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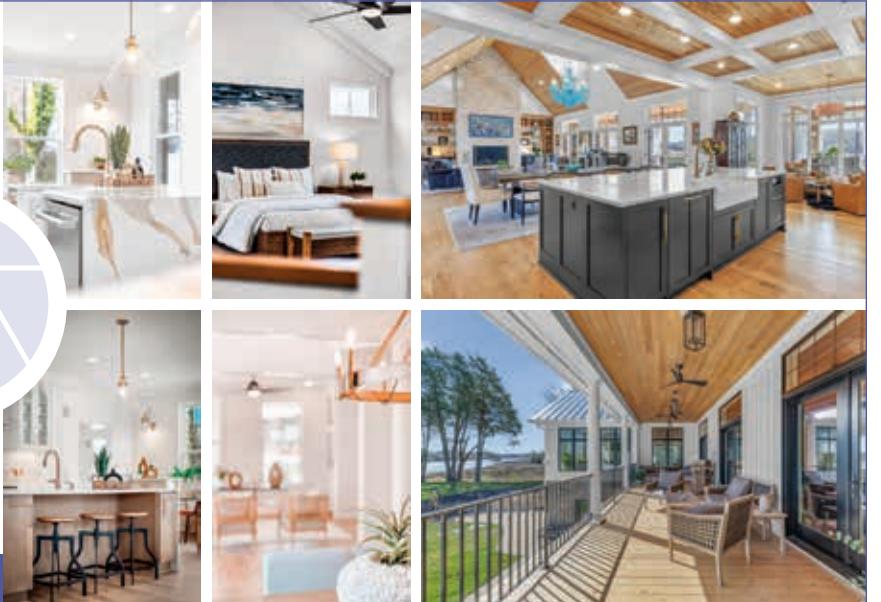
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BAY CREEK
Cape Charles, Virginia

Contents



Jennifer Cool **16**
COVER STORY

PROFILES



48 Haley Morgan & Taylor Hinson



24

Pamela Brown



30

David Burchett & Daniel Caro



42

Mellissa Hecker

IN THIS ISSUE

- 4 Preferred Partners**
- 10 Meet the Team**
- 12 Publisher's Note**
- 14 2025 By the Numbers**
- 16 Cover Story: Jennifer Cool**
- 24 On the Rise: Pamela Brown**
- 28 Real Producers: The Place to Find Your People**
- 30 Partner Spotlight: David Burchett & Daniel Caro, Arbor Home Loans**
- 36 Event Recap: VIP Magazine Celebration**
- 42 Featured Agent: Mellissa Hecker**
- 48 Partner Spotlight: Haley Morgan & Taylor Hinson, Hanger Law**
- 52 Hampton Roads REALTOR® Association**



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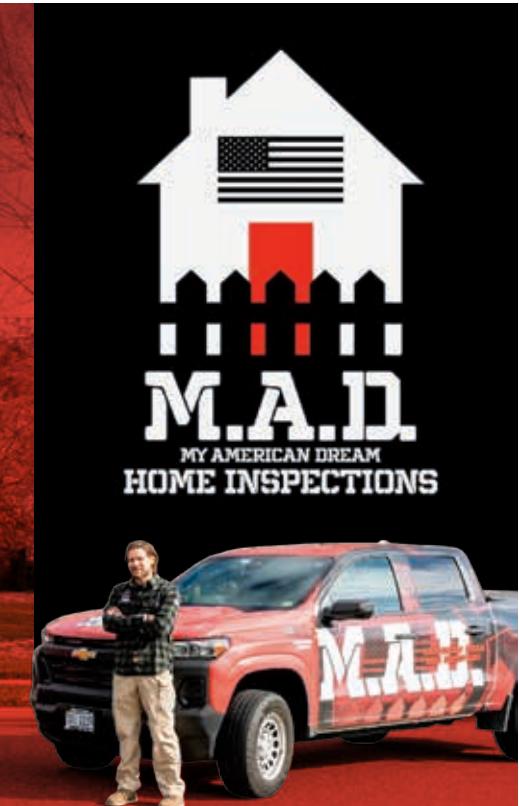
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February is a reminder that the most meaningful partnerships are built on trust, care, and consistency. Choosing the right lending partner is a commitment to protecting the client experience you've worked so hard to build. Carrie Williams, voted **Best Mortgage Broker** two years in a row by Coastal Virginia Magazine, leads the Revolution Mortgage team with intention, reliability, and a refined approach. She delivers thoughtful communication and ensures seamless closings from the first conversation to the final signature.

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2026

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access, and because of this exclusivity, our elevated conversations remain relevant and valuable for high-performing professionals.

If you're eligible, we invite you to join us here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/HRRP1>

Only agents from last year's list and this year's list are included in the group. While we understand that falling off the list can be disappointing, maintaining the integrity of this group is essential to keeping it impactful for everyone involved.

Show Off Your 2026 Top 500 Badge

We've released the 2026 Top 500 badges, and this year brought some exciting changes. Of the Top 500 agents in the market, 160 agents fell off the list, and 160 new or returning agents earned their place. Congratulations to everyone who made the list—we can't wait to celebrate you in person at our upcoming event.

Raise a Glass at Toast to the Top

Please mark your calendar: We're starting the year strong with one of our most anticipated events: **Toast to the Top on Tuesday, March 10, 2026**. We have sent invitations and look forward to honoring you and celebrating your success. More events are already in the works, and we'll share details as we finalize plans.



As we enter the second month of 2026, we have exciting initiatives and events planned for our Top 500 community.

