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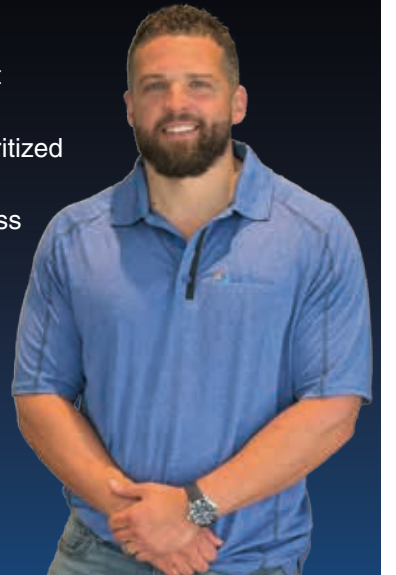
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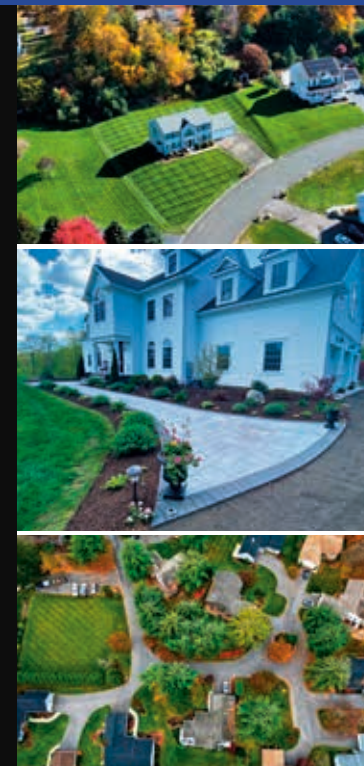
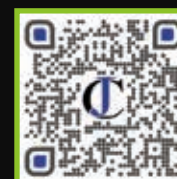
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David Borges

52  
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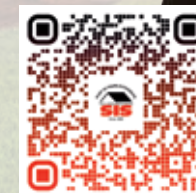
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please email us at: [sam.kantrow@realproducersmag.com](mailto:sam.kantrow@realproducersmag.com)

## INSPECTOR SPOTLIGHT:

*Todd Disston*

Todd is an experienced and licensed Home Inspector in Connecticut and New York. He has extensive construction experience that lends to him also doing FHA 203(k) inspections. Todd had his own Home Improvement and Construction Company for many years and loved working on historic homes. He loves sharing his knowledge with home buyers, especially first-time home buyers, to educate them on their home. Additionally, he has his FAA UAS license for the use of drones and uses this for residential and commercial roof inspections. Todd is a certified CCPIA commercial inspector and has good experience in commercial retail/office complexes, Industrial, and multifamily buildings. When not working, you can find him on his boat on the Long Island Sound with his wife, Dianne.



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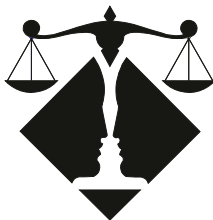
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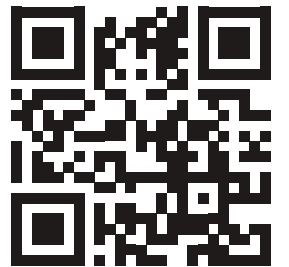
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# Let's Talk About Nominations

One of the questions I'm asked most often is, "How do people get featured in the magazine?" And I love that question—because the answer is simple, powerful, and community-driven: every single feature starts with a nomination... from YOU.

Oh—and one more thing right up front: **There is absolutely NO cost to be nominated or to be featured.** This magazine exists to celebrate top professionals and share real stories—not to sell you a spotlight. In this note, I want to take a moment to walk you through how the nomination process works, but before we get into the details, let's revisit what makes *New Haven and Middlesex Real Producers* so special.

At our core, we're here to **Connect, Elevate, and Inspire** the top-performing real estate professionals in our region. We believe in collaboration over competition. We celebrate people who pour into others, who rise above challenges, and who never stop striving to grow both personally and professionally. This platform isn't just about sales numbers—it's about impact, integrity, and community.

So—who decides who gets featured? You do.

Agents, team leaders, preferred partners, brokers, friends—we rely on your nominations to

spotlight those who deserve recognition. Whether it's someone who crushes it in production, gives back in a big way, or has an inspiring story of perseverance, we want to hear about them. Here's how you can submit a nomination:

1. **Text me directly at (203) 435-6891** with the nominee's name, contact info, and a short note about why you're nominating them.
2. Or, email me at **sam.kantrow@realproducersmag.com** with the same info—whatever's easiest for you!
3. Write New Haven and Middlesex Real Producers on Instagram and Facebook.

