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TOGETHER INTO 2026

Dear Real Producers of Fort Myers,

A new year officially begins in January, but after the holidays fade and routines settle back into place, it's often February when the year truly finds its rhythm. With that in mind, welcome to 2026—a fresh chapter filled with momentum, opportunity, and anticipation.

This time of year is always especially exciting at *Fort Myers Real Producers*. Behind the scenes, our team is hard at work determining who has earned a place in our 2026 Top 500. These are the professionals who will receive the magazine throughout the year and be invited to our exclusive, relationship-driven events. It's a process that reflects both consistency and growth—honoring those who have maintained their standing while celebrating those who have reached this milestone for the very first time.

Each year, we see a strong group of agents retain their rank, a testament to their dedication and sustained excellence. At the same time, we're energized by the newcomers—professionals who have elevated their businesses and are stepping into the Top 500 community for the first time. Welcoming these new members is one of our favorite parts of the year, and March marks the beginning of that celebration.

Our first event of 2026 is just around the corner. Be sure to keep an eye on your inbox for your invitation to our upcoming gathering on March 12, 2026. Additional details will be shared soon, and we look forward to bringing everyone together—reconnecting with familiar faces while introducing many new ones—as the year fully gets underway.

Thank you for being part of what makes this community so special. Here's to a year of connection, collaboration, and continued success.

Very respectfully yours,



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“Servant leadership is truly in my bones, so I give my clients the best of me while always choosing people over profit.”

Candice Carter lives that truth at John R. Wood Properties | Christie’s International Real Estate in Fort Myers. A solo agent who launched right before Hurricane Ian struck, Candice battled through a slow start and never looked back.

In 2024, she closed 28 transactions, and she’s already pushing beyond that pace — while earning *RealTrends* 2025 Verified recognition among the Top 1.5 percent of real estate professionals in the U.S.

A Solid Foundation

Candice didn’t stumble into real estate unprepared; she arrived with a lifetime of service and structure. Born in Michigan and raised in a pastor and missionary family that moved often (including several years in Moscow), she’s called Cape Coral home for nearly two decades.

Before obtaining her real estate license, Candice spent over two decades in nonprofit leadership, running everything from large local events, vast teams, to a childcare center — while adding a bachelor’s in international multicultural communications and a master’s in executive leadership to the mix. That

powerful combination taught her to read the room and stay calm.

“During all of those years leading nonprofits, I kept a strict routine, as well, and learned that application is everything,” she affirms. “You can learn something, but it is useless until you apply it; action is at the forefront of progress.

“Leadership has also helped tremendously in understanding what people are *really* saying underneath what they’re telling me,” she adds.

Answering the Call

The shift from nonprofit leadership to real estate wasn’t a total whim. Over

the years, friends and family would often encourage Candice to consider the industry since she seemed like a natural. While pursuing her master’s, she realized she’d outgrown her ceiling and needed a field that demanded more creativity, grit, and upside. Once she obtained her master’s, she realized she could do anything.

“I was also craving something bigger and more dynamic in my life,” she reflects. “But ultimately I just loved the idea of creating an opportunity without boundaries, the vastness of real estate’s reach, and it really struck me that people are always going to want land and a house to put on it.”



CANDICE
HEART & HUSTLE
CARTER

BY JESS WELLAR • PHOTOS BY LACASATOUR



She took the leap, got licensed, and went all-in — then backed that decision with an unlikely mentorship and plenty of hustle.

“Peter Davis was my mentor and we are polar opposites in every way!” she chuckles, noting how he “gave it to me straight” and fed her early land deals while broker Jay Richter modeled a calm, client-first style.

The results came quickly as her pipeline grew. But volume matters less to Candice than impact with her tried-and-true playbook: show up early, serve hard, and deliver beyond the ordinary.

People Over Profit

Candice’s self-proclaimed superpower is collaboration. She’s direct when it counts, proactive without the drama, and clients feel that steady confidence — both at the negotiation table and in the countless small moments along the way.

“I’m not here to sugarcoat things or make promises I can’t keep,” she says. “My clients deserve honesty.”

That honesty is backed by a deep skill set: organization, negotiation, and the ability to clearly communicate what matters most — right when it matters most. Candice pours herself into tailoring each experience to the people she serves, believing relationships always come before numbers. She’s also never afraid to roll up her sleeves, stay late, or do what it takes to get the job done.

“My work ethic is rooted in gratitude,” she explains. “The alarm goes off at 4:30 a.m., and I’m in the office by 5:30 a.m. — because the families I serve deserve my very best, every single day.”

