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Meet The Team

Cover photo by Cory & Mindy Poff, Poff Media Group



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Elaine Sheffrey



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2025

BY THE NUMBERS

HERE'S WHAT SARASOTA & MANATEE TOP 500 REALTORS® SOLD IN 2025



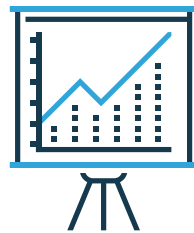
\$10,420,371,000

TOTAL SALES VOLUME



14,461

TOTAL TRANSACTIONS



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Joe Ebert

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STORY BY JACKI DONALDSON
PHOTOS BY MINDY & CORY POFF,
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In 2014, Joe Ebert was a newly licensed real estate agent in a new town. The New Jersey native had moved to Sarasota with his father and brother in search of sun, sand, and surf, but he didn't know many people and knew he had to start strong if he was going to succeed in real estate.

Determined to build a successful business, Joe partnered with a real estate coach and invested in professional development, mentorship, and learning from top performers in the industry.



"Each year has gotten better, and in the past five years, my business has really taken off," Joe shares. In his early days, he supplemented his income with boat rental and sales businesses, which he later sold after becoming an accomplished agent. He now works alongside his wife and marketing director, Amber, as well as his transaction assistant, Anna.

The first lesson Joe learned from coaching was how to deliver superior customer service. "As a result, everything I do is 100% based on the client's best interest rather than mine," he states, adding that he grew up in an

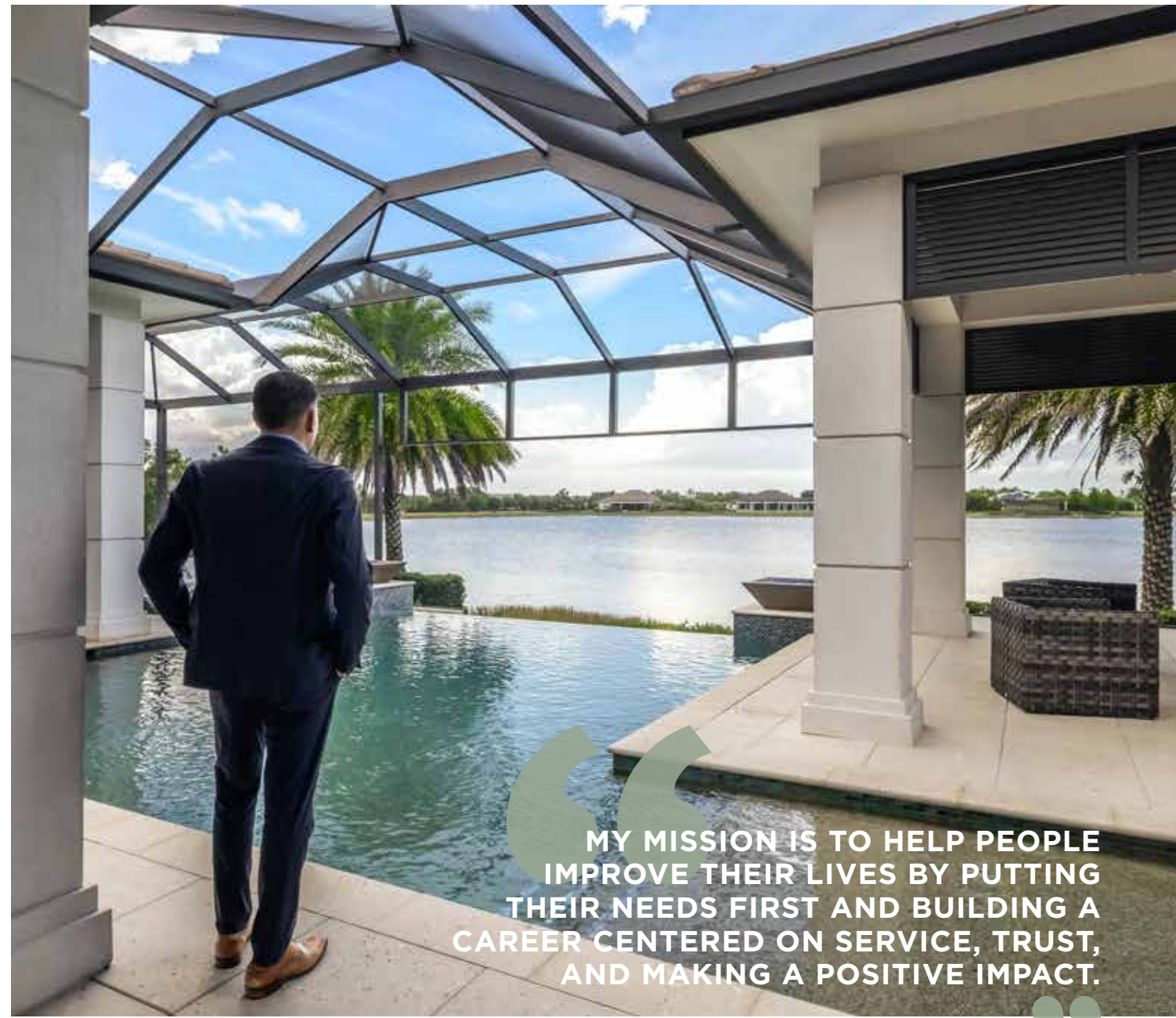
entrepreneurial family and had a strong background in treating people right. His reviews consistently praise him for his honesty and exceptional service.