What we're looking for:

- **Collaboration** – Are they well-respected by peers? Do others enjoy working with them?
- **Competition** – While numbers matter (especially for the cover), we're more interested in the story behind the stats.
- **Character** – Integrity is non-negotiable. We only feature people who are known for doing things the right way.
- **Contribution** – We love highlighting those who give back—to the industry, their community, or both.
- **Compelling Story** – Everyone loves a good comeback or breakthrough story. If someone has overcome adversity, we want to celebrate that.



- A couple reminders:
- **You can nominate yourself.** That's not weird. It's smart—and we welcome it!

**We let nominees know who nominated them.** It's a great way to show someone you admire and respect their work.

So... who do you know that's doing big things and deserves the spotlight?

To everyone who has nominated someone or shared a story with us—thank you. You are the reason this community is thriving, and I can't wait to see who we'll be celebrating next.

With gratitude,  
**Sam Kantrow**  
Publisher, *New Haven and Middlesex Real Producers*



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# FROM DECLUTTERING TO STAGING:

## A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO MAXIMIZE YOUR HOME’S APPEAL AND PROFIT

LINDSAY FULLER • INTERIORS BY LINDSAY

Getting a home ready for sale can feel like a daunting task. Many sellers are unsure where to begin and turn to their agent for advice. Common questions include, “What should we pack or leave out? Should we paint or make upgrades?” Homeowners want to make smart choices and avoid unnecessary investments but also want to ensure their home stands out. As an agent, it’s crucial to guide clients through this process, helping them prioritize the right improvements and maximize their return on investment. A well-planned strategy can make all the difference in selling quickly and for the best price.

- **Decluttering:** Sellers typically understand it’s best to remove items from surfaces. We recommend taking it a step further—the only items that should be touching the floors are major pieces of furniture. For

example, sofas, beds, dining sets, side tables, coffee tables, desks, and nightstands help define traffic flow and highlight focal points. Smaller items like trash cans, baskets, filing cabinets, and small cube units can disrupt traffic flow and create “visual noise,” which distracts from the home’s architecture.

- **Painting:** It’s truly amazing what a fresh coat of paint can do to brighten, update, and neutralize odors. Some of my go-to colors by Benjamin Moore are: Classic Gray, Windsbreath, Edgecomb Gray, Swiss Coffee, White Dove, Manchester Tan, and Stonington Gray.
- **Staging:** Buyers aren’t just looking for a house—they’re seeking an emotional connection to a place they can envision as their home. With interest rates in flux, sellers are becoming more selective, especially as they approach the \$1M price point. In fact, nearly

90% of buyers struggle to imagine a space’s potential when it’s empty or cluttered. Staging isn’t about starting from scratch; it’s about making strategic updates that help buyers see the possibilities. Whether it’s adding modern accessories, swapping out artwork, enhancing lighting, or furnishing tricky spaces, staging creates a welcoming atmosphere that appeals to a wide range of potential buyers. The result? Staged homes sell 88% faster and for 53% more than those left unstaged, giving sellers a stronger chance of receiving multiple offers. In this seller’s market, our goal is to maximize profit.

- **Rooms Need a Purpose:** Each room in the house should have a clearly defined function that eliminates guesswork. If a spare bedroom has been used for storage, it’s best to clean it out and furnish it properly. An extra office, gym, or reading nook can have a huge impact on maximizing space.
- **Is It Broken?:** Fix it! Buyers notice when the little things are taken care of, so they’ll assume the larger items, like mechanicals, are as well.
- **Deep Clean:** Before an open house or a private showing, sellers should ensure their house is in pristine condition, most importantly in kitchens and bathrooms. Even if these areas are dated, they will show better if they are sparkling clean.
- **Lighting:** It’s important to ensure all bulbs are in working condition,

match, and are as bright as possible. Sellers can enhance natural light by removing heavy and dark window treatments.

- **Smells:** We all love our furry family members, but litter boxes and pet beds can hold on to odors that may quickly turn buyers away. To alleviate odor, start with a deep clean. Opening windows to allow fresh air to circulate, coupled with fans and air purifiers, is also helpful. Fresh flowers and plants improve air quality. Lastly, a good vacuum with baking soda and a once-over on hard surfaces can do wonders right before an open house.
- **Temperature:** If it’s cold, crank the heat up before an open house. If you have a gas or electric fireplace, turn it on. On the flip side, if it’s 90 degrees, turn the A/C down. Buyers should

feel comfortable and subconsciously know that everything is working just right.

