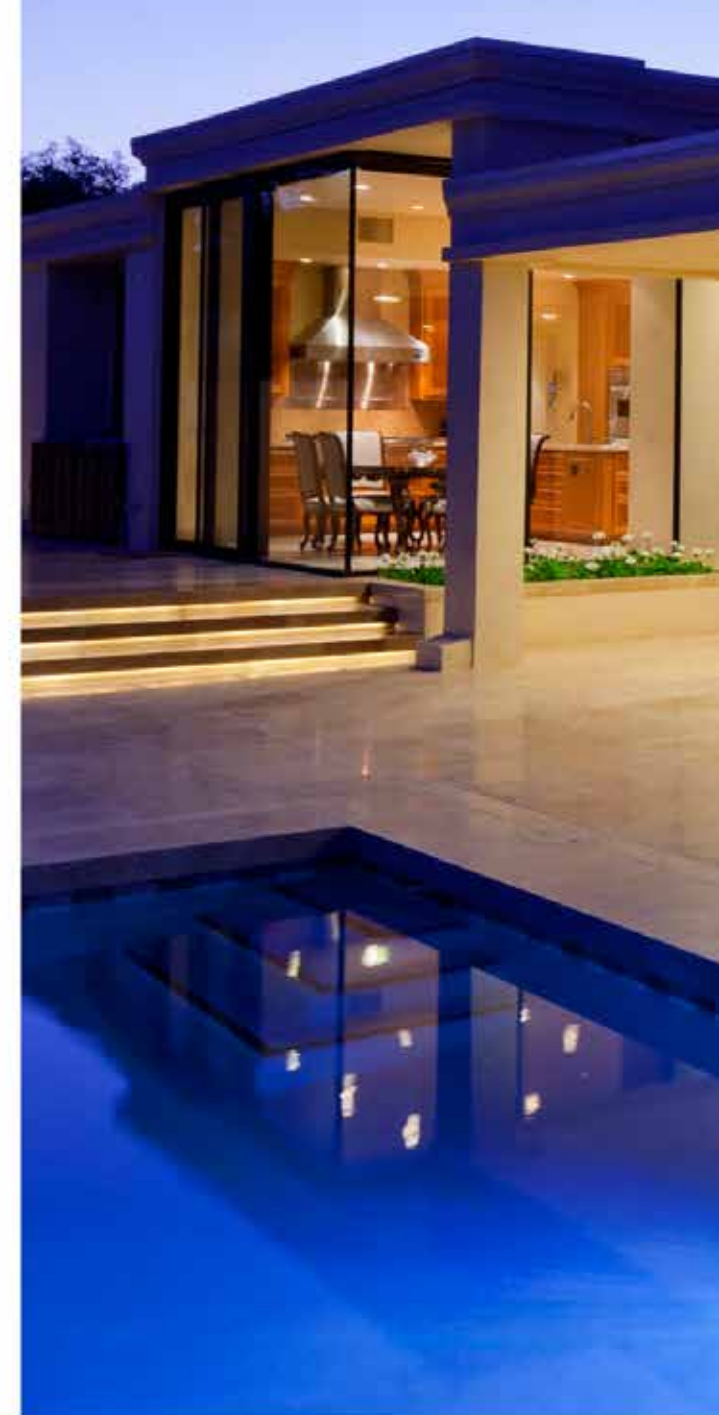








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If you are interested in contributing or nominating a REALTOR® for certain stories, please email us at Mitch@SiliconValleyRealProducers.com.

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▶▶ star on the rise

By Zachary Cohen



C

Christina

DAHRO

YOUR GLAM AGENT

Before becoming a real estate agent, Christina Dahro was a Regional Director for a medical aesthetics company, managing over 70 employees. She oversaw her #1 region in her organization and was fulfilled by her work. Yet, a challenging home buying experience in 2019 led her to reassess her professional path.

“I bought a house in 2019... and I had a horrific experience with my agent. I wanted to be able to build a life for myself and my future family, but also, I didn’t want consumers to go through what I went through,” Christina explains.

During her home buying experience, Christina’s agent never asked if she understood the process. She failed to take time to review disclosures or contingencies. Christina felt pushed, pressured, and even forced into buying a home. Her agent gave her terrible advice; he suggested that the repairs on the house would cost between \$30,000 and \$40,000; the actual cost was at least three times that amount.



“
When I say
I am The Glam
Agent, it means that
I want to make real
estate glamorous,
fun, and different.
”

“I don’t know where to begin,” Christina says. “At the time, I didn’t know any better. I thought it was normal. I remember balling on the phone because I didn’t want to buy the house, and the agent said that the sellers would sue me if I backed out. I had no idea what any of this meant. Zero.”