Join the Top 500 Private Facebook Group

Our private Top 500 Facebook Group is live and thriving. This group serves as a hyper-local space for the best of the best to collaborate. Only Top 500 agents and our vetted preferred partners have

Explore the Website for Exclusive Resources

Our website, hrrealproducers.com, continues to improve, and we couldn't be happier with how it's evolving. We included links to the Agent-Only and Partner-Only sections of the site in the 2026 badge email we sent out. On the website, you'll find:

- Your 2026 Top 500 badge to download
- Event invitations
- Event photos and videos
- Every magazine issue from the past two years
- Detailed profiles of our vetted preferred partners

As a reminder, our preferred partners allow us to do what we do for top agents at no cost to you. Please support them with your referrals.

Be sure to bookmark the website and check back often.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to joni@realproducersmag.com or call me directly at 757-348-7809.

I look forward to seeing you around town, and here's to 2026 being everyone's best year yet.



Cheers,
Joni

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2025

BY THE NUMBERS

HERE'S WHAT HAMPTON ROADS TOP 500 REAL ESTATE AGENTS SOLD

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TOTAL VOLUME

TOTAL UNITS

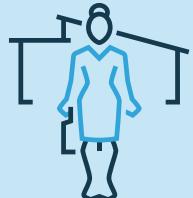


15,248



AVERAGE VOLUME PER AGENT

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AVERAGE UNITS PER AGENT

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Jennifer Cool

For Jennifer Cool, real estate is about serving people, structure, purpose, and the quiet confidence that comes from knowing she's doing what she was designed to do. "I don't see myself as a salesperson," she says. "I see myself as a teacher and a guide. My job is to help people make good decisions. It's never been about the sale. It's always about the person."

Jennifer has been in real estate since 1997. Over the years, she's built her reputation on two strengths: her ability to lead with humility and her love for the analytical, process-driven side of the business. "I love the systems," she shares. "I love teaching buyers and sellers about the strategies they need to be successful and the effective processes that promote lasting relationships by keeping details front of mind."

Before she entered the industry, Jennifer worked as a high school Spanish teacher. Her background in education taught her how to listen. "Teaching gave me patience and structure," she states. "It taught me how to communicate clearly and meet people where they are. Those are the same skills I use with clients today."

Her first exposure to real estate came from her family's longtime agent, Joan King, who made a lasting impression. "Joan was the ultimate professional," Jennifer comments. "She always looked the part, always carried herself with grace, and was service-minded to her core. Even when a transaction was not on the table, she still showed up for people. That stuck with me."

After earning her license, Jennifer spent two years immersed in learning with industry leader Charlee Gowin. Charlee taught her the mechanics of the business, how to manage systems, and how to stay organized and anticipate needs before they arose. "That experience shaped everything for me," she notes. "I learned how to run an efficient, intentional, and service-oriented business."

Today, Jennifer is a cornerstone at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices RW Towne Realty, where she's spent nearly two decades helping families

Berkshire Hathaway
HomeServices
RW Towne Realty

STORY BY DAN CLARK
PHOTOS BY LEAH WALLACE,
LEAH ARIEL PHOTOGRAPHY

navigate one of the most significant decisions of their lives. "What I love most about this company is the professionalism and the camaraderie," she mentions. "It's a true powerhouse of people who care about doing things the right way. That energy pushes me to keep learning and growing."

Jennifer has served in multiple educational and leadership roles with the Hampton Roads REALTORS® Association (HRRA), where she continues to give back to the industry she loves. "I've always felt called to serve," she highlights. "Whether helping new agents find their footing or teaching a class, I get a lot of joy out of seeing others grow."

That servant-leader mindset shows up everywhere in her business. Jennifer believes every client deserves transparency, education, and empathy. "People come to me scared sometimes," she states. "They're moving through major life transitions—a new job, a loss, a divorce, or an opportunity. My role is to take the stress out of it and bring order to the chaos."

Her calm, process-driven approach gives her clients peace of mind. "I'm analytical by nature," she mentions. "I like numbers and structure." She knows that real estate will always throw curveballs, and letting fear of the future keep her from meeting her client's needs would be easy. However, she sees it as an opportunity to grow and show clients how she can best serve them through the uncertainty. "That's how I protect and keep clients," she explains. "I can't control the market, but I can control the process."

Jennifer's analytical side might be what keeps things running smoothly, but her heart for people keeps them coming back. She's built her business almost entirely through referrals, a testament to the relationships she's nurtured over time. "When someone calls and



Photo provided
by Jennifer Cool

says, 'You helped my parents years ago, and they said you're the only one I should trust,' that means everything," she says. "That's success to me."

Outside of work, Jennifer's life centers on faith, family, and community. She and her husband of nearly 30 years love boating along the Chesapeake Bay and exploring the hidden coves of Virginia's waterways. They also share a passion for maintaining the integrity of the land and waterways in Hampton Roads, working with Coastal Virginia Conservancy to preserve the beauty of the region they call home. "We've helped conserve over 1,200 acres here locally," she exclaims. "It's important to give back to the place that's given us so much."

She also serves on HRRA's Foundation Board, where she helps develop community outreach and support initiatives. "I love serving behind the scenes," she says. "It's about creating opportunities for others and strengthening the foundation of what we do as REALTORS®."

For Jennifer, service is the mission. Whether she's helping a young family find their first home, guiding a colleague through their first year in the business, or leading a project that benefits the community, she brings the same steady energy and sense of purpose. "I'm wired to help," she asserts. "That's what fills me up. I love the details, the learning, and the leadership. I love knowing that the work I do makes someone's life just a little bit better."