- **Curb Appeal:** Sellers should ensure the exterior of the home is inviting. Some things to consider are: power washing, trimming, removing overgrown or dead plants, improving lighting, stylish and easy-to-read house numbers, and replacing doormats—all of which have a big impact on boosting curb appeal.

Working with sellers can sometimes present unique challenges. Their needs and priorities vary with each listing, and emotions can often run high.

Not every client is ready or willing to make the decisions that are truly in their best interest. That’s where our partner agents come in, offering a complimentary staging consultation

to help realtors maintain a strong, professional relationship with their clients. During a focused, two-hour consultation, I guide sellers on what to pack, relocate, fix, or paint to prepare their home for the market. Plus, with our trusted network of contractors, we ensure every recommendation is put into action. Think of our team as your one-stop shop for everything needed to set your listing up for success.

Cheers to the 2025 Market!  
Interiors by Lindsay



Before- vacant, wood floors with fireplace.



After - sofa and loveseat setTraditional Madison property



Before - Vacant, black cement floor



After - Ivory sofa set with three-piece accent table set.  
Contemporary Greenwich property



Before - occupied bedroom with seller's furniture.



After - cleared out with our items only. Bed, rug, chairs, etc.  
Oversized center hall colonial in Middletown .



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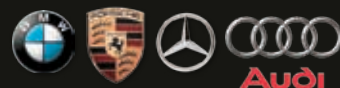
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# Lorrie Maiorano

## A Heart for Homes and a Passion for Service

BY PHYLICIA BOVA

When you meet Lorrie Maiorano, it's impossible not to be inspired.

A dedicated real estate broker with Calcagni Real Estate, Lorrie has spent over two decades in the industry, making an undeniable impact on her community. But it's not just her expertise in residential and commercial real estate that sets her apart. Lorrie's heart for service is what truly defines her, as she's spent countless hours giving back—both to her local community and to her industry.

### A Leap of Faith into Real Estate

Lorrie's journey into real estate began in 2003 when her youngest started school full-time. Before that, Lorrie worked at the post office, but her passion for real estate was sparked after a conversation with a close friend who had just started a career in the industry. "She would call me up to practice her scripts on me, and one day I realized, 'I can do this,'" Lorrie recalls.

Inspired and ready for a change, Lorrie decided to pursue real estate. She enrolled in a 30-hour real estate course, but she initially planned to keep her job at the post office. "My intention was to do this part-time while keeping my full-time, guaranteed job," she said. However, when Lorrie met

with the manager at Calcagni Real Estate to discuss her career, he encouraged her to take the leap and go full-time. "He said, 'Why would you want to do that? Just quit and do this full-time,'" Lorrie remembers. With her husband and two young children waiting in the car, Lorrie made the bold decision to leave her stable job. "I walked out, and I said, 'I'm going to quit my job and do this full-time.'"

That leap of faith has paid off, as Lorrie has built a successful career and has become a prominent leader in both the real estate industry and her local community.

### Leadership in Real Estate and Advocacy

Lorrie's real estate career has been defined not only by her success but also by her extensive leadership and advocacy roles. Since 2018, she has been an active board member of the New Haven Middlesex Association of Realtors (NHMR), holding several influential positions. She served as treasurer, vice president, and president for 2023 and 2024, and now sits as the immediate past president of the association. Her leadership extends beyond NHMR, as she also serves on numerous committees within the Connecticut Association of Realtors (CTR), including the engagement committee, which she co-chaired and chaired in 2023 and 2024, and the risk reduction committee. Additionally, Lorrie serves on the Leading



Edge Advisory Board for the National Association of Realtors (NAR), where she contributes to shaping the industry at the national level.

Her work at the local level is equally impactful. Lorrie has been a key member of the East Haven Chamber of Commerce since 2011, where she has taken on various roles, including vice chair, and chair from 2015 to 2017, and now secretary.