Christina’s awful real estate experience has turned out to be a blessing in disguise. She became familiar with local contractors, construction, and design. Soon enough, her friends began suggesting that she get into real estate sales. Christina was intrigued but hesitant.

“I was interested but scared because I was number one at what I was doing.”

However, when the COVID-19 pandemic descended on our world, Christina was shocked into action.

“I saw the world ending around me. I thought, ‘If not now, then when?’ I started studying for my test, and in April 2021, I quit my job. I decided to make a bet on myself.”

Making Real Estate Fun

Christina was licensed in July 2021. In her first year as a REALTOR®, she sold over 20 homes. Most of her clients have been sourced from referrals, social media, and working her farms. She has successfully leveraged her network as a Bay Area local and made extensive use of social media marketing campaigns. Christina has also had great success in getting top dollar for her clients, as 17 of her 20+ transactions in her first year were listings.

Christina has employed a unique recipe for success. First, she focuses on offering her clients the level of education, support, and integrity that she wishes she experienced while buying a home herself.

“I sit with people and explain the entire process from A-Z. I pull disclosure reports and go through every single report. I explain the contingencies. We make sure they understand and they are in agreement. I provide the red carpet experience.”

Second, Christina focuses on making real estate fun; she’s aptly known as The Glam Agent.

“When I say I am The Glam Agent, it means that I want to make real estate glamorous, fun, and different. I want people to understand the process, be comfortable, be knowledgeable, and really enjoy the home buying and selling process,” Christina explains. “For example, at my open houses, I offer beverages, Frank Sinatra playing, and custom cookies. I create a dinner party experience for potential



“
I’m a genuine,
honest, loving,
over-the-top
person. I am extra,
but that’s me.
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buyers to envision themselves hosting their family and friends. I’m all about the details. I am over the top, but that makes me who I am.”

As Christina looks ahead, she hopes to build upon her first year in the business.

“I don’t have enough hours in a day. I wake up early, hop on my emails, then it’s go-go-go,” she says. “I’m so busy; I’m working 12 to 13 hour days almost every single day. If I’m not working, I am learning. I never thought I’d be this busy. It’s a dream and a blessing. I knew I’d be great but didn’t know it’d be this soon.”

A Family-Focused Vision

Outside real estate, Christina lives an equally glam lifestyle. You’ll most likely find her with her dog, Poofy, wherever she is.

“He is my life, my entire world,” Christina beams. “He’s a white Chow Chow that looks and acts like a lion. My life revolves around him and his schedule. I make sure he’s the happiest dog alive. We go on walks, hikes, and he’s even in listing videos with me.”

Christina is Lebanese and enjoys taking trips to Lebanon, where her father lives. She lives a family-oriented lifestyle and aims to help everyone in her circle live their best life. Her heart to serve extends to everyone she touches.

“For my family and immediate circle around me — I want to see that everyone I love and care about is well, happy, and healthy. I want to keep encouraging them to be better. I want to see everybody win in my life. I’m a genuine, honest, loving, over-the-top person. I am extra, but that’s me.”

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Casey NGUYEN

“I’m fearless and goal driven. I truly believe that I can do anything I want if I really set my mind to it.”

dreaming big

Casey Nguyen’s dreams for success were born across the Pacific Ocean in Vietnam, where she was born and raised. Growing up in Vietnam, Casey lived a middle-class lifestyle. Her parents weren’t rich but worked hard to provide for their kids. Casey’s dad moved to the US when she was five, and she spent much of her upbringing alongside her mother, half-brother, and half-sister.

Education was highly valued in Casey’s household. Her mother stressed getting good grades. As Casey reflects, “only As were acceptable for her.”

“We weren’t living in a big house and didn’t have fancy things, but my mom always delivered,” Casey says. “We lived a good life.”

As she got older, Casey began to dream bigger. Her father was living in Sacramento, so at 17, Casey picked up her life and moved to California to start a new life. Shortly after landing in Sacramento, she relocated to the Bay Area to forge her own path ahead.

“In Asia as a kid, America is the land of opportunity. Everything is so fancy. Even candy tastes better,” Casey recalls fondly. “So, as a 17-year-old, yes, it was scary, but the idea was very exciting. I always had this sense that I’d relocate to America. When I got here, I had to adapt quickly. I had to grow up quickly.”

Finding Her Footing

Upon landing in California in 2005, Casey was tasked with rebuilding her life in an unfamiliar culture. She bounced from job to job before landing in the makeup and hair industry, where she settled in for four years.

By Zachary Cohen
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“
**You can work
really hard, but if
you don’t have a
strong mindset,
you’re not going
to get anywhere.**
”

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“It was a very good career,” Casey reflects. “But I had to work a lot, and the income potential was capped.”

