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Dear Real Producers of Naples,

As October arrives and the busy real estate season ramps up in Southwest Florida, we're not just shifting gears; we're entering the critical fourth quarter of 2024. This month offers a chance for reflection and anticipation, much like the journey of every top-performing Real Producer in our vibrant Naples real estate community. It marks our final push of the year, bringing renewed focus and energy as we assess our progress and prepare for a winning finish. October is a crucial time to consolidate our achievements and strategically position ourselves for end-of-year success, both professionally and personally.

With our inaugural Awards Gala just around the corner on November 8th at Elite Jets, let's seize this moment to recognize the exceptional efforts and results that define our industry. The gala will celebrate not only our business achievements but also the dedication and perseverance that drive us to excel in all areas of our lives. It's a chance to honor those who have set high standards and achieved remarkable success. If you haven't RSVP'd yet, check your inbox and do so ASAP. It promises to be an unforgettable night of glamour and celebration. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Let October be a time to reflect on our progress as we enter Q4. Take

advantage of the season's energy to drive forward and prepare for our major celebration. As we get ready for the gala, let's focus on finishing strong and celebrating our collective victories.

Here's to a successful October and a memorable Awards Gala that highlights the best of Southwest Florida real estate and the triumphs of our exceptional colleagues.

Very respectfully yours,



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» from the desk of the president

## COUPLED VERSUS UNCOUPLED COMPENSATION IN A POST-SETTLEMENT WORLD

By Gia Arvin, 2024 president of Florida Realtors

The REALTOR® universe is now two months into the landmark Settlement that saw the removal of compensation in the MLS, the mandate of written agreements with buyers before touring properties, and the need to ensure that a contract for compensation exists in each transaction to ensure a buyer representative is paid for their work in procuring a residential property for a buyer. As we all learn a new normal, we encounter several terms that we did not use before. Two, specifically, that keep popping up are “coupled” and “uncoupled.”

“Coupled” commission is when the seller typically pays a commission to their listing broker upon the successful sale of their home. The listing broker then shares this commission with the buyer’s broker who has represented the buyer in the transaction. This offer of compensation is what

used to appear in the MLS. Now, it is necessary to contact the listing broker for details on their offer of compensation if you bring a buyer and successfully close a transaction. Under the terms of the settlement, a buyer representative may only collect the amount agreed to by the buyer in the previously executed buyer representative agreement.

The other commission method is known as “uncoupled.” In this model, the seller and buyer each negotiate and pay their respective agent’s commissions separately. In most residential sales, the buyer will incorporate the payment to their buyer representative into their transaction by asking the seller to pay their buyer representative directly, either by a term of the sale or via a separately executed compensation agreement between the seller and the buyer’s brokers.

Florida Realtors has released a menu of forms to assist Realtors navigate this new space and free classes are offered online for anyone needing more information. In the event you encounter a transaction-specific question, the Florida Realtors’ legal hotline is available Monday through Friday until 4:45 p.m. at 407-438-1409. You just need to have your license number available.

We are so proud of our industry’s professionalism as we navigate our transactions following the Settlement implementation. We urge all Realtors to continue to cooperate professionally and remember to always conduct business in a manner that keeps the Florida real estate industry thriving.



Gia Arvin, broker-owner of Matchmaker Realty in Gainesville, is the 2024 president of Florida REALTORS®, the state’s largest professional trade association. She is active in her residential brokerage and is a leader in regional, state, and national real estate associations. Gia was the 2011 president of the Gainesville-Alachua County Association of REALTORS® and the 2017 Florida president of the Women’s Council of REALTORS®, among multiple other previous leadership positions.



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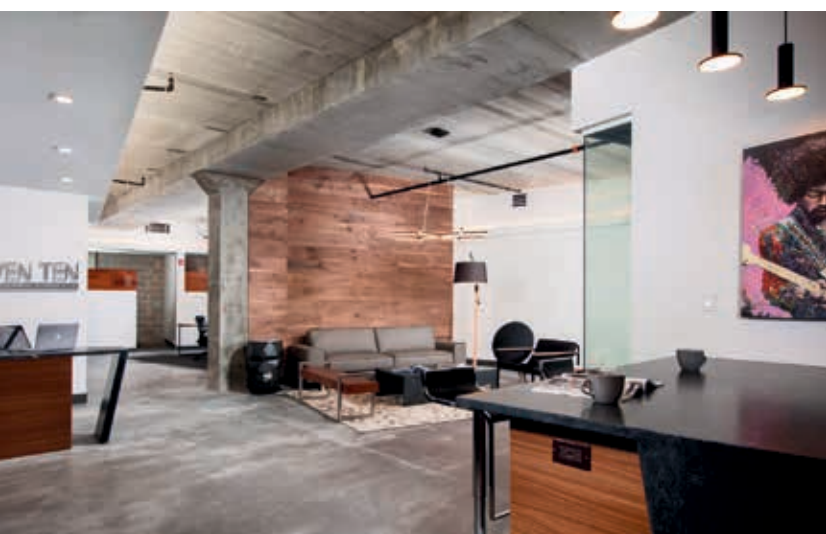
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# FINDING YOUR PURPOSE



Today, hopefully, I'm going to help you find your purpose if you haven't already found it. Many times, while having a conversation with an entrepreneur or a business owner, they share that they have a hard time finding their purpose. Why are they here? What do they stand for? When a coach says, "Take the weekend and write out your purpose," it's simply not that easy.