### Charitable Work and Community Impact

Lorrie's dedication to service extends beyond leadership positions. She's deeply involved in several charitable initiatives. Through the New Haven Middlesex Association's Charitable Foundation, Lorrie has helped support various programs, including assisting homeless shelters and funding initiatives to provide essential resources to children and families in

Lorrie's passion for community service and charitable giving is not only about supporting causes but also about creating events that bring people together. She is currently working on a game show event for the East Haven Chamber of Commerce, which will be similar to Family Feud, to raise funds for the organization. She's also excited about the third annual golf tournament for the New Haven Middlesex Association of Realtors, set for September 18th, which will fund the association's

troop, where she learned the importance of community service and giving back. As her children grew older, she found herself with more time to dedicate to volunteer work, particularly within the real estate industry, where she continues to find ways to make a difference.

Lorrie Majorano's story is one of dedication, passion, and selfless service. Whether she's helping a family find their dream home, organizing a fundraising event, or



Through her involvement in the Chamber, Lorrie has helped organize and support several major community events, such as Lobsterpalooza, a fundraising event designed to bring the community together. She also serves as chairwoman of the East Haven Economic Development Commission, a role she has held since 2021, where she advocates for the town's economic growth and works toward creating a thriving environment for businesses and residents.

need, and the Paddington Bear Campaign, which helps to prevent homelessness. She's also involved in organizing the Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Central Connecticut's biannual charity auction for its charitable foundation, which raises funds for local causes. The upcoming event, scheduled for November 7th at Aqua Turf, will feature dueling pianos and an exciting array of auction items, all to support important charitable initiatives.

charitable foundation. Over the years, this tournament has grown to be one of the biggest fundraising activities for the foundation, which supports a variety of local initiatives, including helping those affected by homelessness.

### A Lifelong Commitment to Volunteering

For Lorrie, volunteer work has always been an important part of her life. Her involvement began with Boy Scout Troop 401 in East Haven, where her son became an Eagle Scout. She spent years as a committee member for the

serving on boards that shape the future of real estate, Lorrie's impact is undeniable. Her ability to balance her real estate career with her extensive volunteer work is nothing short of inspiring, and her commitment to giving back continues to make a profound difference in the lives of those around her.

For Lorrie, it's not just about being a successful real estate agent—it's about creating a legacy of service, one that uplifts her community and industry for generations to come.



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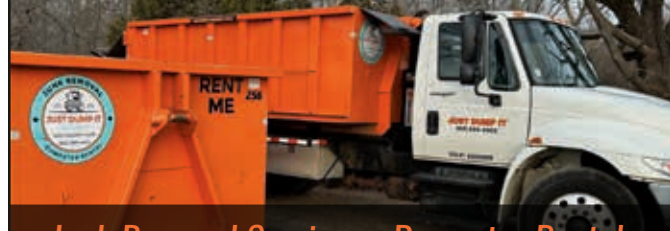
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# The Impact of Social Media in Real Estate

Stand Out, Gain Exposure, and Network Like Never Before

In today's fast-paced world, being successful in real estate isn't just about knowing the market and having a good eye for properties. It's also about being *seen*—and social media is one of the most powerful tools to make that happen. If you're not leveraging social media in your real estate business, you could be missing out on a huge opportunity to grow your brand, connect with clients, and build valuable relationships. Let's dive into why an active social media presence is crucial for real estate professionals and how it can set you apart in this competitive industry.

### Visibility Is Key: Make Sure People Know You

It's no secret that real estate is a highly competitive field. With countless agents vying for the same clients, how do you make sure your name rises above the noise? The answer is simple: visibility. In a world where people spend hours scrolling through Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn, showing up consistently online is essential. A robust social media presence can ensure you're front of mind when a potential client is ready to buy, sell, or lease.

Think of your social media platforms as your digital storefront. It's an opportunity to showcase who you are, what you do, and why you're the go-to professional in your market. By posting regularly about your listings, client success stories, market trends, and even personal moments, you create a digital footprint that builds your reputation as an active and knowledgeable real estate professional. Your social media pages become a reflection of your expertise and passion for your work.

### Build Trust and Credibility with Authentic Content

In an industry driven by relationships, trust is everything. When people feel like they know, like, and trust you, they are more likely to choose you as their real estate agent. Social media gives you a unique chance to build that trust through authentic content. When you share posts about recent transactions, client testimonials, behind-the-scenes moments, or educational tips, you're humanizing your brand. Instead of just being another faceless agent, you're allowing your audience to connect with you on a

personal level. This builds credibility and makes people feel comfortable reaching out when they're ready to make a real estate move. And it's not just about the glossy, picture-perfect posts; people appreciate authenticity. Whether it's a candid photo of you working at your desk or a video explaining the latest market trends, showing your true self resonates more than a scripted, polished post.