Casey had big goals, and she realized that her career in the beauty industry wouldn’t help her achieve them. One of her aspirations was to help provide for her mother, who still lived in Vietnam.

“So I asked myself, what could I do to maximize my income with no ceiling? Two things came to mind — one was selling cars, and the second was real estate.”

As Casey assessed her two top options, it became clear that real estate was the better fit. The income potential was greater, and she was excited about the opportunity to build long-term relationships. So, in 2015, she got licensed and began her real estate sales career.

The Slow Climb

Casey struggled early in her career. After a short stint with a small brokerage, she moved to Intero, where she received proper training and guidance. But after a year on the job, she still hadn’t closed a deal.

“I worked every single day. I did everything everyone told me to do. I’d do open houses, cold call people, door-knock, but nothing seemed to be working, and I didn’t know why. In the past, I’d been so successful at everything I did, but in real estate, I felt like a failure,” Casey reflects humbly.

Casey didn’t give up. She took training courses and attended seminars. She got a real estate coach. She kept her nose to the grind, and slowly but surely, she improved.

Casey closed four homes in her second year and eight homes in her third. Year by year, she increased her sales volume until plateauing at around \$10-15 million for several years. In 2021, Casey took the next big leap in her business, nearly tripling her business to over \$30 million in volume. In 2022, she’s tracking to close over \$40 million, bringing her into the upper echelon of Silicon Valley REALTORS®.

How has Casey made such a dramatic shift? She credits coaching, perseverance, and the work she’s done on her mindset.

“The change has been all about mindset,” she says. “Mindset plays a big role in it. You can work really hard, but if you don’t have a strong mindset, you’re not going to get anywhere.”

2022 represented not only an increase in Casey’s sales numbers; her business made a 180-degree turn in buyer-to-seller ratio. In 2021, 85% of Casey’s business was sourced from buyers. Although she was very profitable, she was exhausted. So, in 2022, she shifted her marketing approach, and the results are impressive. In 2022, over 90% of Casey’s business was sourced from sellers.

“I make more money. I have more free time. It’s amazing,” Casey smiles.

Dreaming Big

Still in her mid-thirties, Casey has big dreams for the future. She and her husband, Collin, have been together for nearly a decade.

“We live a really grateful and blessed life. We have the ability to travel all over the world. We travel six to seven times a year to different countries,” Casey explains. “I love learning about culture, experiencing different cuisines, and meeting new people in different places.”

Growing up in Vietnam, Casey dreamed of living a successful life in the US. Now that she’s achieved that goal, she has her heart set on returning to her roots and living a simpler life in Asia.

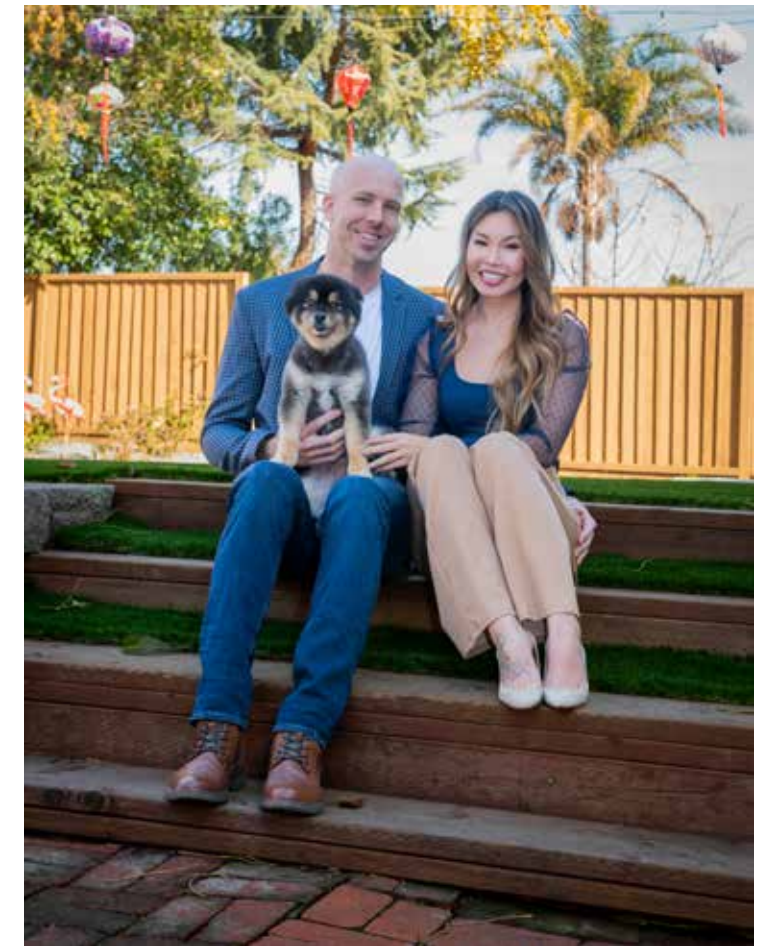
“When I was living in Vietnam, America seemed like it was so beautiful. The land of opportunity, right? For me to live here for 17 years, I love everything about our life, but we live a very stressful life. We make a lot of money and spend a lot of money, and we’re running on a hamster wheel. So my dream is to simplify. I want to start a nonprofit dog rescue in Asia and live more simply.”