Family Fun

Away from closings, Candice is hanging out with her favorite people: Isabella (20), Gabriela (17), and MJ (14), while their three pet Yorkies



Candice Carter is a solo agent with John R. Wood Properties | Christie’s International Real Estate.

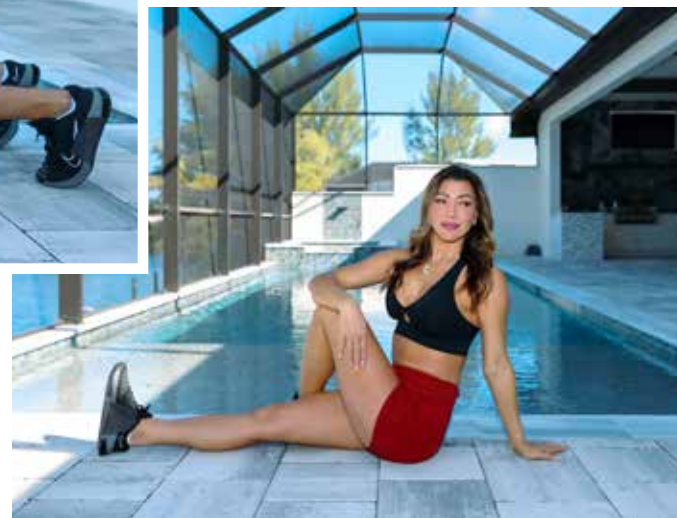
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A fitness enthusiast, Candice Carter often starts her days with early workouts.



— Cocoa, Thor, and Rosco —
“really run the ship.”

The Carter family are serious foodies who love the beach, music, shopping, and a spirited kitchen rap battle. When the sushi craving hits, there’s no question where they’re heading: “Hands down our favorite spot is J&P Asian Fusion in Cape Coral,” Candice declares. “It’s ridiculously good and has life-changing sushi. Their ex-girlfriend roll has ruined me! Nothing compares.”

Service still threads through her personal life as well. She attends Cape Christian and is a proud business partner with Crunch Fitness to support local health initiatives. Additionally, Candice contributes to Convoy of Hope and Christy’s Cause, aligning her work with causes that fight disaster fallout and human trafficking.

The engine underneath it all is simple: family first. Her daily motivation comes from her brood (“they’re my daily cheerleaders and

inspiration”), her visual pipeline board, early workouts, and a growth mindset fed by audiobooks and top-producer circles. She sums it up with two personal mantras that keep her honest: “Average is unacceptable” and “The only obstacle in my way is me.”

Looking ahead, Candice’s goals are audacious yet anchored. She wants scale — portfolio building, teaching her children the language of real estate and entrepreneurship, and elevated production — while never losing sight of her why: legacy, service, and meaningful impact for the place she calls home.

Ultimately, she sees herself in future real estate roles that “give people hope and encouragement,” through broader community advocacy.

“The journey ahead excites me, and I’m here to stay and make a meaningful impact along the way!” she concludes.