In a business often driven by speed and volume, Jennifer Cool stands as proof that true success comes from consistency, clarity, and heart. She's building trust, one family, one student, and one relationship at a time.



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- Nathan G.

"Justin was professional, quick, and an overall amazing help with making this journey easy. Happy to have him on my side walking me through things."

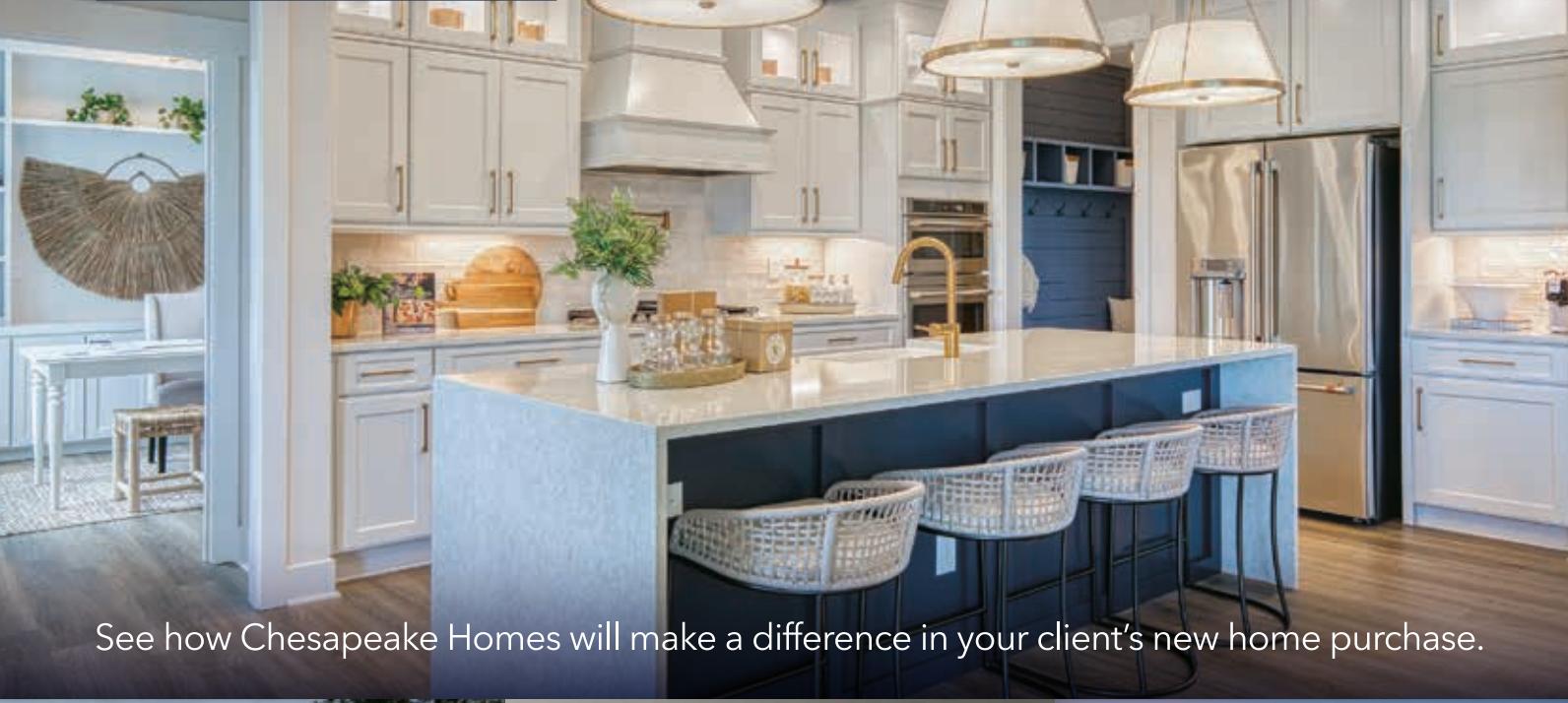
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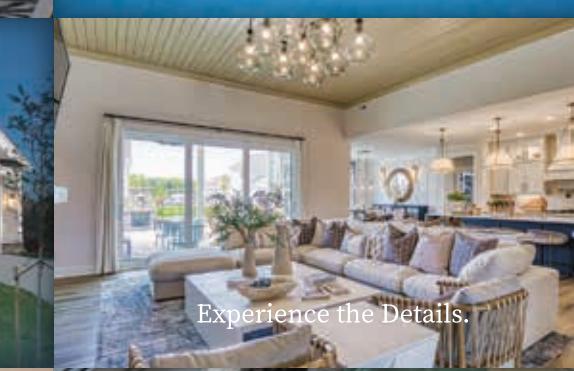
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THE DIFFERENCE

The map shows the coastline of Virginia Beach, Virginia, with major cities like Hampton, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach marked. Numbered callouts point to specific communities: 1. Townes at Coliseum Central (Hampton, VA); 2. River Club (Suffolk, VA); 3. Creekside Reserve (Suffolk, VA); 4. Edgewater (Suffolk, VA); 5. Haven at Centerville (Chesapeake, VA); 6. Ashville Park (Virginia Beach, VA); 7. Walker Grove (Chesapeake, VA); 8. Waterleigh (Moyock, NC); and 9. Albemarle Plantation (Hertford, NC). Each community has a small image and a brief description.

1 **Townes at Coliseum Central**
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2 **River Club**
SUFFOLK, VA
Welcome to the heart of Suffolk, where you can call the community River Club home. While located close to various city centers, the community itself offers lots of entertainment with its many proposed community amenities.