As Casey and Collin travel the world, they keep their senses open to the location that feels right for their next big transition. Until then, Casey plans to keep doing what she’s doing – growing her real estate business, serving her clients, and rising to the top of the Bay Area real estate rankings.

“I’m very aggressive. I’m just 34, and my goal is to make that move by 40. By 40, I want to be completely financially independent.”



I’m very aggressive. I’m just 34, and my goal is to make that move by 40. By 40, I want to be completely financially independent.



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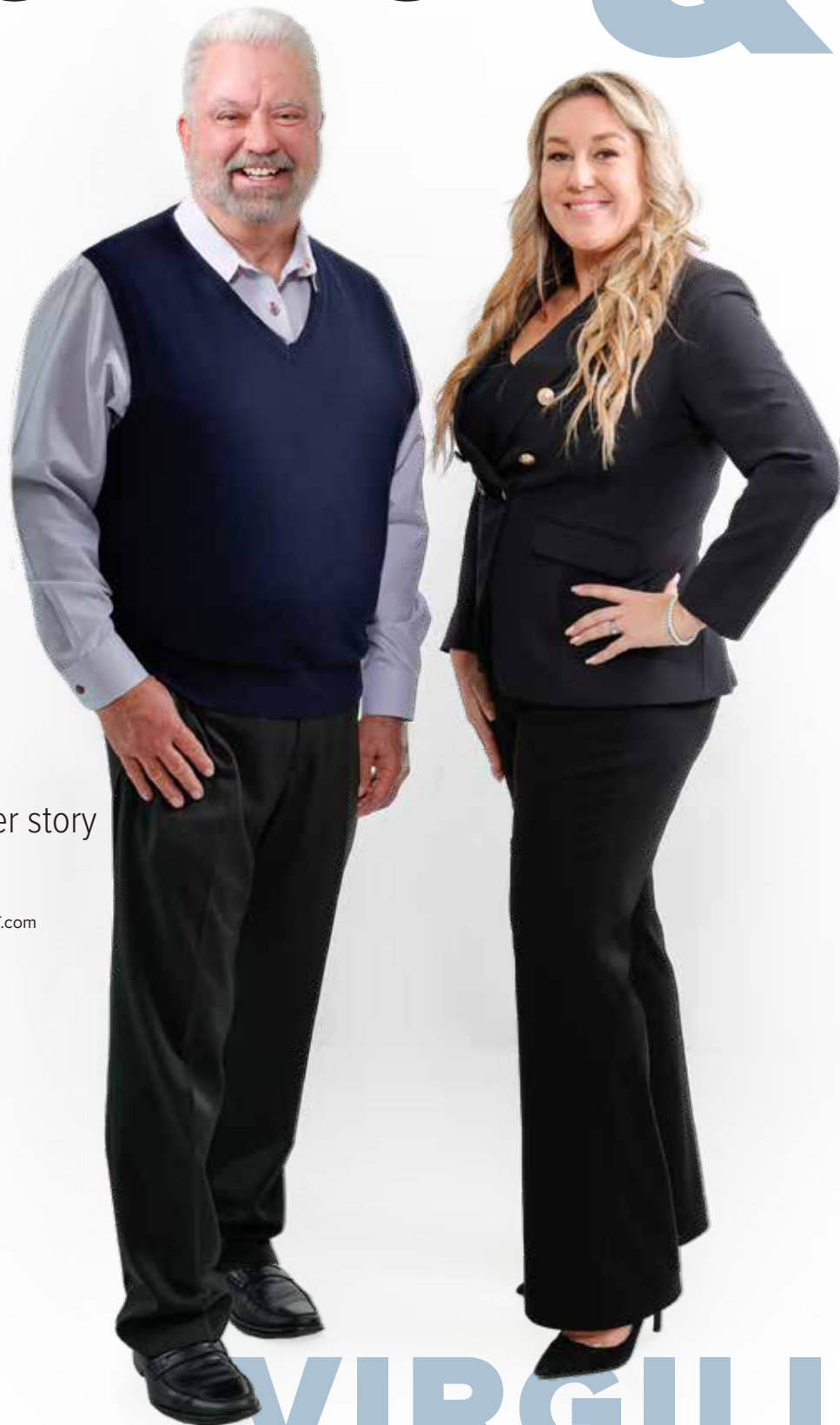
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QUINCY & NICOLETTE VIRGILIO



► svrp cover story

By Zachary Cohen
Photos By Teresa Nora
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relentless. committed. grateful.