### Networking Opportunities Like Never Before

Networking is the heart of real estate. But gone are the days when you had to attend endless mixers and conferences to make meaningful connections. With social media, networking opportunities are virtually endless—and often more effective. Platforms like LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook allow you to connect with potential clients, colleagues, vendors, and industry influencers no matter where you are.

By engaging with others online—commenting on posts, sharing useful information, or starting conversations—you can build a network that extends far beyond your local area. You can engage with people across the country or even around the world, expanding your reach and building relationships that could lead to referrals, collaborations, and business opportunities. The real power of social media networking is that it allows you to form connections on your terms. You can directly message a potential client, interact with a local business, or connect with other professionals who could refer you to others in need of real estate services. Building a personal network is one thing, but social media helps you extend that to an entirely new level, connecting you to a broader community.

### Social Media as a Lead Generation Machine

One of the most compelling reasons to be active on social media is its ability to generate leads. Social platforms are not just about showing off listings—they're an excellent tool for reaching out to potential clients who may be in the early stages of their real estate journey. By posting engaging content, running targeted ads, or even hosting live Q&A sessions about real estate topics, you can encourage direct inquiries. For example, a Facebook ad showcasing a newly listed home can attract buyers who are interested in that property or in similar homes. A short video explaining the process of buying a home can prompt viewers to reach out for more information or schedule a consultation. These interactions can turn into valuable leads and eventually, long-term clients.

Additionally, platforms like Instagram and Facebook allow you to create stories and ads that can be hyper-targeted to specific demographics—like location, age, or interests. This means you can focus your efforts on reaching the people who are most likely to need your services, maximizing your return on investment.

### Be the Go-To Expert in Your Area

Social media also offers the opportunity to position yourself as an expert in your field. By regularly sharing valuable content—such as tips for first-time homebuyers,

mortgage advice, or local market updates—you'll become the go-to source for information. This positions you as a thought leader in your niche, increasing your credibility and attracting more followers and potential clients.

For example, sharing local market updates or providing advice on how to stage a home for sale can provide your followers with valuable insight that they can't get anywhere else. These posts not only showcase your knowledge but also build trust with your audience. And over time, this will result in more people reaching out to you when they need expert advice.

### Embrace Social Media for Your Real Estate Success

Social media is no longer optional for real estate professionals—it's a critical tool for staying relevant, visible, and connected in an increasingly digital world. By embracing an active social media presence, you open the door to new networking opportunities, greater exposure, and more potential clients. The key is consistency—posting regularly, engaging with others, and providing value to your audience.

Whether it's showcasing your listings, sharing tips, or simply interacting with others in your community, social media is one of the most powerful ways to stand out, build trust, and grow your real estate business. So, if you haven't already, it's time to get online and start building your brand, one post at a time.



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Whether you're looking to grow your network, meet new business partners, or just have a great time with fellow industry peers, this is one event you won't want to miss.

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# Artisan Tile Kitchen and Bath

Claudia Santangelo

BY GEORGE GROTHEER • PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS DEVLIN

To make a home work, one needs a functional understanding of the property and the space.

To make any home work, one needs the tools Claudia Santangelo and the team at Artisan Tile Kitchen & Bath bring to the table.

Artisan Tile was founded in 2016 – but that is not where Santangelo’s story begins. She started in this area of work years earlier – honing her craft in design to hit the ground running when she launched her own company. She learned what she could from others with more experience in the field – finding what worked and what did not, to develop her own method of service. Artisan Tile began as a specialized tile showroom with a staff committed to exceptional service – with the team (and Santangelo especially) priding themselves on how they have grown into a comprehensive remodeling company.

Santangelo is as hands-on as they come: she loves going to clients’ homes to see how they function and what needs they have. Once she has a list

of wishes and wants, she puts it all together to make a space as functional and aesthetically pleasing for her clients as possible. During the design phase, she is constantly in touch with her team, asking the important questions – how an idea will go through phases of planning and execution.

“That’s when I call my group of professionals that I rely on

to say, ‘Hey, we need to make this thing. How do you think it can be made?’” she says. “If I have to talk to an architect, an engineer, a plumber, an electrician, and a carpenter, I can really know how the design can be implemented.”

With new homeowners, says Santangelo, there comes a lot of investigation into properties. They often don’t know how the house is made



“I FEEL LIKE MY SERVICES ARE A GOOD FIT FOR NEW HOMEOWNERS BECAUSE I CAN REALLY HELP THEM FIGURE OUT THE PROPERTY THAT THEY BOUGHT. I CAN HELP THEM FIGURE OUT HOW THEY CAN PUT IT ALL TOGETHER.”