3 **Creekside Reserve**
SUFFOLK, VA
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4 **Edgewater**
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PAMELA Brown

KELLER WILLIAMS COASTAL VIRGINIA

STORY BY MADDIE PODISH

PHOTOS BY ANDREW WOODS, ANDREW E. WOODS PHOTOGRAPHY

When the world shut down in 2020, most people put their dreams on hold. Pamela Brown did the opposite. Amid business closures and widespread uncertainty, she took a leap of faith and launched her real estate career. This move would test her resilience and reveal her natural ability to thrive under pressure.

Long before real estate, Pamela had already built a solid foundation in sales. "Previously, I worked at Jared the Galleria of Jewelry as a gemologist," she says. "I also ran a women's boutique, which had me traveling up and down the East Coast." Those experiences gave her an instinct for reading people, a sharp eye for value, and a genuine understanding of customer service.

But even with her success, Pamela found herself craving something more profound. "I wanted more stability and to be able to give back to my community in a more meaningful way," she reflects.

That desire for purpose led her straight into real estate. "I came right in the beginning of COVID-19," Pamela recalls. "It was honestly a great market for me. I sold about 10 homes in my first six months." Her success wasn't by chance; it was the product of years spent honing her craft. Drawing from her entrepreneurial background, she seamlessly carried over her experience in communication, strategy, and customer connection, blending them into her real estate practice.

While others were learning to navigate a new virtual world, Pamela saw possibilities. Her background in retail and business ownership had already taught her how to sell without a storefront. So when in-person meetings disappeared, she leaned into what she knew would get the job done—

social media. "Everything was online, and I knew that to succeed, I had to market on social media," she explains. That early digital focus allowed her to connect with clients even when face-to-face meetings weren't possible. By showcasing listings virtually and sharing valuable insight, she created steady momentum that propelled her forward.

Her adaptability paid off quickly. "I had my first buyer, a listing, a cash deal, and a short sale all within my first month of real estate," she says with a smile. That rapid-fire experience with different transaction types gave her confidence and versatility that would carry her far beyond her first year.

Real estate quickly became a calling. For Pamela, it represented the perfect balance of business and service, which includes her investment portfolio. "They're all give-back home rentals," she explains about her investment



properties. "I wanted to help support battered women and children and mental health agency group homes." Her sister, a licensed clinical social worker, played a key role in inspiring this mission. "My sister has always been in that field," shares Pamela, who provides affordable, stable housing and contributes to programs that help people rebuild their lives.

Pamela's heart for service extends far beyond her investment portfolio. "Every Christmas, I sponsor at least two less fortunate families a year," she



“

I told myself, from the beginning, that young Pam has to take care of old Pam. What you do right now should secure your future for later years.”

comments. “I also enjoy spending time giving back through my church.”

Family is at the heart of everything Pamela does. Her two beautiful daughters, Amiyah and Jalayah, are already embracing an entrepreneurial mindset of their own. Pamela takes pride in knowing she has built a successful foundation for them. Both girls currently own four houses each. Her oldest daughter is preparing to join the business full-time. “When my daughter graduates next year, she will be preparing to take over my residential sales department so I can focus solely on investments,” Pamela states. The plan reflects her

belief in generational wealth, not just through property ownership, but also through mindset and leadership. While selling homes, she’s showing her daughters how to build empires.

Despite her ambitious goals, Pamela remains centered and grounded. “I focus on keeping my life in harmony, staying spiritually grounded, mentally strong, and physically healthy,” she states. That balance, she believes, is what allows her to sustain the energy and passion her business demands.

Her approach keeps her moving with clarity and purpose. “I told myself, from the beginning, that

young Pam has to take care of old Pam,” she remarks. “What you do right now should secure your future for later years.” That philosophy, anchored in faith, has guided her every step. “I’m just growing through grace,” she adds.

Pamela’s rise in real estate was no coincidence; it was purpose meeting preparation. Her background in sales gave her the skills to succeed, but at the root of her journey is her faith, which grounds her decisions, shapes her relationships, and drives every step of her business. “God is the center of my business,” she says with conviction. “He has not failed me yet.”

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David Burchett & Daniel Caro

ARBOR HOME LOANS

STORY BY MADDIE PODISH
PHOTOS BY DARREN MYERS,
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When Daniel Caro and David Burchett decided to launch Arbor Home Loans in April 2024, their goal wasn't a reinvention. It was a realignment. After decades in the mortgage world, both men recognized a shift taking place. They saw an opportunity to build a company that reflected where the industry is heading and how they believe it should operate. As Daniel states, Arbor Home Loans is "built on a foundation of trust, innovation, and a client-first approach."



They have woven that philosophy into their brand promise: ROOTED IN TRUST. PARTNERING IN SUCCESS, which is more than a tagline—it's the result of intention meeting experience.

Daniel, CEO, has spent 24 years in mortgage finance. David, the president and co-founder, brings 33 years to the table. "Fifteen years of working side by side—we've seen it all," David jokes. Their long-standing collaboration built the



foundation for the seamless operation the business is known for today.

From the beginning, their vision was clear: create a company that evolves with the industry while keeping a boutique, relationship-driven feel. "We wanted boots on the ground with local people supporting local people," Daniel explains. Despite that local-first approach, the company is licensed in all 49 states, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. "We like to say we're national in reach but local at heart," David adds.

For David, one of the biggest draws to the industry has always been the sheer complexity of mortgage lending. But at Arbor, complexity becomes opportunity. "The tough deals are the fun ones," he says. "Give us the puzzle pieces. Odds are we can make them fit."