Today, Quincy and Nicolette Virgilio are a thriving father-daughter team and team leaders of the Virgilio Real Estate Team. Together, they have come to be known for their relentless work ethic and commitment to their clients, as well as their market expertise.

Yet, Quincy and Nicolette live a life they could have only dreamed of 30 years ago.

Turning it Around

Quincy and Nicolette's story has a humble start. In the late '80s and early '90s, Quincy was struggling for direction in life. Nicolette was a young girl.

Quincy was a successful restaurateur for many years, but he left the family business on bad terms in 1987.

"1987 wasn't a great year," he reflects humbly. "I lost the family business, lost my marriage, and even lost my children for a few years."

For the next six years, he worked in the bartending world. One day, a client, Gale Christenson, offered him an opportunity to turn his life around.

"I ran into a wonderful man who suggested I get into the real estate business. Things weren't going so well at that time with family and financially. I was not doing well financially, working as a bartender, struggling to get my own life together. And along came Gale Christenson, a customer at the bar I worked at. He saw some potential in me and encouraged me to get into real estate, and it changed my life."

Quincy recognized the opportunity presented to him. He quit his bartending job to study for his real estate exam.

A New Path Ahead

Real estate not only proved to be a good match for Quincy; it helped him get his life back in order. At the time, Nicolette was just 11.

"My dad was a bartender with two kids in an apartment. It was incredibly brave for him to make such major changes in his life to not only impact the way his life would be but to give us a chance at a better life as well. I have ultimate respect for the ability to change his life and pave the way for us," Nicolette reflects.

"There was no such thing as failure," she continues. "It was going to work, and it did. He's created a beautiful life for all of us."

Quincy's drive and energy proved to be an asset in real estate. He remembers Gale advising him to make 100 phone calls each day.

Nicolette remembers being impacted by her father's commitment to success.

"He said, 'You make a hundred phone calls a day, and you'll make more money than you know what to do with.' I



“

We have been able to deliver an exceptional level of service to our clients by having systems in place that anticipate things that may go wrong.



In 2018, Nicolette returned to real estate alongside her dad.

“For me, it was a very scary thing to go from making great income on salary and sales with my eyes closed to no paycheck. It was scary, and it still is, but that helps me stay motivated and believe in myself.”

In the meantime, Quincy became a market leader, both in sales and organizational involvement. He owned his own brokerage for 14 years before moving back to a team model. He has served as the Chairman of the Board of the regional MLS, is the Past President of the Santa Clara County Association of REALTORS®, served as a Director for the National Association of REALTORS®, and served on many committees for the California Association of REALTORS®.

“It was all about giving back to the industry that gave so much to me.”

Stepping into the Future

Today, Quincy and Nicolette run the high-powered Virgilio Real Estate Team side by side. They have a strong support staff, which allows them to stay focused on executing for their clients and growing the business. They have been a top producing team every year since 2018 and were the number one team in their office in 2021.



thought, ‘If a hundred is good, two hundred is better.’ I put one hundred pinto beans in a jar, and for every call, I’d take one bean out. When they were all out, I’d put one bean in the jar after each call until all hundred were back in the jar. And I wouldn’t go home until they were all back in the jar.”

Becoming a Team

Nicolette started working in real estate just a few years after her father began his career.

“I got started in high school in 1997 when I was grounded,” she laughs. “That meant I worked 40 hours in real estate because I was always grounded. To go out at night, I would have to enter files, do loan processing, database work, and make calls. I knew the Mike Ferry scripts, using that same jar of beans.”

Nicolette found a liking for the business. She was licensed by 18 and joined her dad in business.

“I had banana yellow hair to try to make myself look older, thinking if I dressed like an older person, I could pull it off,” she laughs.

Diverging, Coming Together Again

Nicolette found success working alongside her dad, but she also desired her own path forward. So, after three years of selling real estate, she shifted gears and joined the title industry. She remained in title for 15 years, becoming a top producing sales agent.

Nicolette was wildly successful, but after over 15 years away from real estate sales, she desired a return to the sector she started in.

“I thought in my heart I was doing a disservice by remaining in the background. Truly what I was doing was training other real estate agents to be top producers when I had that top producer spirit in me the whole time.”



“

I feel so blessed. There is such an ability to create the life I want and still be a top producer.

“We have been able to deliver an exceptional level of service to our clients by having systems in place that anticipate things that may go wrong. All of our systems are set up to make sure every step goes as it should,” Quincy says.