– or if it has been remodeled. On many occasions, the Artisan Tile team has found new layers during demolition. Santangelo says she works with a lot of new homeowners, and they want to feel reassured with what they have purchased and are eager to make plans for their new space.

“I feel like my services are a good fit for new homeowners because I can really help them figure out the property

that they bought,” she says. “I can help them figure out how they can put it all together.”

Design is a key complement to realty, says Santangelo, because designers can help realtors sell houses that are less desirable by giving the homes new life – helping turn a property into what clients want it to be. The Artisan Tile team says they aim to help clients identify what is possible for a given space.



Santangelo says the goal is to grow the company with design work – but wants to maintain her client relationships. She has formed lasting friendships with clients over the years and would love to see that side of her experience expand in the future.

In the meantime – Santangelo and her team will keep striving to do the best job for their clients at their

Guilford showroom. Their consultants accept walk-ins – offering to help customers learn about the company, what they do, and what the client can do with their space.

Says Santangelo: “Obviously, growing is important, but I also want to make sure that the level of customer service and relationships with our customers are good.”





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# FAQ

## All About New Haven/ Middlesex Real Producers

The first Real Producers magazine started in Indianapolis in 2015. Real Producers is now in over 130 markets across the nation and is continuing to grow nationwide.

**Q: WHO RECEIVES Real Producers MAGAZINES?**  
**A:** The top 300 real estate agents across New Haven and Middlesex Counties and our preferred partners.

**Q: WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THIS MAGAZINE?**  
**A:** We believe that we are better together. When we surround ourselves with other successful, like-minded people, we grow to new heights. Real Producers is a platform that brings together the most accomplished individuals in the Connecticut real estate sector.

By curating an exclusive community comprised of the top 300 real estate agents and RP-vetted businesses in each market, we foster a shared space for sharing stories, celebrating successes, discussing market trends, and highlighting upcoming events. Our monthly publication is dedicated to connecting, informing, and inspiring, encompassing anything that contributes to the enrichment of our community.

**Q: DOES Real Producers HAVE EVENTS?**  
**A:** Yes! We have specific networking events throughout the year.

**Q: WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR BEING FEATURED IN THIS MAGAZINE?**  
**A:** The process for getting featured in our magazine is straightforward. To be eligible, you need to be on the top 300 list, and we value nominations highly. Whether you're a real estate agent, business, broker, owner, or someone who admires the work of others, you can nominate individuals, including



yourself. Even office leaders have the opportunity to nominate outstanding real estate agents. We take every nomination seriously and consider anyone from the top 300 list who is brought to our attention. While we cannot guarantee a feature, we strongly encourage you to connect with one of our team members, show support for Real Producers, and participate in our private events. These steps can enhance your chances of being featured in our publication.

**Q: WHAT DOES IT COST A REAL ESTATE AGENT/ TEAM TO BE FEATURED?**  
**A:** Zero, zilch, zippo, nada, nil. It costs nothing to agents, so nominate away! We are not a pay-to-play model. We share **REAL** stories of **Real Producers**.

**Q: WHO ARE THE RP-VETTED BUSINESSES?**  
**A:** The RP-vetted businesses featured in our publication represent the some of best in the business in their respective categories within the Connecticut

Shoreline. You can easily locate them in our index. We do not randomly select businesses, nor do we collaborate with every business that approaches us. We prioritize businesses that have received your stamp of approval through recommendations and each business showcased has been personally recommended by many of the top agents featured in our publication. Before featuring any business, our team conducts additional vetting to ensure they align with our community's values and bring substantial value. Our aim is to build a robust network that not only includes the best real estate agents but also features top-tier businesses, fostering collective growth and strength within our community.

**Q: HOW CAN I RECOMMEND A BUSINESS?**  
**A:** If you want to recommend a business that works with top real estate agents, please email or message us - **Email: sam.kantrow@realproducersmag.com**

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# Danielle Borges

## COLDWELL BANKER REALTY

BY GEORGE GROTHEER  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS DEVLIN

**Sometimes, to find your second wind in life, you have to spend twenty-five years in prison...**

**... as a correctional officer.**

Danielle Borges is watching her second career unfold before her eyes – after spending more than two decades working for the Connecticut Department of Corrections. In her

time with the state prison system, she ran facilities and served as a deputy warden. She describes that experience as a never-ending pile of work – with phones constantly ringing and emergencies happening left and right.