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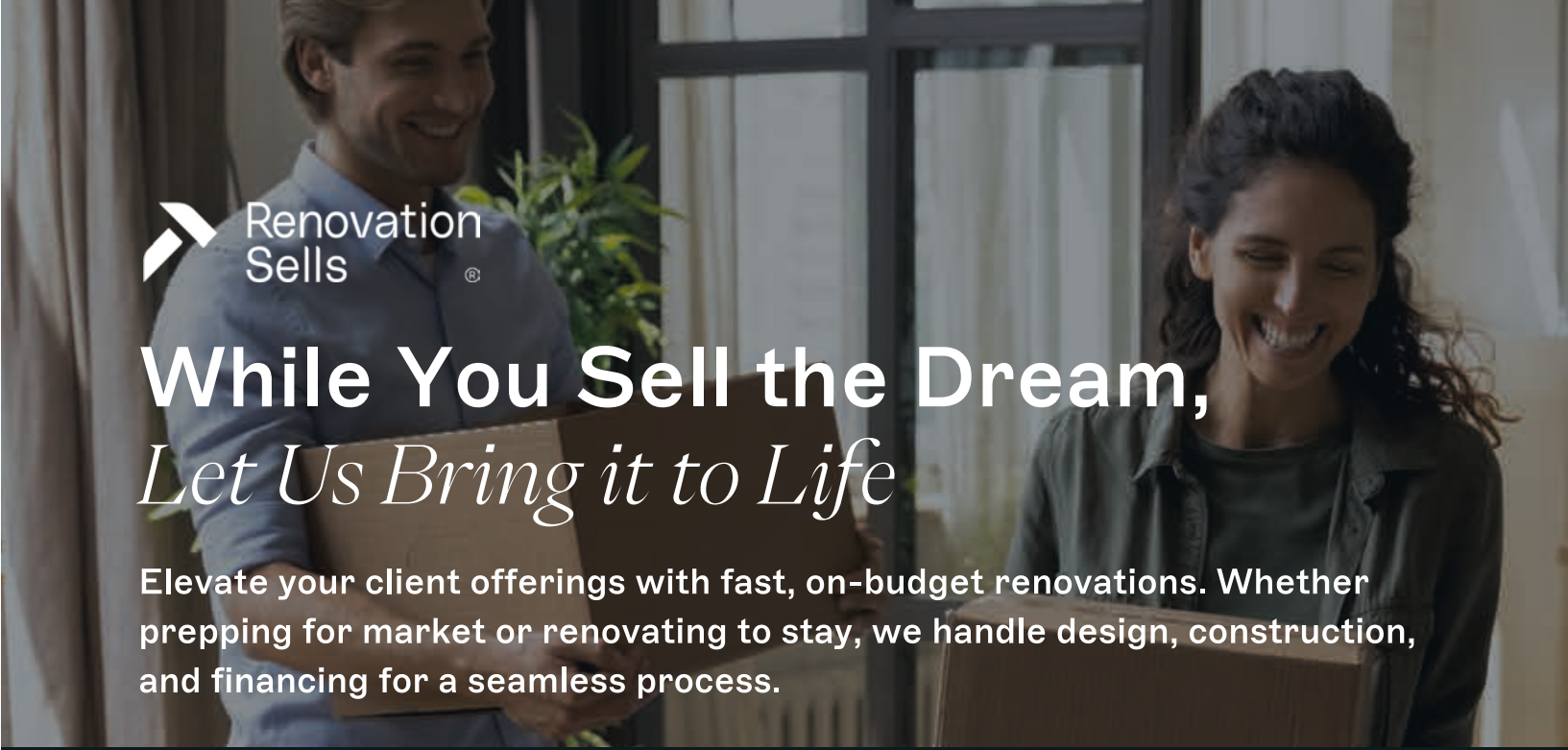
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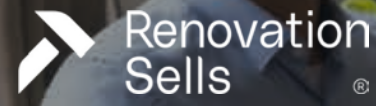





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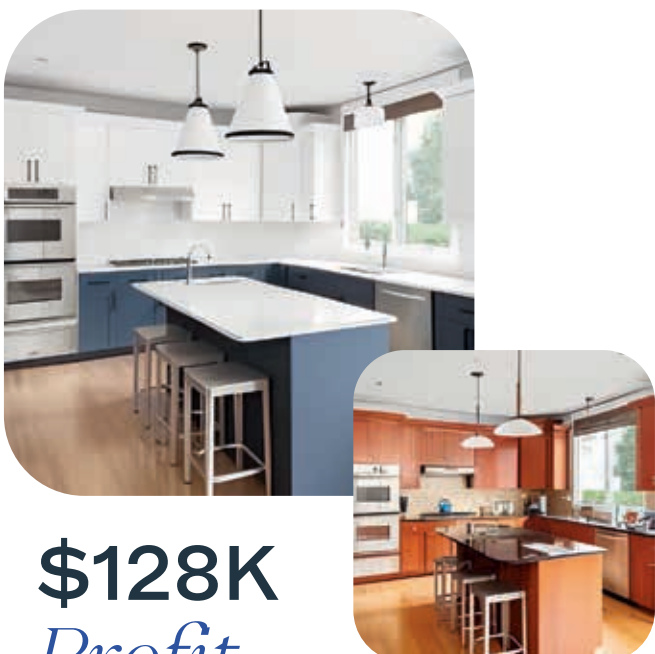
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RELENTLESS
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BY JESS WELLAR
PHOTOS BY
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For Joe Nugent, owner and CEO of Joe the Home Pro Home Inspections, two decades spent in hospitality is more than a resume filler — it defines the way he has built his business and his reputation in Southwest Florida.

“Relentless Service’ is our number one core pillar and I credit those hospitality days to being able to understand what it takes to have a service-based business be the best,” he explains.

Today, Joe leads one of the most trusted inspection companies in the region, with a thriving team, multiple locations, and a growing licensing division that’s taking his business nationwide.