I was blessed and very fortunate to find my purpose. However, up until I was 54 years old, I didn't know my purpose. When I was looking at buying my coaching practice, I took a walk to filter through whether this was the right decision or not and, as I crossed the street, I had an out-of-body experience where the big guy — God — touched me on the shoulder and set me straight, providing some clarity on where I needed to go. That experience has impacted me to this day.

When I finished that walk, I went over to the statue of Mother Mary that was out in front of the church, put my hand on her head and said, "I wasn't looking for a sign, but if this is your sign, I'll serve." I realized, right then and there, that was my purpose. My purpose was to become the best I could be. To shine myself up to become my absolute best because I am going to be needed to help others down the road. That's when I bought my coaching practice. And it has served me well. Most likely the best decision I ever made in my life, outside of marrying my wife, Susan.

When defining your purpose, the first question you have to ask yourself is: What impact do you want to make? The impact I wanted to make was to help business owners get more from themselves, their businesses, and their teams to create freedom, abundance, and wealth so they could do what they want, when

they want, with whomever they want. That became my why — the impact I wanted to make.

So, number one, what impact do I want to make? Get clear on that. Write the answer to that question down. It could be with people, with the universe, in a certain industry — who knows? But what type of impact do you want to make?

When you get to that answer, start asking yourself where and with whom. Where do you want to make that impact? Some people like to go to the other side of the world and create missions in Africa, where they assist in the creation of clean water, schools, and churches, and where they take care of the underprivileged. That clarifies where they want to go and who they want to impact. For me, I wanted to have an impact on business owners, teams, CEOs, and leaders of organizations.

Once you get your where and your who, then you can ask, how? How am I going to impact them? And that's where you begin to create a plan — the strategic plan of what needs to happen for you to be able to make that impact. However, most importantly, to get clear on your purpose, get clear on your "why." Why do you want to make an impact on those people? Now, we could be selfish... We just want to feel the juice of helping others. But that's not selfish. That's a win-win, and that's essentially why we're here.

To get clear on your purpose, you figure out why you want to make an impact, where you want to make an impact, and on whom. As you begin to come up with the answers, you will find your purpose.

The other indirect benefit of this process is huge: we get stuck when we make it about us. What we don't have, who said no ... whatever it may be. When we don't get what we want, we may get stuck and stay stuck because we've made it about us. However, when you put yourself out there to help others get what they want, Zig Ziglar said it best: "You can have everything in life you want if you will just help other people get what they want."

When you are in a place of gratitude and abundance and focus positively in ways that resonate with you, including putting yourself out there to help others get what *they* want, you can discover your purpose and, in doing so, often find you'll get what *you* want.



Coach Michael Dill is an award-winning, certified business coach, global speaker, and published author. He is a proud ActionCOACH franchise partner, as well as the president of Power & Ice Wealth Creation, a strategic leadership company. Michael brings more than 40 years of business and entrepreneurial experience to his leadership, team training, and mentoring practice. To learn more, visit [BusinessCoachMichaelDill.com](http://BusinessCoachMichaelDill.com).



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## PRIORITIZE LIKE A PRO WITH THE BIG ROCKS THEORY

By Carlene Marie

**Picture this:** It's 7 a.m. and your phone is already buzzing with messages. A new listing just hit the market, clients need updates, and your calendar is packed. The day hasn't even fully begun and you're already feeling the pressure. In the midst of this chaos, it's easy to lose sight of what's truly important. But what if the key to thriving in this high-stakes environment is not doing more, but focusing on the right things?

Stephen R. Covey's "Big Rocks" theory offers a powerful framework for prioritizing what truly matters. Covey wisely said, "The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities." This principle is a game changer, especially for a high-performer who juggles countless tasks daily.

### WHAT ARE YOUR BIG ROCKS?

Imagine a jar representing your life or work schedule. The big rocks are the essential tasks or goals that, if accomplished, will have the most significant impact. The smaller pebbles and sand represent the less important tasks that often fill up our days. The key to effective time management is to place the big rocks in the jar first, ensuring they take precedence over the smaller, less critical items.

These big rocks might include securing high-value listings, nurturing key client relationships, investing in professional development, or even dedicating time to self-care to sustain long-term success. The smaller pebbles could be administrative tasks, attending less critical meetings, or responding to non-urgent emails. By identifying and scheduling your big rocks first, you ensure that your most important tasks are prioritized and completed.