Arbor's lending approach reflects that mindset. "We don't believe in one-size-fits-all lending," Daniel remarks. "Everything we do starts with real-world solutions, not rigid guidelines." Powered by a \$2 billion portfolio and a unique portfolio lending platform, the team can create custom financing strategies many lenders can't, especially when tackling challenges that frustrate agents and buyers the most. Contingent contracts, for example, often stop deals before they start. Arbor's answer: the Cross-Collateralized Bridge Loan. "It lets buyers finance up to 100% of their next home before selling their current one," Daniel shares. "No domino effect, no stress. Just freedom to move."



High interest rates pose another challenge. The Arbor Rate Advantage program allows sellers to offer buyers a below-market rate without additional upfront costs. "It can boost buying power by 20-30%," David notes. "The program is a game-changer for listings that have been sitting."

Then there's construction lending—one of Arbor's strongest specialties. With both One-Time and Two-Time-Close Construction Loans, plus a VA One-Time Close option at 100% financing, they stand out in a crowded market. Pair that with their flexible Lot Loan program, and Arbor becomes a go-to partner for builders and future homeowners dreaming from the ground up.

Offerings also include Non-QM Portfolio loans, DSCR loans, Bank Statement programs, Fix-and-Flip funding, and Reverse Mortgages for purchase or refinance. "If it exists, we probably do it," David laughs. "And if it doesn't exist, we'll figure out a smart way to make it happen."

But great programs mean nothing without follow-through, which is where Arbor truly sets itself apart. Its simple internal motto sums up its operations philosophy: We Make You Look Good. "We understand an agent's reputation is on the line with every referral," David comments. "If we don't communicate, and if we don't deliver, that reflects on them. And that's not acceptable."



To support that promise, Arbor built a Localized Operations Team that functions as an extension of the sales side. Many team members have more than 20 years of experience, and underwriting is grounded in what they call Common Sense Underwriting. "If a deal makes sense, we fight for it," Daniel mentions. "We're not in the business of saying no when yes is possible."

The process prioritizes efficiency without sacrificing accuracy. With Direct-to-Underwriting Approvals, Full TBD Underwriting, dedicated processors, underwriters, closers, and cutting-edge technology, files move quickly and seamlessly. "We want clients saying, 'That was it?' at the closing table," David asserts.

Arbor's support doesn't stop with lending. Its in-house marketing team partners with agents to build and elevate brand presence through fast, strategic, and customized marketing assets. "If we can help grow your business, we will," Daniel promises. "Your success is literally written into our mission."

Culturally, Arbor is built on authenticity, leadership through service, and a genuine commitment to doing what's right. Daniel is passionate about preserving the human touch in an increasingly digital world. David says their leadership style centers on humility. "We work for our team," he insists. "Not the other way around."

Outside the office, Daniel, originally from Connecticut, enjoys woodworking when he's not running between kids' activities. David is happiest on a golf course, located only a mile from his home and office.

Together, David and Daniel have built more than a mortgage company. They've built a place where innovation meets empathy, where leadership is rooted in service, and where each loan represents a family's future. "Mortgages aren't transactions," Daniel stresses. "They're stepping stones to stability, community, and legacy." David adds, "Nothing beats seeing the joy and hope on someone's face at the closing table. That's why we do what we do."

Arbor Home Loans is proving that when trust, vision, and heart align, success is achievable and inevitable.

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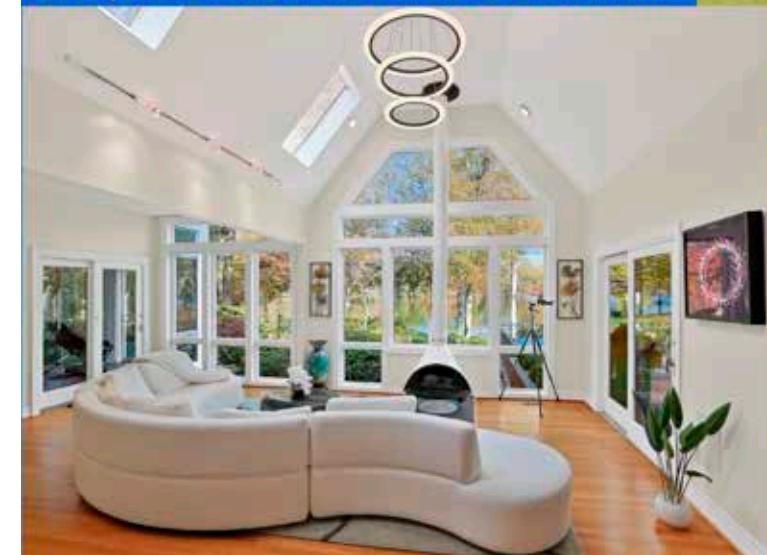
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VIP MAGAZINE CELEBRATION WRAPS UP THE YEAR

ARTICLE BY PUBLISHER
JONI GIORDANO-BOWLING
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What a way to close out another year! Our December VIP Magazine Celebration brought together agents and friends from recent issues to honor the outstanding professionals and stories we featured in *Hampton Roads Real Producers*. The energy in the room reflected the dedication, hard work, and excellence we showcased on our pages in 2025.

Being featured in *Real Producers* is no small feat. Agents must meet strict production requirements, receive a nomination, pass our team's vetting process, and often wait months—or even years—before their story is published. Every feature is a true marker of achievement and a reason to celebrate.