Switching Gears

Born and raised in Cleveland, Joe attended Xavier University, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in communications. For 20 years, he thrived in hospitality, working his way up to director of sales and marketing for a large hotel company with several bumps along the way.

“In July of 2013, I lost my job. I was married at the time with two kids and tired of relying on other people to give me a paycheck,” Joe recalls. “I was watching HGTV and got the idea to look into inspections.”

Joe officially launched his inspection business in 2015, but it wasn’t an overnight leap. He ran Joe the

Home Pro on the side for five years, steadily building up a portfolio of clientele while working full-time. Then COVID hit and Joe lost his hospitality job again in June of 2020 — for the last time.

“COVID was the catalyst I needed to work for myself full-time,” Joe offers. “It also helped that the housing market here went ballistic during the pandemic so the timing didn’t hurt either!”

Setting the Standard

Joe runs his business like the service pro he’s always been — super methodical, intentional, and people-focused. It’s no wonder word of his company’s culture has spread, as Joe notes he currently has a “deep bench of people on the wait list” that he knows personally who want to work for him.

Currently, Joe the Home Pro Home Inspections has four employees, including three state-certified inspectors personally trained by Joe, and one office manager who, in his words, changed everything.

“Joe Pate has been the most influential and important hire,” Joe shares. “He has elevated everything we do and it goes to show that who you hire matters.”

Joe’s lead home inspector has been with him for five years, and he takes a tremendous amount of pride in knowing that his team was trained correctly from the outset.



Joe Nugent is the owner of Joe the Home Pro Home Inspections.

“We have one team member who worked for another inspection company for about a year but we trained him the Joe the Home Pro way! So there are no bad habits to break,” he points out. “The fact that we have multiple inspectors and can get to a home within 48 hours typically also helps. Our reports go out within two hours after we complete an inspection.”

What really sets his company apart, though, are its four pillars: In addition to Relentless Service, Joe’s business values Unwavering Ethics and Morals, Intentional Communication, and Community Centric values.

“I chose Unwavering Ethics and Morals to be on the right side of everything. I will never ask an employee to do something I wouldn’t do myself,” Joe emphasizes. “And Intentional Communication comes from my hospitality days, as I have always made a conscious effort to talk to people in terms they can understand so we’re all on the same page.”

“We’re also Community Centric, because we wouldn’t be here without community,” he adds. “We have an obligation to give back.”

That commitment shines through, as Joe and his team perform a Day of Service several times a year, while Joe himself chairs multiple committees, sits on local boards, and contributes to various nonprofits across Naples.



At the end of the day, though, it’s the impact on clients that drives him.

“This is the most expensive purchase someone will make in their lifetime,” he notes. “It is our job to help them understand their home, as well as help them avoid costly items in the future.”

Life Beyond the Business

When Joe isn’t scaling his business, he’s soaking up life with his two kids, Logan (15) and Maddy (13).

“We love to explore Southwest Florida, go to Disney, hit the beach and stay active,” he shares.

Weekends might find Joe on the water, traveling, or at Boston Beer Garden catching a game with friends. He’s also quick to admit he’s a foodie at heart.

“I love to check out the latest Southwest Florida restaurants,” he elaborates. “Blackbird and Tigress are two new spots I’d highly recommend.”

No Slowing Down

A decade into his inspection career, Joe sees a bright road ahead. He currently owns Tampa to Marco Island, with plans to expand all over the country, including Lynchburg, Virginia, and soon, Cincinnati, Ohio.

“As we grow and scale, I am in the process of purchasing another home inspection company. I am also currently licensing my company nationwide and want to help put 200 Veterans to work!” Joe says with conviction. “I am not a Veteran myself, but it is a cause that is near and dear to my heart. Veterans match perfectly with the skills required for home inspection.”

He even offers Veterans a 50 percent discount on licensing, equipping them with the tools to launch their own business. “We show them how to scale as we have a roadmap to success by offering essentially a ‘business in a box.’”

Looking ahead, Joe is both grateful and motivated. With more inspectors, more locations, and a nationwide licensing vision, he is building something much bigger than himself—he’s building opportunity, community, and trust.

“This industry is getting younger; COVID caused a lot of people to get out or sell,” he concludes. “And the ability to incorporate AI is something we are looking into so that we can add to our stellar customer service and make things even more efficient for ourselves and our clients.”