### IMPLEMENTING THE BIG ROCKS THEORY

To begin implementing this approach, start by identifying your big rocks for the week. What are the tasks that, if left undone, would significantly impede your success? Write these down and make them the focus of your daily schedule. I call these your MVPs — Most Valuable Priorities.

Next, commit to a daily routine where these big rocks are addressed first thing in the morning, before the day's distractions take over. This practice aligns with one of my core Mindpower coaching principles: Mastering your morning sets the tone for mastering your day. By tackling your most important tasks early, you set a productive momentum that carries you through the rest of the day.

### OVERCOMING OBSTACLES: A CLIENT'S STORY

One of my clients, a top-performing REALTOR®, often found herself caught in a cycle of organizing her workspace and catching up on minor tasks before she felt "ready" to tackle her main priorities. This routine felt productive and busy, but it was, in fact, a form of procrastination. She was delaying diving into the core activities that would drive her success, like nurturing client relationships or strategizing for high-value listings. When she recognized this pattern, she began to implement Covey's Big Rocks theory. She identified her most crucial tasks and scheduled them as non-negotiable priorities. By focusing on these big rocks first, her productivity soared, and she felt more accomplished and less stressed.

### THE TAKEAWAY

Incorporating Covey's Big Rocks theory into your daily routine can dramatically enhance your productivity and success. By focusing on what truly matters and making intentional choices about how you spend your time, you can achieve more with less stress.

Take five minutes today to identify your big rocks. Write them down, schedule them in, and commit to tackling them first thing tomorrow. Make this a daily habit and watch how your productivity and sense of accomplishment skyrocket. Success isn't just about how much you do; it's about doing what truly matters.

Prioritizing like a pro isn't about squeezing more into your schedule. It's about creating space for what really matters, where every moment counts to set you apart and lead to your remarkable success.



Carlene Marie is a Certified Master Mindpower Coach and Certified Health, Wellness & Life Coach. She specializes in private and group coaching, keynotes, workshops and publications helping high performers cultivate mental toughness and emotional resilience. With extensive expertise in unlocking human potential, Carlene Marie's programs empower and guide toward lasting change for optimal success in every area of life. [CarleneMarie.com](http://CarleneMarie.com) | 513.383.5647

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►► featured agent

By Zachary Cohen  
Photos by New Frame Photography

# DIRK FISCHER

GOODBYE  
DEUTSCHLAND

While living in Germany, where he was born and raised, Dirk Fischer began watching the television show *Goodbye Deutschland!* This popular series followed Germans who left the country in search of greener pastures. It also provided Dirk with his first introduction to life in Southwest Florida.





“Often, I saw things from Cape Coral. For a German who was exposed to 300 cloudy and rainy days, Cape Coral looked fantastic — palm trees, canals, and sun,” Dirk explains. “I tried to convince my wife for five years to leave Germany and live here.”

After several years, Dirk’s wife agreed to take the trip across the Atlantic to explore the U.S. Naturally, Cape Coral was their first stop. What began as a long, extended vacation in Southwest Florida quickly became more. Dirk and his wife fell in love with the weather and lifestyle of the area.

Meanwhile, Dirk was tasked with restarting his career in America. He ran an international trading company and sold real estate in the western part of Germany, but in the U.S., his first break came in an unlikely field — photography.

“By coincidence, I met Stuart Dunkin, the owner of Dunkin’s Diamonds. I had a passion for photography, and I showed him a few photos I took. He liked it so much he hired me to take photos for his next advertising campaign,” Dirk explains.



Dirk Fischer founded Fischer Realty Int. LLC (doing business as 5th Homes LLC) in 2015.

“  
**I GET THE  
JOB DONE.**  
”



That work quickly expanded into a full-blown video production company, which ironically led Dirk back into real estate. As he got more connected in the area, he started getting hired by real estate agents to provide photos and videos for their listings.

“That reignited my old passion for real estate,” Dirk shares.

In 2013 — five years after moving to Florida — Dirk got his real estate license. In 2014, he relocated to Naples, where he’s been ever since.

Fast forward 10 years, Dirk is thriving in real estate and has had many big wins along the way. He was even featured on *Goodbye Deutschland!* three times from 2014 to 2018. His biggest success, however, is the founding of Fischer Realty Int. LLC (doing business as 5th Homes, the brokerage he started in 2015).

“I wanted to fix everything I saw was wrong in the industry,” Dirk explains. “Many brokers exploit their agents and don’t provide enough backup in terms of tech and office support. I wanted to give my agents something better. That was my motivation.”

Dirk has a unique model at 5th Homes. Every agent takes home 100 percent of their commission. Meanwhile, Dirk continues actively selling; he averages around \$15 million per year. The brokerage has 10 agents, many of whom have been with him for years.