“We have a relentless commitment to serve and empower,” Nicolette adds. “We are not agents that let things come to us. We dig and find and use every resource we have, and our clients feel that.”

As Quincy and Nicolette look ahead, they are preparing for an eventual transition. One day, Quincy will step back from the business, and Nicolette will take

over the lead role. But for now, they are focused on continuing to serve their clients, growing the business, and living a life filled with appreciation.

Quincy and Nicolette reflect on those years in the early ‘90s, when their family was struggling, with a sense of humbleness and also gratitude for what they have now. Nicolette even has her children, Taylor (12) and Blake (8), helping out with real estate tasks, just like she did at their age.

“I feel so blessed. There is such an ability to create the life I want and still be a top producer,” Nicolette smiles.



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I thought, ‘Maybe there’s a niche of people that want to work with someone that’s younger, has a lot of energy, is focused. I found that to be true. It can be a real plus. People like to work with that type of energy.’

JAMIES STEELE

Finding
His Niche

By Zach Cohen

“There wasn’t a pre-real estate time,” James Steele begins with a smile.

After graduating with a business degree from the University of Southern California, James packed up a Uhaul, moved back to the Bay Area, took his real estate test, and got to work. That was in 2009.

“I wanted to do real estate ever since I was in middle school or high school,” James reflects. “I would go to the precursor to the MLS, I think it was mls.com, and just print out listings, look at houses -- even in high school, from the comfort of my bedroom.”

James has always been interested in houses. He remembers buying books that had different floor plans. And while he considered careers in architecture or urban planning, he admits laughingly, “I don’t have an artistic bone in my body.”

“There wasn’t a story there, necessarily. Everyone in my family is either a lawyer or an educator. There wasn’t someone in the business that I knew, but it was something I was drawn to.”

James saw an opportunity to meet interesting people, fuel his love for houses and real estate, and learn the art of negotiation. In college, he had worked as an assistant to a commercial real estate agent, and by the time he graduated, he was ready to take the leap and head out to build a business.

Finding His Way

“I still get people that say I look young for the industry. I’ve been doing this for like a decade now,” James says. “But there was something that never really scared me about [being young].”

James always recognized the reality that real estate agents aren’t really in competition with each other for business. There are countless different types of people, personalities, and ways of going about business. James’s goal was to find the people that wanted to work with him.

“I thought, ‘Maybe there’s a niche of people that want to work with someone that’s younger, has a lot of energy, is focused. I found that to be true. It can be a real plus. People like to work with that type of energy.’”

Back in 2009 when James began his real estate career, he found mild early success. Yet, quickly, he realized he needed to find a specialization. With short sales and REOs hot, he dove in.





“At the time I got certified to handle short sales,” James recalls. “They were very difficult transactions and sometimes took nine months to complete. About eight or nine people in my office got certified, but I actively marketed in my office. So a lot of very senior agents would partner up with me. I worked really hard, got people out of very tough situations.”

“

In reality, we assume that once we reach the “there,” there will be this transcended moment of arrival. ‘Oh my god!’ But most of the time you wake like any normal day. I’d be lying if I said every day I wake up and recognize it... but you have to realize, we’re in a lucky spot.

As James proved his work to peers and top agents within his office, they began to trust him more and more with their referral business. “So I did a lot of really good things for people’s clients. Once you do a good job for people and those clients, I found that it all flowed word of mouth. When you can impress your peers, and they think you’re a stand-up guy -- that’s something I’m really proud of.”

Finding Balance

James is currently the #2 individual agent in his office, but when asked about awards or sales volume, he drew a complete blank. It’s not something he’s counting.

“I’m more focused on where I’m going. It’s more about progression,” James says.

Over the past decade, James has built a unique relationship with balance. He looks at balance not on a daily or weekly basis, but on an annual scale. When things get busy, and everything seems to be coming to life at once, he’s willing to work long hours to get the job done for his clients. And when the flow of the market slows, he takes time off -- not feeling guilty about his willingness to relax.

“For example, this spring I have not had a day off. I don’t think I’ve had a partial day off. That’s really tough



to maintain that degree of intensity year round. On a weekly basis right now I have no balance.”

“But then there are times where there is a natural breathe and take. I go to Coachella every year... in August my wife and I went to Japan for two weeks. I look at balance as an annual thing. I think with the reality of our industry trying to force a work-life balance on a weekly basis is not really feasible.”

With acceptance and flow, James leans into the busy times, and appreciates the slower days and weeks. “I embrace it,” James says.

Exploring the Differences

When he does find time away from real estate, James can be found with his wife

-- traveling, eating and cooking good food, or working out.