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RHONDA KEANE *Milligan*



**A
CUT
ABOVE**
BY JESS WELLAR
PHOTOS BY MICHELLE REED

“Doing hair for 22 years, and owning several salons, I realized my passion had shifted to real estate because I was buying and selling properties as an investor,” Rhonda Keane Milligan reflects. “My excitement only grew the more I got into the business, knowing it was going to be my next career. After helping friends and family buy and sell, I knew it was time for a change.”

As a Certified Luxury Home Marketing Specialist, Rhonda is the solo engine behind the Milligan Realty Team at SERHANT. in Fort Myers-Cape Coral. “We recently joined SERHANT. as part of the team leading the expansion of the brand in Fort Myers and Cape Coral, bringing a modern, media-driven approach to luxury real estate in Southwest Florida,

combining local market expertise with SERHANT’s innovative platform and global reach. We are instrumental in the expansion of the brand in this market, along with Bryan D. Keane.”

She runs lean by choice, leading a streamlined operation supported by her husband, a fellow SERHANT. agent, who is part of her team. As



her fun signature sign-off reminds every buyer and seller who lands in her inbox: “Help, help me, Rhonda!”, a fitting tagline from the Beach Boys classic.

Roots and Reinvention

Rhonda grew up in the small town of Newton, Iowa, then headed for Southern California to work after cosmetology school, ultimately planting roots in Florida. She spent decades behind the salon chair — from 1982 to 1989 in SoCal, then 15 more years once arriving in Southwest Florida — building a client-centric muscle she still uses in her second act.

The shift toward real estate started quietly with a growing appetite for investing with her ex. As the years passed, Rhonda noticed her fulfillment from acquiring properties for herself and loved ones had replaced her passion for cosmetology. She decided to make it official and bet on herself as a full-time Realtor in 2004.

When the local real estate market dipped shortly thereafter, she didn’t fold either; she relied on her hard-wired entrepreneurial instincts and quickly pivoted to owning and operating City Tavern (still going strong) and launched Fuel Tap & Tavern from the ground up.



“**I FOCUS ON THE PERSON, NOT THE SALE — FROM FIRST TALKING TO THEM TO THE CLOSING TABLE & LONG AFTER.**”



Rhonda’s husband, Barry, is an agent on her team.

After stepping out of real estate during the downturn from 2006 to 2012 to steer her hospitality ventures, Rhonda came roaring back when the timing and market synced and has been a consistent top producer ever since.

In 2024, she closed 27.5 transactions, landed among the Top 100 agents in Lee County, and ranked as a consistent Top 5 producer at her previous brokerage year after year. In 2025, she surpassed over 30 closings.

Ask what true success looks like though and Rhonda won’t cite numbers. She’ll talk about joyful outcomes and lasting friendships. But Rhonda wins listings because she brings the whole package — professionalism, poise, and presence. She’s hands-on with contractors, checks in daily, and never outsources the hard conversations.

“I focus on the person, not the sale — from first talking to them to the closing table and long after.” She means it; many clients become

lifelong friends, and those referrals not only keep her pipeline full, but also her social calendar.

Her salon background shows up everywhere as Rhonda deftly puts out fires while calming frazzled nerves. She’s not shy about the emotional curve of a sale either.

“Balancing emotional ups and downs of clients during the process can be quite challenging,” she admits. “But I try to stay calm and put the stress on myself instead of my clients to mitigate the toll on them. I really want my clients to feel supported every step of the way.

“I think that is the reason why I now have a very big friend group!” she adds with a laugh.

On the Homefront

Rhonda’s household is shared with her husband, Barry— together since 2012—and a lively teacup chihuahua named Kai who is one year old. Now empty nesters but idle by no means, Rhonda’s blended family includes





“

I REALLY WANT MY CLIENTS TO FEEL SUPPORTED EVERY STEP OF THE WAY.”

daughter Brittany Keane (40) who thrives in commercial real estate with Mayhugh Commercial; son Bryan David Keane (33), who sells residential real estate at SERHANT. in Fort Myers-Cape Coral (he is a key driver in helping shape the firm’s expansion and long-term footprint in the area), and two adult stepchildren, Brady (22), a residential elevator service tech, and Berkley (21), who’s on a fast-track nursing program.

Free time for Rhonda is kept SWFL-simple. “We love going to the gym, boating, going on long weekend trips, and spending time at our Funky Fish House in Cape Harbour when we aren’t renting it out,” she shares.