“I’m very specific when I’m hiring,” Dirk continues. “We have an office culture of friendship and mutual respect. There are people from seven different countries. We speak nine different languages. My firm has multiple brokers who could easily open their own brokerage. People are here because they want to be here.”

Dirk's approach to selling real estate is just as unique. While many agents take a relationship-focused approach, earning their way into their clients' inner circles, Dirk prefers a professional, transactional take on the business.

"I get the job done. I'm very transactional. I may not be as much fun as others," he says frankly. "But I do focus on providing a stress-free experience for my clients and on getting them the best results, without imposing on their personal lives.

"The way I see it, when someone hires me as an agent, they have professional expectations. They are not looking for a new friend or a new family member, so I focus on over-accomplishing what is expected of me. If a friendship develops down the road, then that is a good thing. And that's what works for me."

**FUN**  
**FACT**

Dirk Fischer is still passionate about photography and videography. He reviews cameras, lenses, and other gear on YouTube in his free time. "I don't make money on it. I do it because I thoroughly enjoy it, and it balances my real estate life."



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» partner spotlight

By Zachary Cohen  
Photos by LaCasaTour



# BUTCH BACON

## DOMINION CONTRACTING GROUP

Construction has long been a part of Butch Bacon's life. He's held his general contractor's license since getting out of the U.S. Marine Corps in the early '90s, but his experience in construction dates back even further. His father was an electrical contractor, and many of his father's friends were builders, framing contractors, plumbers, and HVAC experts. By the time Butch was in high school, he was spending his summers working in the trades.

After a four-year stint in the Marine Corps, Butch re-entered the construction world. He spent a decade with a local home builder before founding Dominion Contracting Group in 2009. Over the past 30-plus years, Butch has supervised the construction of over a thousand single-family homes, along with countless extensive renovations and remodels. That experience has made Dominion Contracting Group one of Southwest Florida's most well-respected contracting brands and a go-to resource for anyone who is looking to sell or has recently purchased a home.

The last few years have been a wild ride in the real estate world. When COVID-19 struck in early 2020, many predicted the market would crash, but what followed was exactly the opposite. The real estate market accelerated, and so did home renovations. While people were stuck at home, they took on more home improvement projects than ever. In a way, that was good for Dominion Contracting Group, but it also caused stress. Materials were expensive and hard to come by, as was good labor.

A STEADY HAND

“Over the past two years, the industry itself has changed so much. With COVID and what followed, it was a tough time with manpower, staffing, employees, and having the right guys on the team so we could still get stuff done and deliver the best quality. We were lucky to be able to find the right team to put out a near-perfect product,” Butch says proudly.

Butch credits his time in the Marine Corps with helping him develop the tenacity needed to get through tough times. During his time in the service, he developed discipline and a detail-oriented mindset that has allowed him to stay on top of things even in the most difficult of times.

“We stay focused on striving for perfection, because if you’re not shooting for perfection, what are you intending to do?” he says.



**A FAMILY FOCUS**  
Beyond his professional achievements, Butch’s commitment to excellence extends to his family life. Butch and his wife, Lori, have three children: Jake (17), Emma (16), and Asher (13). All three are standout athletes, and Emma and Asher are national champion wrestlers.

“My goal as a parent is to make sure my kids have the tools for success in life so they can build their own lives and futures,” Butch says.

**BACK TO BUSINESS**  
Now, as the market settles into a new normal, Butch and his team are settling into a new groove too. The slower times have allowed him to give more of the hallmark, customer-focused experience he has come to be known for.

“It’s great to be able to take our time and work alongside the homeowner and their designers,” Butch says. “REALTORS® sell and designers design and builders build. When we all stay in our lane and do what we are good at, it flows. For the business, our goal is always to provide a quality product at a reasonable price with customer service that can’t be matched.”

*Dominion Contracting Group offers residential and commercial remodels and renovations, including kitchens, baths, flooring, and paint. For more information, please visit [www.dcgswfl.com](http://www.dcgswfl.com).*



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# NATALIE PEREZ-BENITO

NATIVE ROOTS

Over the past few decades, the population of Southwest Florida has ballooned. People from all corners of the world have flocked to Collier County to enjoy the region's marvelous beaches, pristine waters, and carefree lifestyle. The population growth has brought in countless blessings, but it's also made Naples natives something of a rarity.

Natalie Perez-Benitoa is one of those Naples natives, and she is immensely grateful for the opportunity to grow up here.

"I'm a unicorn, as they say," she says with a laugh. "Growing up here was awesome. I did not have the experience of trying to get away from the place I grew up. I loved everything about my childhood — the friendships and the lifestyle I was spoiled to have. It's paradise. I'm so lucky to have grown up here."

Natalie's father is a local family law attorney, and her mother is an art



teacher at Naples High School. They taught her the power of discipline, working hard, having an open mind, and being creative.