He also learned how to structure his time. "My biggest strategy is being in the office by 7:00 a.m. and on the phone until noon, creating as many relationships as I can," he says. "Getting that momentum going took a lot of time and hard work." He makes a lot of calls, networks with other business owners, and connects with folks in real-estate-adjacent companies, like lending and title. "My mission is to help

people improve their lives by putting their needs first and building a career centered on service, trust, and making a positive impact," he notes.

Joe's mission truly is to make lives better through his work. Last year, he closed 32 transactions totaling more than \$22 million, and he has his sights set on exceeding 100 transactions in the coming years. He is not reaching for money, though. "I am not about what money can do for us, but what we can do with the money," he stresses.

He and Amber aim to build facilities to care for individuals with special



“MY MISSION IS TO HELP PEOPLE IMPROVE THEIR LIVES BY PUTTING THEIR NEEDS FIRST AND BUILDING A CAREER CENTERED ON SERVICE, TRUST, AND MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT.”

needs, like his brother, Chris. “Finding affordable places with good care is very difficult,” Joe points out. “I don’t know exactly where that goal will lead us, but we are in the process of starting a foundation. We are young enough to make it happen.”

Currently, about 75% of Joe’s business comes from sellers and 25% from buyers, and he enjoys working with unique waterfront and golf-course

properties. “We take pride in the marketing side and how we can position properties to stand out to get our clients the sale,” he mentions. He considers himself an advisor, not a salesperson, and is honored to help people navigate their next chapters.

Joe has always loved real estate but never thought he’d be in the position he’s in today. He credits Amber for her role. “We couldn’t

do it without her,” he says. “She’s the rock of the family.” Amber was previously a full-time agent before she and Joe had their son, Lane, who is 2 years old.

Lane is Joe’s main motivator, and Joe’s dad, Ed, a retired auto repair business owner, is also an inspiration. “I will give back to him as much as I can,” Joe says. “He’s taught me everything I know.” Joe and his dad both help care

for Chris. When he steps away from real estate, Joe, a former drag racer, likes to boat, fish, and camp.

Joe still arrives at his office at 7:00 in the morning and remains committed to learning, growing, and finding new ways to better serve his clients. “I think we can never stop learning,” he stresses. “If we stop expanding our minds, we will fall out of sync.”

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Linden Creek Home Staging & Interior Design

STORY BY MADDIE PODISH
PHOTOS BY MINDY &
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Elaine Sheffrey



Average days on market in the Sarasota and Bradenton area: 67 days.

Average days on market for homes Elaine Sheffrey staged during her first six months with Linden Creek Home Staging & Interior Design: 11.

For most agents, numbers like that are enough to make them pause. For Elaine, they reinforce what she has known for years: people do not fall in love with square footage. They fall in love with how a home makes them feel.