“My wife and I spend a lot of time figuring out where we’re going to travel to next. I love trying to learn as much of the language as I can before going to a place,” James says.

And, admittedly, he loves keeping track of local commercial development as a hobby, even though it’s not part of his professional life. It’s just like the days of buying books with floor plans or printing out listings from mls.com -- James continues to stoke the fire that is his true love for all things real estate.

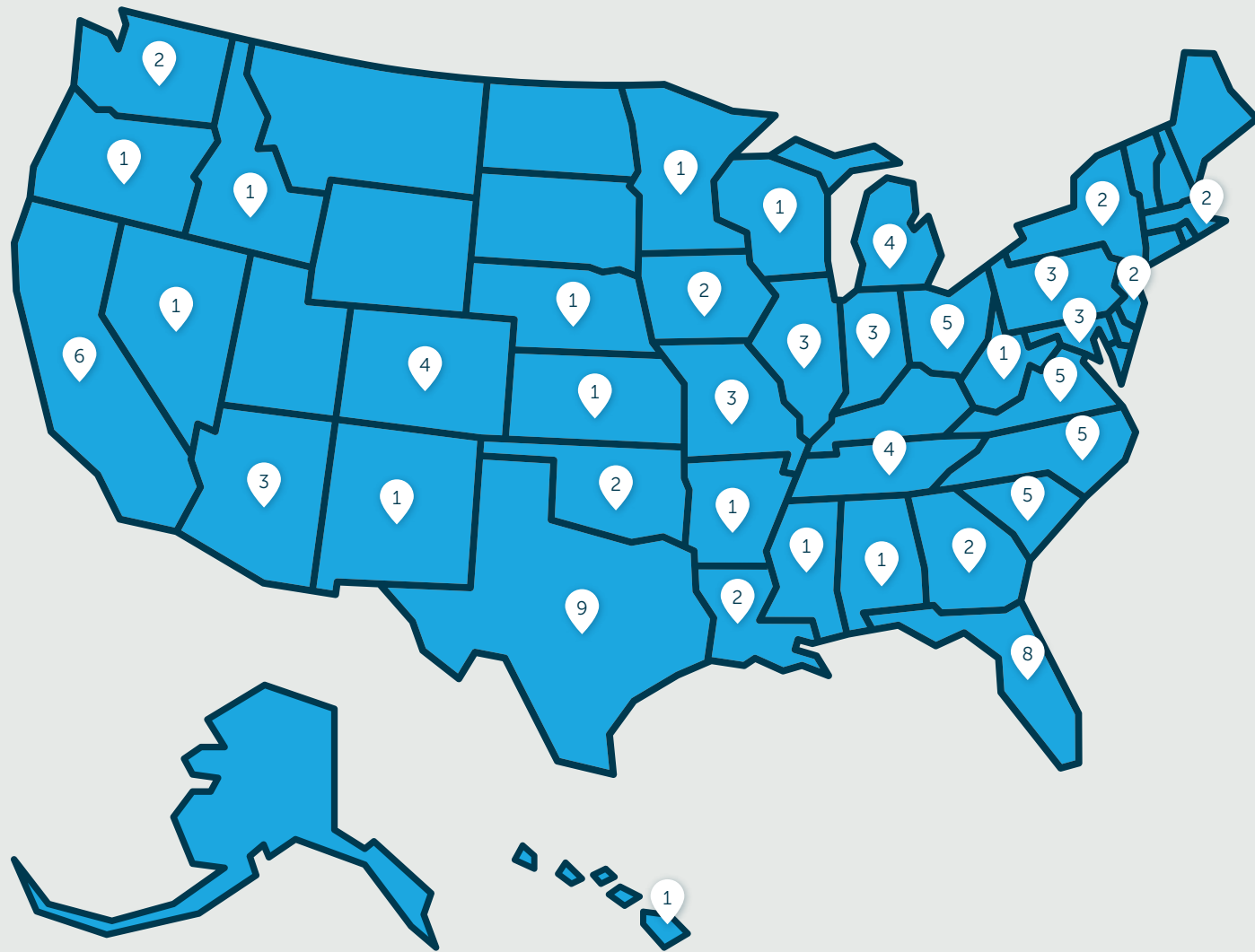
As he continues to find success in life and in business, James works hard to retain a grounded, humble outlook. He refrains from counting his paychecks in favor of doing right by his clients. He’s grateful when things are good and gentle with himself when he has a tough day.

“In reality, we assume that once we reach the “there,’ there will be this transcended moment of arrival. ‘Oh my god!’ But most of the time you wake like any normal day. I’d be lying if I said every day I wake up and recognize it... but you have to realize, we’re in a lucky spot.”