As she got older, Natalie's ambitions took her away from Naples for many years. She spent four years in New York, where she attended a performing arts college, began her acting career, and worked in hospitality. She then moved to Los Angeles, where she pursued an acting career in earnest.

"Along the way, I formed a sense of self and learned that building relationships is not only the key to business but to fulfillment. I learned that from auditioning and waitressing," Natalie shares. "My favorite gigs were comedic — something to make people laugh and relate. I wanted to provide an experience for people."

Natalie always sensed she had a desire to be an entrepreneur, but

▶▶ rising star

By Zachary Cohen  
Photos by LaCasaTour



she wasn't sure how her entrepreneurial journey would unfold. When COVID-19 struck in 2020, however, her dreams were fast-tracked. She was living in a studio apartment in Los Angeles when the world shut down. Stuck in California, she knew she was ready for a change. That's when she turned to real estate.

"Everyone told me I was crazy because real estate was a saturated area, but I was an aspiring actress in LA, so I know a thing or two about saturated markets," Natalie quips. "So I took my test and hit the ground running."

"I always knew I had a knack for entrepreneurship, but I didn't know how it would work until real estate came along. I finally had a product to market, be creative with, and tell a story about."

Natalie was licensed in early 2021 and joined Compass the following year. In 2023, she closed 18 transactions for \$7.5 million, putting her in the upper echelon of Southwest Florida agents.



Rising Star Natalie Perez-Benitoa is a Realtor with The Bowers Group at Compass.

Some of the keys to Natalie's success have been her work ethic, her local knowledge, and her ability to leverage social media. She works with honesty, authenticity, and the lightheartedness that helped her become a great actress when she lived in Los Angeles.

"Real estate is a transaction that people make. It can be so tech-driven, but this business is still people-to-people. Showing honesty in social media is a tool I think we need to use," Natalie shares.

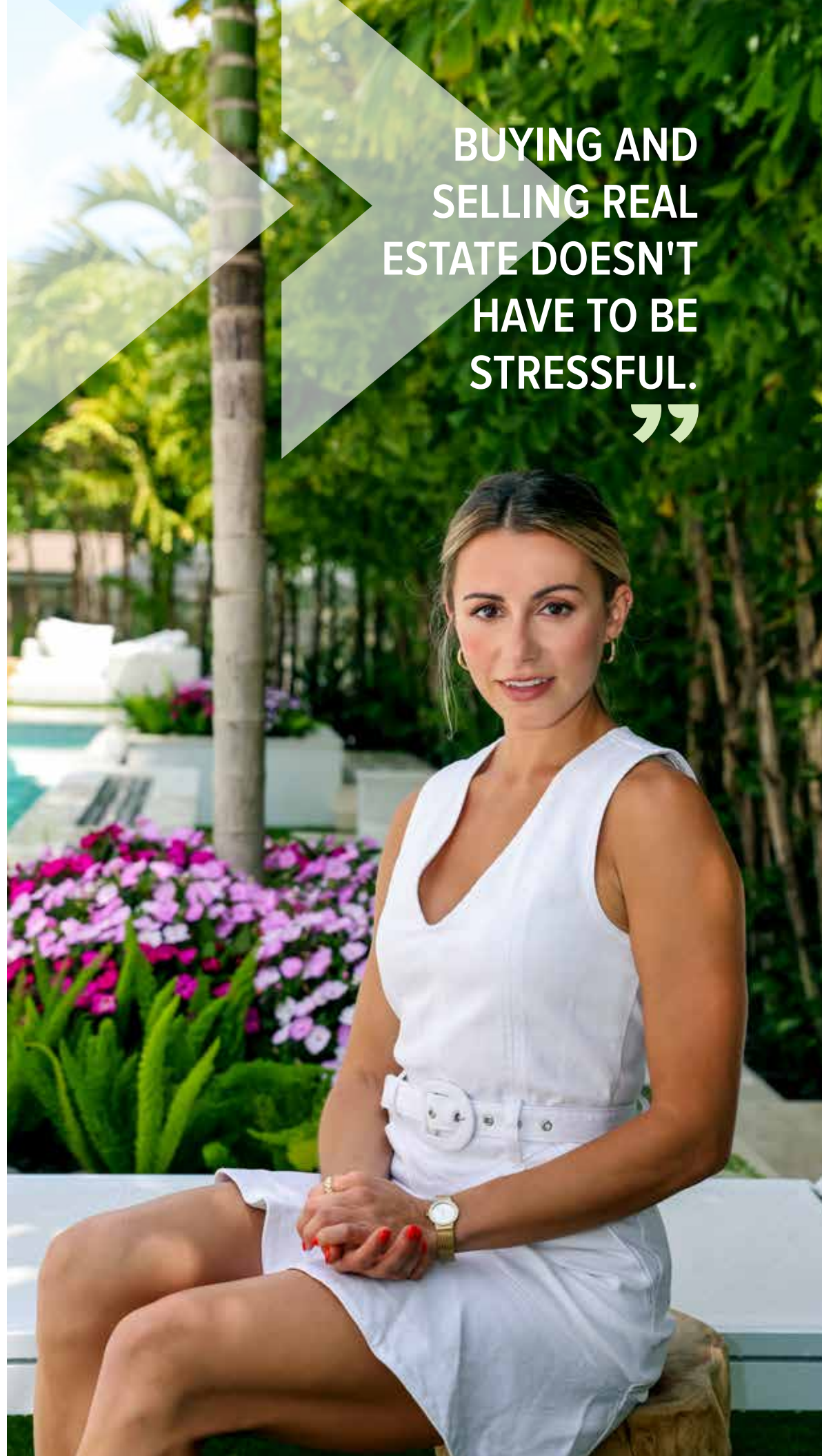
"Another key to my success is having self-awareness and making that a priority in my daily life."