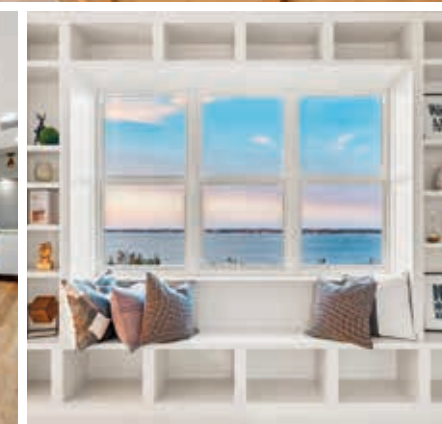
She keeps her social circle wide with plenty of client dinners, long walks, weekend workouts, and quick escapes with Barry to the Keys or North Captiva. Giving back threads through her annual agenda, too.

“We get invited to five or six different charity events per year so we support many different initiatives,” she notes. “We also like to donate a week’s stay at Funky Fish House to several charities to auction off for fundraisers.”

Looking ahead, there’s a family milestone on the horizon that Rhonda is eagerly anticipating: her son’s June 2026 wedding to fiancée Amanda in Los Cabos. As for the next professional chapter?

“I want to continue to be an exceptional, hands-on real estate agent while writing a new version of myself, both professionally and personally, each year,” she concludes. “I have mentored a lot of new agents that tend to call me for some reason, and I look forward to helping them and many more clients as well.”

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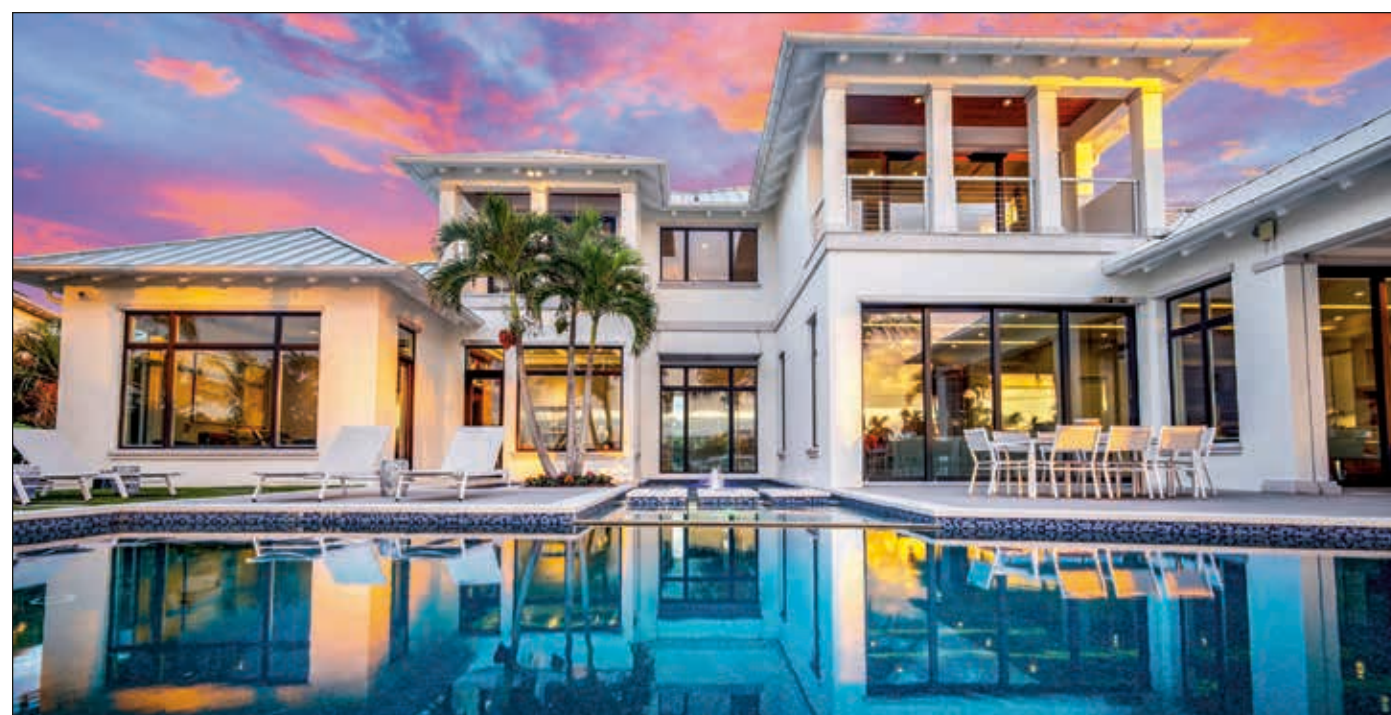


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