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1) Source: www.scotsmanguide.com/rankings/top-mortgage-lenders/2023-top-retail-lenders/ 2) Source: www.wsj.com/buyside/personal-finance/best-mortgage-lenders-d0ea859d 3) Results may vary. Conditions apply. 4) Source: www.housingwire.com/articles/announcing-the-2024-tech100-mortgage-winners/ 5) LMPI availability is subject to qualifications. 192 Ballard Ct., Suite 100, Virginia Beach, VA 23462 | loanDepot.com, LLC NMLS ID 174457 (www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org). Licensed by the VA Bureau of Financial Institutions MC-5431, (040224 131872-2014b)



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Mellissa Hecker

Iron Valley Real Estate

STORY BY DAN CLARK • STORY BY LEAH WALLACE, LEAH ARIEL PHOTOGRAPHY

For Mellissa, life rarely moves in straight lines. She's a wife, mom, and full-time real estate agent juggling soccer schedules, clients, and dogs. Some days feel like chaos, but she handles the madness with humor and heart. "Soccer season, work, all the things," she says. "I feel like we're always going, but that's life right now."

Mellissa is a real estate agent with Iron Valley Real Estate Prestige, and she's quick to share how much she loves the culture. "We have incredible training and so many people who are genuinely supportive," she shares. "You can feel the energy in the office. Everyone's working hard, but we are all friends, too. It's the perfect mix of productivity and fun."

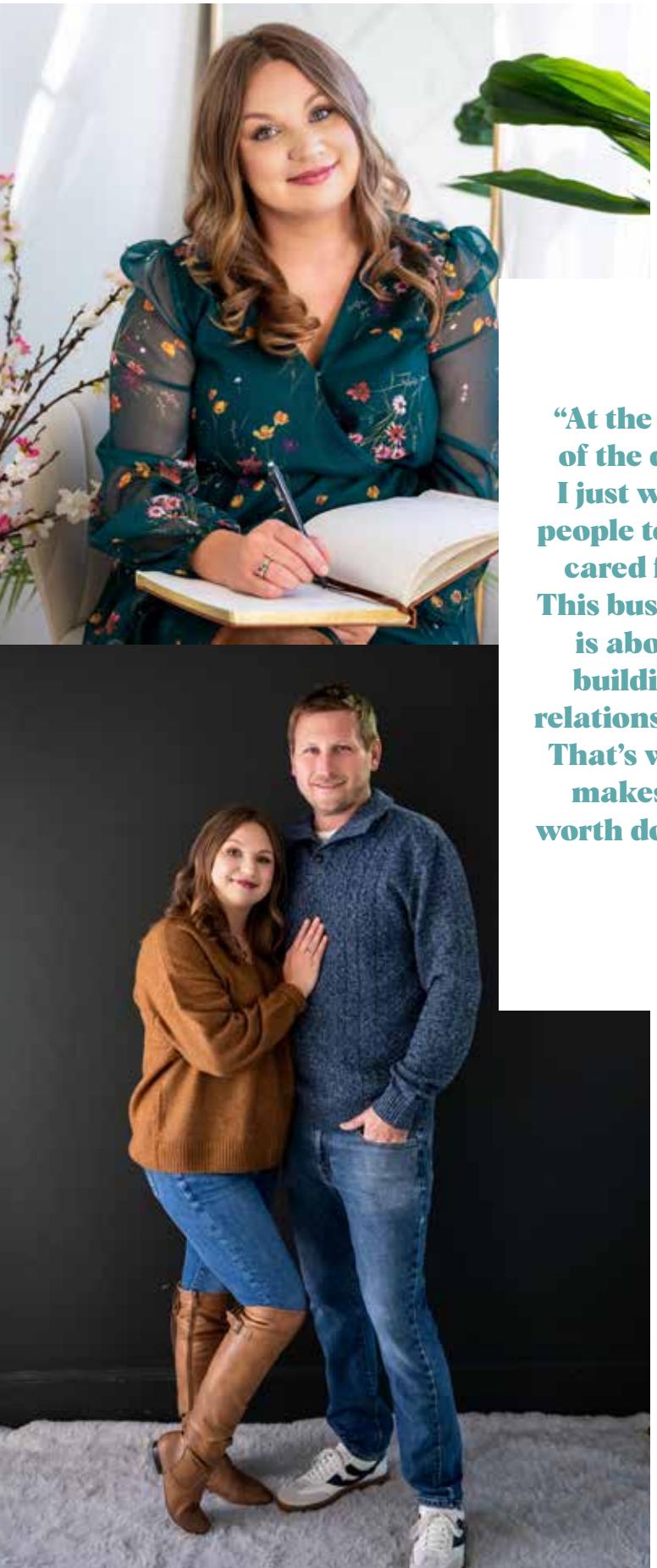
Before real estate, Mellissa worked for an industrial refrigeration and HVAC company, managing payroll and front-office operations. "Completely different

world," she comments. "I went from handling refrigeration systems to real estate contracts. But the work taught me organization, communication, and how to follow through, which I use every single day."

Those skills, combined with her people-first mindset, helped her build a foundation of authenticity. Mellissa doesn't buy leads or chase internet traffic. Her business is 100% referral-based, built on relationships and reputation. "It just evolved that way," she proudly states. "I used to think I needed to be everywhere all the time, but that wore me out. I realized my happiest clients are the ones who come from trust and connection. It feels better that way."

Her approach is simple—show up for people when it matters. "I'm more of a sprinkler," she exclaims. "I don't wait until closing to give a gift. I check in along the way. If





clients are packing and stressed, I'll drop off boxes. If I know they're exhausted, I'll send dinner or coffee. I'm not about being flashy. I'm about letting them know I see them."