As she looks ahead, Natalie aspires to find ways to bring her creative side into real estate. She currently co-hosts, produces, and edits a podcast, *Everybody Loves Naples*, and dreams of running her own show on HGTV one day. But for the time being, she's keenly focused on being the best real estate agent she can be.

"Buying and selling real estate doesn't have to be stressful," she says. "This can even be fun, and I think I have the tools to make that happen for people."

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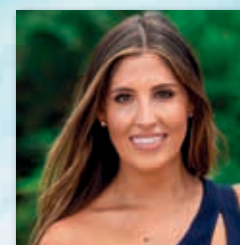
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By Zachary Cohen | Photos by New Frame Photography

# JIM BOATMAN & ERNIE RICCI

BOATMAN RICCI

**“To practice law with excellence for the blessing of others and advancement of the Kingdom of God.”**

This is the mission statement of local Naples law firm Boatman Ricci. A full-service legal boutique with commercial litigation and real estate law at its core, Boatman Ricci was founded in 2007 by Jim Boatman after nearly a decade of work in the legal industry.

## The Birth of a Vision

Jim is originally from Central Florida and graduated from Florida State University in 1997. After completing his law degree, he steadily built his practice, working his way up from law clerk to associate, eventually becoming a seasoned litigator.

Jim saw the good, bad, and ugly sides of many law offices. That inspired him to build something unique — a firm that sought to make truth paramount and honor client-attorney relationships. Armed with a laptop and a rented cubicle, he founded what was initially known as The Boatman Law Firm in 2007 with the slogan “Truth Guided, Relationship Driven.”

Jim and his young law firm assisted many Naples residents in fighting foreclosures during the 2008 economic crisis while providing other transactional and litigation services. Building his network and capacity to bring in new casework meant he could purchase office space along Airport Boulevard in 2013, which became the first among four current Boatman Ricci offices (Fort Myers, Marco Island, Tallahassee, and Destin).

## Ernie Joins the Team

Meanwhile, Jim’s soon-to-be business partner, Ernest Ricci, was beginning his legal practice. Born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and a graduate of Dickinson College and the Ave Maria School of Law, Ernie received his license to practice law in Florida in 2012. He would spend the next few years clerking under various judges in Naples, Fort Myers, and Charlotte County until an advert looking for an associate attorney on a Christian job site led him to Jim in 2015.

“Like I tell everyone about meeting my wife, it was love at first sight with Ernie,” Jim recounts playfully.

Ernie was hired as an associate. Two years later, he became a firm partner, and in 2020, Ernie became an equity shareholder. At that point, the firm’s name was changed to Boatman Ricci.



Jim Boatman

### Vigilance in Practice

Today, Boatman Ricci employs 11 attorneys operating out of five locations, with plans to add more associates to better serve clients needing transactional services and legal representation throughout Florida.

Jim, Ernie, and their team pride themselves on understanding the needs of REALTORS®, buyers, and sellers.

“Realtors need an effective office that can be responsive to inquiries about the status of things,” Jim explains. “But the secret sauce for us is that we are litigators. People are so often trying to marginalize concerns to get to the closing table, and while the closing is critical, what we bring to the table is the capacity to analyze situations and deal with a potential conflict in a way that gives people meaningful information and options while being sensitive to the fact that everyone wants to close a deal.”

Boatman Ricci provides first-class legal advice throughout a transaction. Having an attorney during a rough closing means your representative has the capacity to

intervene and extinguish disputes by using the legal infrastructure.

“If you’re just a yes-man for a transactional Realtor,” Jim continues, “you might get through closing but then have unhappy clients because they weren’t told the implications of certain issues.” Having an attorney on standby with knowledge of the transactional framework can dispel these concerns altogether.