People often hear the word *staging* and immediately think of throw pillows, decorative accessories, and making a home look pretty. Elaine sees it differently. She believes staging can be one of the most powerful tools in a home's marketing strategy. The right staging can help maximize a client's return while giving agents stronger listing photos, more compelling social media content, and a home that stands apart from the sea of virtually staged properties buyers scroll through every day.

"Place settings don't sell houses," Elaine explains. This simple statement perfectly captures her approach. A collection of colorful décor can distract buyers from beautiful built-ins. Furniture placement can unintentionally make a room feel smaller. Personal items can keep buyers focused on the current homeowner rather than living there themselves.

For Elaine, understanding that connection has been years in the making. Long before staging became a familiar term within real estate, she was immersed

in design work and learning the psychology behind how people experience spaces. Back in 2005, when staging was still relatively new, a REALTOR® friend asked whether the practice was something worth investing in. Curiosity took over.

That curiosity led Elaine to earn her Accredited Staging Professional certification and eventually launch her own design and staging business. Years later, after relocating to Florida, she discovered Linden Creek Home Staging & Interior Design and immediately recognized something that felt different. It was not just the staging itself. It was the experience behind it.

As one of Linden Creek's earliest franchise owners, Elaine saw an approach built around quality, consistency, and thoughtful design. Rather than relying on décor and furnishings buyers may see repeated from one home to the next, Linden Creek carefully curates each stage with higher-end furnishings and recognizable luxury brands that create a more elevated feel throughout the space.

The experience continues beyond the staging itself. Every staged home includes a "Make It Yours" feature, allowing buyers to easily identify and purchase pieces they connect with throughout the home. Elaine chuckles while describing a known scenario most of us have been through that sparked the idea. She asks, "Have you ever seen a lamp or some item in a home and thought, 'I need that,' and nobody knows where it came from?" Linden Creek solves



that problem by giving buyers direct access to what they fall in love with, creating another layer of connection that extends beyond simply preparing a home for sale.

Some agents jokingly call Elaine the “bad guy.” Others call her their “secret weapon,” and for her, both are compliments. After all, agents are already helping clients navigate emotional decisions, finances, timelines, and life transitions. Asking someone to remove sentimental décor, rethink furniture placement, or pack away personal items can quickly become a difficult conversation. “It’s not necessarily what’s being said,” Elaine explains. “It’s who is saying it and how it’s being said.”

Rather than adding more work to an agent’s plate, Elaine focuses on removing it. She frequently encourages agents to walk homes alongside her during consultations so they can experience the process firsthand. “Let’s go work together,” she says. “I want them to see what I do and understand the value of it.”

Her philosophy is simple. Agents should approach staging the same way they approach every other specialized part of a transaction. “If a client says the toilet is leaking, you don’t grab a wrench,” Elaine says with a laugh. “You call a professional.” In her eyes, staging deserves that same level of trust.

Behind the scenes, Linden Creek makes the process efficient and seamless, allowing Elaine to focus on what matters most—creating an experience that feels easy for both agents and sellers.

More than anything, Elaine wants agents to know they have a trusted resource they can call without hesitation, someone who handles the details and simplifies the process from beginning to end. Because for Elaine, staging has never really been about furniture. It has always been about helping buyers walk through a front door and finally feel at home. ▀



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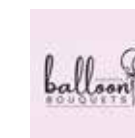
The Sarasota & Manatee Real Producers community gathered for an incredible and inspiring evening, hosted by Diamond Sponsor John Cannon Homes. For nearly 40 years, John Cannon Homes has been designing and building exceptional custom homes throughout Southwest Florida, creating everything from award-winning luxury models to stunning private estate residences.

The event brought together some of the area's top-performing real estate professionals, who collectively represent more than \$1 billion in annual real estate sales. Throughout the evening, attendees enjoyed meaningful conversations, strengthened existing relationships, and forged new connections with fellow industry leaders.