“As a supervisor, I enforced a lot of rules and regulations and made sure that the schedule was being run appropriately – and that things were happening the right way,” she says.

How about if we change it to something like ...

That experience, it turns out, helped Borges develop the necessary toolkit to begin anew after retirement. She left the DOC in 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and found herself looking for something to do. At first, she threw herself into familiar activities: continuing her yoga practice, getting involved with her community, and spending more time with family. But despite these efforts, a sense of restlessness lingered. She couldn’t shake the feeling that something was still missing. That’s when a few friends introduced her to the

world of real estate. Initially, it seemed like a distant idea, but as she began exploring the field, something clicked. The challenge, the human connection, the chance to guide others through a major life decision – it reignited a spark within her.

Borges says many retirees are finding their way to a career in real estate – self-starters with a desire to be their own bosses and create their own schedules can find success in this industry. With her pension locked up (no pun intended), she felt more comfortable betting



“

**I really like getting to know the people, learning what they really want, what they really need, trying to balance that and ultimately finding them a place that is going to make them happy.”**



AGENT TO WATCH



on herself by pursuing a new dream. Borges 'got in' with Coldwell Banker and pursued leads from Realtor.com to get her start. She put her ax to the grindstone and persevered as she found her footing – making phone calls and setting up meetings to develop connections. She made her first sale in New Milford last year and says the experience taught her a lot about things she would not have considered with a novice perspective outside the industry. Borges has established relationships with clients that she has maintained in the early going – making connections through friends of family, actively sending out mailings to her community and beyond, and spreading her information through word of mouth.

“I really like getting to know the people, learning what they really want, what they really need, trying to balance that and ultimately finding them a place that is going to make them happy,” she says.

Putting the needs of the client first has been Borges's priority since day one. She carried that effort over from her previous life – having served as chair of an employee wellness committee at the state Department of Corrections toward the end of her career.



In that role, she helped kickstart a program to offer fitness classes to off-duty employees. She organized events for the corrections team, aiming to put focus on the mental and physical well-being of her staff. Now, on top of her real estate responsibilities, she teaches yoga to find her own Zen – so she can stay ready to help others find theirs.

“I feel like I’m helping people and I’m doing my best for them,” she says. “And I see myself wanting to continue to thrive, build relationships, and be there for people.”



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# DAVID LEMEL

BY GEORGE GROTHEER • ALYSSA MUCHA PHOTOGRAPHY



To be a top agent, one must know what works for their client.

A background in beauty will help.

David Lemel is the definition of a “people person.” He grew up in his family business – working in a salon. He worked with clients on health and beauty aids, makeup, hair, nail care, and more, learning to help people get what they needed. Lemel describes it as a very people-oriented business – always listening to people, talking to them, getting to know

their lives, and developing relationships. Through that upbringing, Lemel cultivated a strong work ethic and desire to help people as often as he could.

While Lemel describes himself as having more common sense than book smarts, he actually has a background in psychology – giving him a deeper understanding of his client’s needs and wants. He was a psychology major and marketing minor in college – a combination that turned out to make him a force to be reckoned with in the real estate business.

Lemel started working in real estate in 2005 – getting going with Era Siegel Realty in Hamden for his first five years. The top real estate agent in the state at the time was his mentor – and Lemel became a sponge. He learned the language, watched senior realtors’ moves, and grew to understand how to communicate with clients and colleagues – and it all happened fast enough for him to make twenty-five sales in his first year, earning a “Rookie of the Year” award.

As Lemel honed his craft, he saw what worked for others while making it his own. While he describes others as “salesy,” he focuses on building relationships with people – relationships built on friendship and trust.

“If you try to sell somebody something, you’re a salesperson,” he says. “If you build a relationship with somebody, you have a friend forever or a relationship forever for that client, and they can know in their heart and their mind to trust and feel comfortable with you.”

Lemel understands that there are a lot of emotions for people as they buy or sell their home – and he says his job is to help





“IF YOU TRY TO SELL SOMEBODY SOMETHING, YOU’RE A SALESPERSON,” HE SAYS. “IF YOU BUILD A RELATIONSHIP WITH SOMEBODY, YOU HAVE A FRIEND FOREVER OR A RELATIONSHIP FOREVER FOR THAT CLIENT, AND THEY CAN KNOW IN THEIR HEART AND THEIR MIND TO TRUST AND FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH YOU.”

them be psychologically prepared for what is about to happen.