Alongside Boatman Ricci, a full-service law firm, Jim and Ernie



Ernie Ricci



Jim Boatman (left) and Ernie Ricci (right) teamed up to form Boatman Ricci in 2015.

lead Trinity Title, a Florida-based title company. Having an agency run by knowledgeable attorneys, Jim asserts, means Realtors can be provided a more efficient, well-informed closing experience.

“The goal of Trinity Title and Boatman Ricci is for real estate agents to have direct access to not only excellent

closers but also attorneys who can help them deal with the constant issues that come up as you move from going under contract to closing. We want Realtors to feel like they have us on speed dial for issues that come up and get real, solid answers. We have experience in so many different areas, including litigation,” Jim shares.

“In many ways, it’s simple. We try to be excellent lawyers who give people high-level closing services and access to top litigators.”

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» cover story

# DAVID WILLIAM AUSTON

BETTING ON HIMSELF By Zachary Cohen  
Photos by Michelle Reed



While today David William Auston sits atop the local real estate rankings, his career began in a much humbler fashion. David launched his real estate career in 2005, just before the real estate market meltdown. While many real estate agents were leaving the business from 2006 to 2009, David dug his heels in, fully committing to creating a sustainable real estate business, even amid a historic recession.

YOU CAN'T BE SUCCESSFUL IN  
BUSINESS WITHOUT TAKING RISKS.  
**IT'S REALLY THAT SIMPLE.**



David persevered with a combination of hard work and creativity. His willingness to bet on himself and take risks ultimately allowed him to create the business of his dreams.

“By 2009, I realized that the top REALTORS® in Naples were the ones who lived in a community and specialized in that community,” David shares. “By that time, I’d been here for a few years, and I found Mediterra the place I liked most. It was the place I wanted to live, meaning it’d be the easiest place to sell.”

There was only one issue with David’s plan, and it was a significant one: he couldn’t afford a home in Mediterra. So he began renting there. He also bought a club membership, using most of his savings to do so. His goal was clear: to meet as many community members as possible.

David took a risk, but it worked. Within two years, he had built a strong enough business to purchase a home in Mediterra. And now, 15 years later, Mediterra accounts for over 75 percent of his sales volume.

As Nasdaq’s President and CEO Adena Friedman said, “You can’t be successful in business without taking risks. It’s really that simple.”

#### THE ROAD TO REAL ESTATE

David was born in Toronto and raised in Battle Creek, Michigan. After graduating with a degree in economics from the University of Michigan in 2002, he spent three

years in Denver, Colorado, selling cars. His first taste of sales was favorable, inspiring him to take the leap into real estate.

“One of my best friends, who is also a Realtor, had moved here to Naples before me and was doing well in the real estate business,” David recalls. “While I was in Denver, he convinced me to buy a rental home with him in Naples without even being here. I came down to visit the rental home he was living in — I owned half of it — and fell in love with the area.”

Naples had everything David desired: a small-town feel, ample business opportunities, and a friendly

community. So in 2005, he packed his bags and moved to Southwest Florida.

“The combination of my best friend doing well and me having already had success in the sales world, and also the small-town feel — that was a mix I couldn’t pass up moving for.”

#### FINDING HIS GROOVE

Although David’s real estate career began slowly amid a recession, he’s now one of Naples’s top agents. As an individual agent with Amerivest Realty, he closed 22 transactions for \$75 million in 2023. He also has a licensed



David Austin’s wife, Lacey, also has her real estate license.



assistant, Madeline Denison, who has been with him for 13 years.

In real estate, David is not only successful; he's fulfilled. One of the reasons he was willing to leave the car business was due to a lack of fulfillment. Real estate, on the other hand, checks all the boxes for him.

"When I help somebody buy a home using my experience and knowledge, it can make a difference, and that is fulfilling," he says.

Outside work, you'll find David with his wife, Lacey, and three children: Pearl (11), Elenora (5), and Donna (1). Lacey also has her real estate license. As their kids get older, she plans to step into the business more deeply.

"When it's not real estate, it's typically spending time with my kids, whether it's riding bikes to the Mediterra park or picking my kids up from dance practice. We enjoy taking vacations in the summer," David explains.

"Generally speaking, if it's not work, it's about spending quality time with my kids. All of the clientele and friends I'm around on a daily basis are typically older and constantly reminding me that this phase with little kids passes very fast. So I try to spend quality time with my kids, whether it's simple time at home or an activity out of the house. That's what's important to me."