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Bathroom Remodeling Guide: *Dos and Don'ts*

By: F. Alcaraz Construction



► industry expert

As experts in the field of bathroom remodeling, we understand that the process can be daunting for homeowners. From the design stage to the final touches, there are a lot of decisions to be made. However, by following some simple guidelines, you can ensure a successful bathroom remodel that meets your needs and exceeds your expectations. In this guide, we will share the dos and don'ts of bathroom remodeling to help you achieve the bathroom of your dreams.

Do Plan Ahead

“The trick to making the renovation of your bathroom a success is solid planning, both in establishing what you want from the space and knowing what to ask your designer,” says Sarah Alcroft of Houzz UK Editorial Team. One of the most important things you can do before starting a bathroom remodel is to plan ahead. Determine what your goals are for the space, and what your budget is. Consider factors like the size of the room, the materials you want to use, and the overall style you are going for. With a clear plan in place, you can avoid costly mistakes and stay on track throughout the process.

Do Hire a Professional

While it may be tempting to take on a bathroom remodel yourself, we highly recommend hiring a professional. A professional contractor can provide guidance on design and materials, ensure that all necessary permits are obtained, and manage the entire process from start to finish. This will help ensure that the project is completed on time, within budget, and to your satisfaction. In San Jose, California, one of the leading contractors for bathroom remodeling is F Alcaraz Construction, with over 25 years of experience serving residents and businesses for their home and commercial remodeling needs. They are professional home and commercial remodeling contractors dedicated to maintaining the highest integrity and standards in the industry.

Do Choose Quality Materials

When it comes to bathroom remodeling, choosing quality materials is essential. Opt for materials that are durable, easy to clean, and resistant to moisture. High-quality materials will not only improve the appearance

of your bathroom but will also increase its longevity and functionality. Some popular choices include natural stone, porcelain tile, and glass shower doors.

Don't Forget About Storage

Storage is often an overlooked aspect of bathroom design, but it is essential for keeping the space organized and functional. Consider incorporating storage solutions like built-in cabinets, open shelving, and vanity drawers. This will help keep your bathroom clutter-free and allow you to easily access the items you use most often. “The key to keeping your new bathroom smart is having good storage, so think about what you'd like to keep in there,” Alcroft says.

Don't Skimp on Lighting

Lighting is a critical aspect of any bathroom remodel, but it is often overlooked. Good lighting can enhance the overall appearance of the space, as well as improve its functionality. Alcroft says, “Think about having different lights for different moods” consider incorporating a combination of overhead lighting, task lighting, and accent lighting. This will help create a warm and inviting atmosphere that is both practical and stylish.

Don't Overlook the Ventilation

Proper ventilation is essential in any bathroom to prevent moisture buildup and mold growth. When planning your bathroom remodel, make sure to include a high-quality exhaust fan that is appropriately sized for the space. This will help ensure that the air is properly circulated and that your bathroom stays fresh and dry.

Do Prioritize Safety

Safety should always be a top priority when it comes to bathroom remodeling. Consider incorporating features like non-slip flooring, grab bars, and a walk-in shower to help prevent accidents and make the space more accessible. Additionally, be sure to follow all necessary building codes and regulations to ensure that your bathroom is up to code and safe for use.

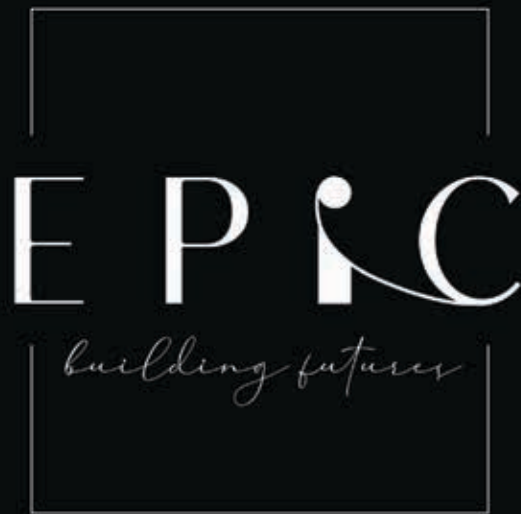
Do Consider Universal Design

Universal design is an approach to design that focuses on creating spaces that are accessible to people of all ages and abilities. When planning your bathroom remodel, consider incorporating universal design features like a walk-in shower, a comfort-height toilet, and lever-style faucets. This will not only make the space more accessible but will also increase its resale value and appeal to a broader range of potential buyers.

By following these dos and don'ts of bathroom remodeling, you can ensure a successful project that meets your needs and exceeds your expectations. Remember to plan ahead, hire a professional, choose quality materials, prioritize storage and lighting, and prioritize safety and accessibility. With these guidelines in mind, you can create a beautiful and functional bathroom that you and your family will enjoy for decades to come.



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