“My job is to be there as their friend, as their realtor, and really, as a ‘kind of’ therapist,” he says.

In helping people understand their own emotions about home-buying or home-selling, Lemel learned to identify the pros and cons of a home. He believes it is his job, when touring a property with buyers, to look for any past challenges the home may have faced or any potential issues that could arise in the future, in order to protect his clients when

making an offer. When walking through a seller’s home, Lemel works with them to identify any problems that may come up and offers suggestions for repairs that should be made before listing the property, as a pre-home inspection step. Lemel considers himself a good judge of character – and he says that goes for both clients and fellow realtors. He prioritizes consideration of his clients – making sure they feel safe and secure at every step of a sale, letting them speak their minds and feelings, and providing a space to learn about what does and does not work for them.

“When you do a lot of business, it’s different than if you’re just somebody who does a couple of deals here and there,” he says. “You don’t have the same connections or relationships in life and in business. Experience matters because it not only helps you navigate the complexities of each transaction but also strengthens your ability to anticipate challenges and find solutions quickly. The more you’ve seen and experienced, the better equipped you are to guide clients through the process smoothly.”

Lemel has built a team that has turned into a real powerhouse in Connecticut real estate. He initially wanted to build up his intimate network as a way to lighten his load, to spend more time with his family. He says people saw what he was doing because of his success and he attracted team members in that way. Lemel says being a team leader is about supporting his colleagues’ success and being their friend, creating a workplace dynamic that feels like a family. He says a real estate team is not about the money, it is about the relationships formed. Every agent on his team gets full recognition for the sales they make – independent from the sales made by the team. He wants his team to feel valued – and sees them all as rockstars for how they carry themselves in business.

“I want good people who want to learn. I don’t want people who think they know what they’re doing and don’t want to listen,” he says. “I want people who care and want to learn to be the best of the best at what they do.”

If Lemel wants to see people who are the best at what they do... all he needs to do is return to his family’s salon to look in the mirror.







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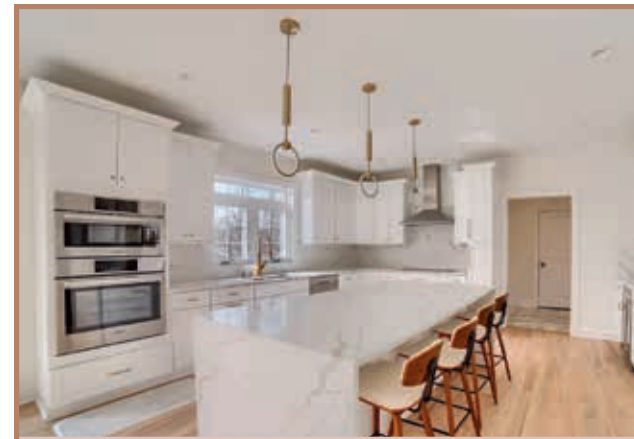
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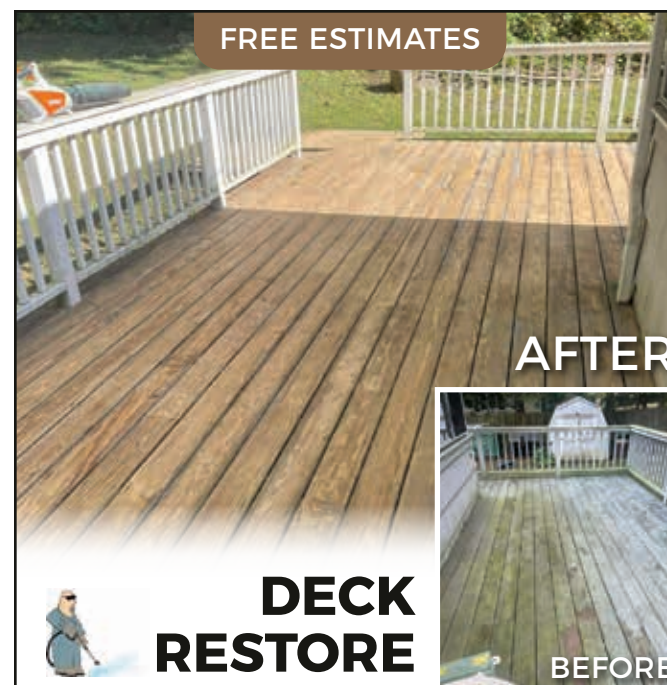


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