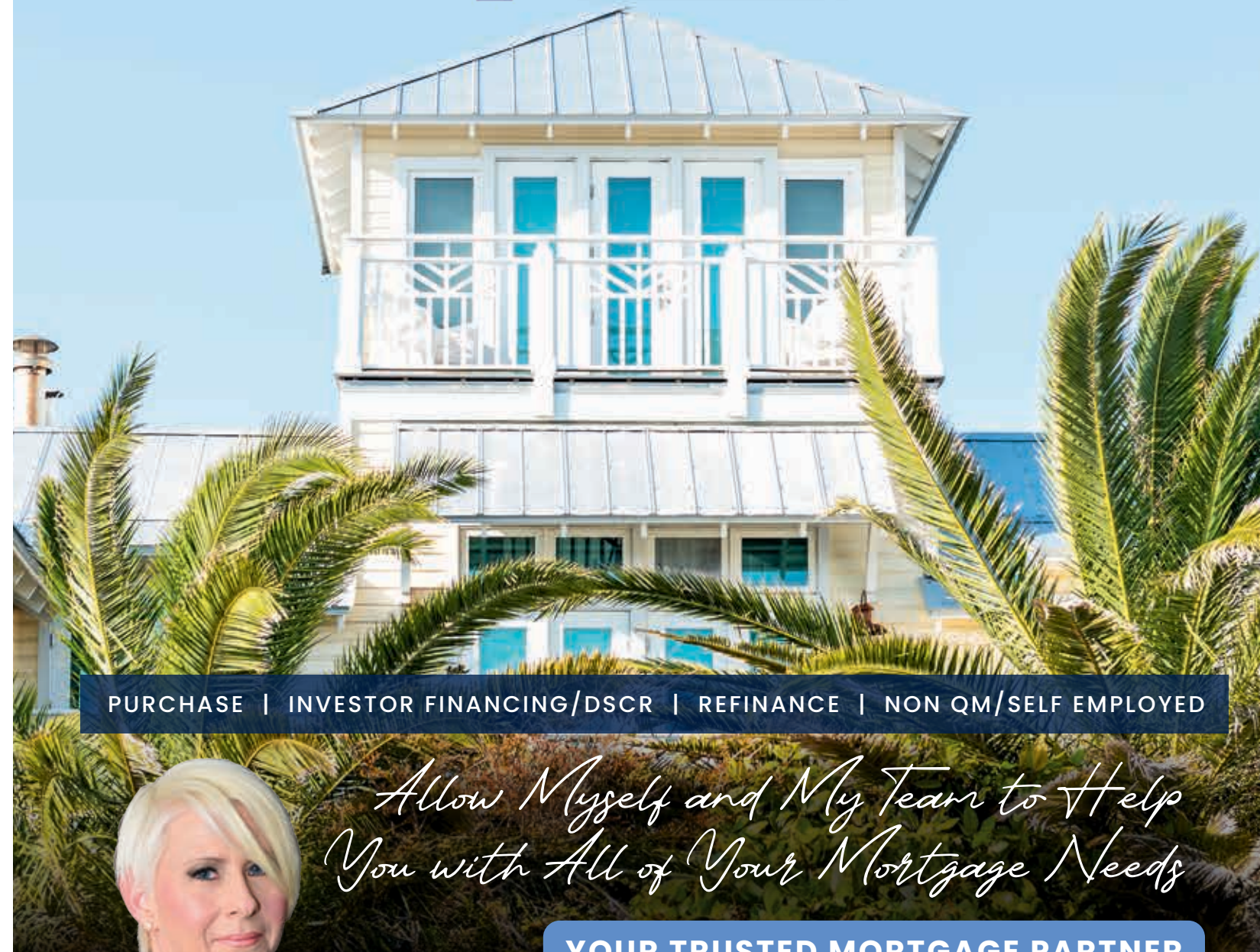


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Top performer David Auston is an individual agent with Amerivest Realty.

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September 5, 2024

We want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who joined us for our recent event. Your presence and enthusiasm truly made it special! The evening was filled with unforgettable moments, inspiring connections, and a celebration of our shared successes.

A special thank-you to our incredible sponsors who made the evening possible: **Lauren Maxwell of Maxwell Mortgage Team** (Headline Sponsor), **Fluent Mortgage** (Beverage Sponsor), **John Prete of HouseMaster** (Catering Sponsor), **Becker Custom Builders** (Photo Booth Sponsor), **FirstSource Title** (Espresso Martini Wall Sponsor), and our high-top sponsors — **Venture Title Services**, **Medrano & Cail**

**Bookkeeping Professionals, and Xinsurance.** We also appreciate all our preferred partners for their ongoing support of our community vision.

We're excited to keep the momentum going with our upcoming **Awards Gala on November 8th**. Don't miss out on celebrating even more accomplishments with us — RSVP today for this exclusive event!

Once again, thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to making this event a success. We look forward to seeing you at the Awards Gala!

*For information on all Naples Real Producers events, please email [SWFL@n2co.com](mailto:SWFL@n2co.com).*







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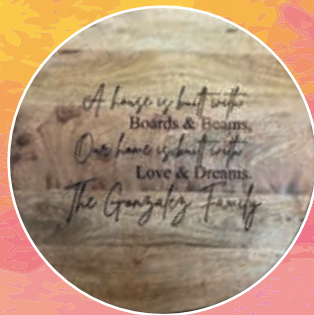
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