Originally from upstate New York, Mellissa grew up in the small rural town of Canajoharie, the kind of place where everyone knows everyone. "It's literally middle-of-nowhere America," she reflects. "We'd trick-or-treat in snowsuits. I used to haul wood through the snow to heat the house. It was simple, but it taught me that family and community matter more than anything."

She moved to Virginia in her early 20s after visiting her sister. "We were raking leaves in t-shirts in November," she laughs. "I went back home, packed my car, and said, 'I'm out.' I was done with the cold."

Now, years later, she and her husband, Matthew, have built a life in Virginia Beach with their 16-year-old son and two dogs. "Our son is into soccer, so this year, I became the team manager; I wanted to reconnect with him through something he loves," she beams. "The role is busy but worth it."

When she's not working or managing tournaments, Mellissa loves quiet time at home. "I'm pretty simple," she notes. "I like to read, hang out with my family, and be still. The world's hectic enough. When I'm home, I want peace."

Her husband is the opposite. "He's always got a new business idea," she says, smiling. "I'll be on the couch with the dogs, and he's building spreadsheets or talking about his next project. He's the wild one, and I'm the calm one. It works."

That balance carries over into their shared work, too. Matthew invests in real estate with his brother, Ben, and flips properties, while Mellissa handles the listings. "He's the visionary," she explains. "He walks into a house and immediately knows what walls to move, what color palette to use, how to transform the space. It blows my mind how he sees it all before it's even started. When I finally get to list it, it feels like the finishing touch on something we built together."

That partnership, both at home and in business, keeps her grounded. She knows how chaotic life can get, and she's built her career around bringing calm to the process for others. "Buying or selling is stressful," she stresses. "People need someone who listens, slows things down, and cares. That's who I try to be."

Mellissa's story is about consistency, relationships, and heart. She's proof that success doesn't have to come from hustle culture or perfection. It comes from showing up for her clients, her family, and herself.

"At the end of the day," she states, "I just want people to feel cared for. This business is about building relationships. That's what makes it worth doing."



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Together, James and Gloria form the leadership team that keeps UAM family-strong, locally focused, and performance-driven. Their combined experience shapes the culture that Real Producers agents experience: personal service, fast execution, and mortgage expertise that strengthens your business.

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MEET HALEY — *Relationship Manager*

What unique strengths or perspectives do you bring to the job that make a difference for clients and coworkers?

As the Relationship Manager at Hanger Law, one of my biggest strengths is my genuine love for people. I thrive on building relationships, connecting dots, and helping others grow. My background in marketing and community building helps me see the big picture, but my heart is in the details—checking in on agents, making sure clients feel taken care of, and creating experiences that feel personal, not transactional. I want everyone who works with us to feel like they have a real partner in their corner.

Who has been a mentor or motivator for you along the way, and what's one piece of advice from them that's stuck with you?

I'm constantly inspired by strong women in business—women who are honest, generous, and love to build others up. One piece of advice that's stuck with me is: "People may forget what you said, but they won't forget how you made them feel." That idea drives everything, from how I show up for agents and clients to why I started two women's networking groups, DowntownNFKLadies and PeninsulaVALadies. I want people to walk away from a conversation with me feeling seen, encouraged, and supported.

How do your personal values show up in your daily work or in the way you connect with clients?

Remembering my "why" is essential. Real estate and law can be intense, but at the end of the day, we're helping people with some of the biggest moments of their lives. Getting out to events, cheering on my people, volunteering in our community, and spending time with my husband at the baseball field all help refill my cup.

When things get hectic, what helps you stay focused and energized?

My work is rooted in authenticity and service. I show up the same way with clients, agents, and coworkers as I do with my family, friends, and community—genuine, present, and invested. People can feel the difference when you genuinely care, and I try to lead every interaction with kindness, clarity, and follow-through. For me, my work is not just about getting



the closing or checking a box; it's about building trust, creating authentic relationships, and making sure people feel supported every step of the way. Whether I'm answering late-night questions, connecting folks to a resource, or simply celebrating their wins, I want the people I work with to feel valued and cared for.

Connect with Haley Morgan

757-737-5223 | hmorgan@hangerlaw.com

at Hanger Law

WE CAUGHT UP WITH HALEY MORGAN AND TAYLOR HINSON, TWO OF THE FIRM'S EXPERTS IN PEOPLEWORK.

MEET TAYLOR — *Director of Marketing*

What's your role at Hanger Law, and how does your work serve the team and clients?

I wear a lot of hats at Hanger Law, which is one thing I love about my role. I am the Director of Marketing; I manage our Virginia Beach office; support operations, HR, and IT; oversee our First Impressions Team in each office; and run our event venue, The Rooftop at Hanger Law. At the core of everything I do is one goal: making sure our clients feel confident, welcome,



and taken care of while our team has the tools and support they need to do their best work. I'm incredibly proud of the culture within Hanger Law. It's collaborative, fast-paced, and people-first. I truly enjoy showing up every day with this team.

Every career has its challenges—what's been one of yours, and how did you work through it?

One of my biggest challenges has been balancing growth with sustainability. When you're driven and capable, it's easy to take everything on yourself. I've learned that leadership isn't about doing it all; it's about building trust, empowering others, and creating systems that allow everyone to thrive. Letting go of perfection and focusing on progress has been a game-changer. Also, you mustn't be scared to delegate.

With the legal world constantly evolving, how do you stay on top of new trends or tools that help you do your job even better?

I stay curious and open to learning. Whether it's new marketing platforms, technology tools, or operational systems, I'm always learning and paying attention to what our clients and team need next. The legal world may evolve, but strong relationships, adaptability, and excellent service will never go out of style.

If you could give one piece of advice to someone just starting their career—or to your younger self—what would it be?

Don't be afraid to ask questions or raise your hand for opportunities that feel a little intimidating. Some of the most rewarding moments in my career came from stepping outside my comfort zone. Also, find people you enjoy working with—culture and relationships matter more than any job title.

Connect with Taylor

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Jay Mitchell, 2026 HRRA
Immediate Past President,
and Phil Kazmierczak, 2026
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HRRA Celebrates Leadership and Service at Annual Installation & Service Awards Luncheon

BY AUBRÉA GREEN, HAMPTON ROADS REALTORS® ASSOCIATION, SVP OF COMMUNICATIONS & EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

On December 3, 2025, the Hampton Roads REALTORS® Association (HRRA) hosted its annual Installation & Service Awards Luncheon, a signature event that honors excellence in real estate leadership and recognizes members who have gone above and beyond in service to the association and the industry.

This year's luncheon was more than a celebration. It was a powerful reminder

of the impact REALTORS® have on the communities they serve. From advocacy and education to innovation and professionalism, HRRA members continue to set the standard for real estate in Hampton Roads.

The event marked the official installation of its 2026 Board of Directors, which will guide HRRA through a year of growth, education,

and advocacy. Leading the charge is Phil Kazmierczak, who will serve as President. Joining him are Gladys Fain, President-Elect; Jay Mitchell, Immediate Past President; Melissa Gates, Vice President; and Gregory Chaplain, Treasurer. The 2026 Directors include Jennifer Dawn, Kimberly Denton, Jason Dunaway, Kim Georges, Shevika Hannah, Christian Harris, Eric Hovik, Mimi Kopassis, Marilyn Rivera,



Sherri Thaxton, and Rob Waring. These leaders represent a diverse cross-section of the real estate industry and bring a wealth of experience and vision to the association.

In addition to installing new leadership, HRRA recognized members who demonstrated exceptional commitment to the association and the profession throughout 2025. The President's Awards for Outstanding Service, presented by 2025 President Jay Mitchell, and several Service Awards highlighted individuals whose contributions have strengthened HRRA and elevated the REALTOR® brand. To view the full list of award recipients, visit hrra.com/service-awards.

The Installation & Service Awards Luncheon is more than an annual tradition—it's a reflection of what

sets REALTORS® apart. Our members don't just sell homes; they advocate for property rights, adhere to a strict Code of Ethics, and invest in professional development to better serve their clients and communities.

In 2026, HRRA will focus on embracing innovation with purpose, expanding education opportunities—including the launch of the HRRA Leadership Institute—and strengthening advocacy efforts at every level of government. These initiatives underscore HRRA's commitment to helping members thrive in a rapidly evolving industry while maintaining the trust and integrity that define the REALTOR® brand. As incoming President Phil Kazmierczak shared during his address, "My vision for 2026 is one where every member feels empowered—technologically,

educationally, and personally—to not just keep up with change, but to lead it."

With nearly 4,000 members across Hampton Roads, HRRA's influence extends far beyond transactions. Our members are community leaders, mentors, and advocates who shape the future of real estate and protect the rights of property owners. For non-member agents, the luncheon serves as a reminder to consider the value of REALTOR® membership—not just for your business, but for the industry and the clients we serve.

As we step into 2026, HRRA remains dedicated to empowering members with tools, education, and opportunities to lead. Together, HRRA members will continue to raise the bar for professionalism and ensure that Hampton Roads remains a vibrant, thriving market for years to come.

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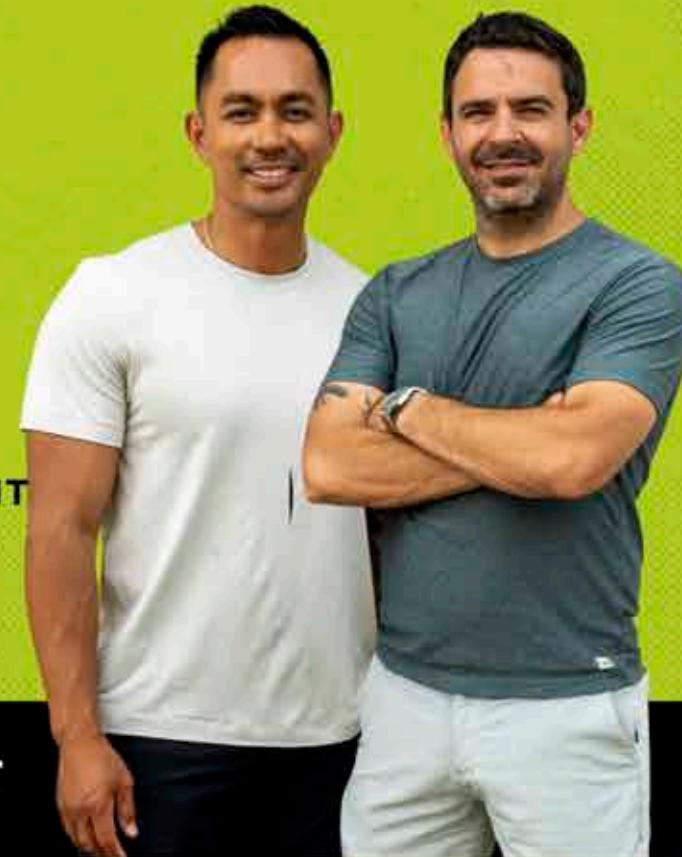
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