The energy in the room was a powerful reminder of what makes the Sarasota & Manatee Real Producers community so special. While these professionals continually raise the bar in their businesses, they also champion one another's success and understand the value of collaboration. One attendee shared, "Thank you to Sarasota Manatee Real Producers for having us! It was our first Real Producers event, and it definitely won't be our last. We love spending time in rooms full of people who are motivated to be the best in their field. Grateful for the conversations, connections, and inspiration."

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We also appreciate bartender Stacy Sutton of **Hook Line & Drinker** for helping create a welcoming atmosphere for our guests and Dana Bachmann of **Sarasota Balloon Bouquets** for providing the amazing balloon decor.

Thank you to everyone who joined us. Be sure to check out the highlights on our website at sarasotarealproducers.com to relive the night. We can't wait to see you at the next event!

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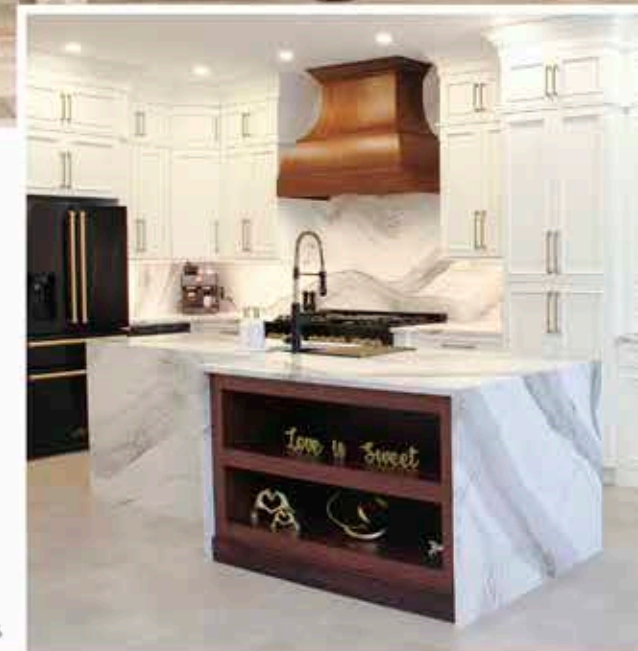


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RYAN & KATIE SHERMAN

STORY BY DAN CLARK
PHOTOS BY MINDY & CORY POFF, POFF MEDIA GROUP

Ryan and Katie Sherman are easy to talk to. They've got that relaxed Midwest way about them, and they don't try to act like real estate has to feel stiff or scripted. They're married, they work together, and they've built their business around one goal. "We wanted to humanize the experience of real estate," Katie says. The rest of their approach flows naturally.

After relocating from St. Louis to Florida in 2022, the Shermans were starting over in a completely new place. At the time, they had the option to move anywhere in the country, but Sarasota immediately felt different. The beaches, tropical beauty, coastal energy, wildlife, nature preserves, coffee shops, farmers' markets, and laid-back lifestyle all became part of what they now love sharing with clients. Over time, they became what they like to call "locals by choice."

Ryan got licensed in 2022 and joined Palm Paradise Realty Group roughly a year and a half ago. Drawn to what he describes as a tech-based, new-age brokerage, Ryan liked the innovation, AI tools, lead support, and systems that still allow agents to build relationships authentically. More importantly, the brokerage helped the Shermans establish themselves in a place where they knew no one and could begin building connections that quickly grew into community. "Team leader Marcus Larrea was the most straightforward person I interviewed," Ryan notes.

Katie obtained her license soon after Ryan joined Palm Paradise. Before real estate, she spent years working as a paralegal while also building a business as a functional medicine health coach and plant-based chef. Ryan came from an entrepreneurial background in advocacy, relationship-building, and hands-on creative work.

Together, they realized their aligned mindset and genuine care for people could create a different real estate experience from what they often saw in the industry.

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“
WE NEVER
WANT PEOPLE
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TRANSACTION.”

The Shermans’ human approach shows up most in the little moments. They pride themselves on staying calm, solutions-focused, and steady throughout the process, especially during the stressful parts of a transaction. They want clients to walk away feeling cared for and supported from beginning to end, even if they have to roll up their sleeves and clean a home themselves before a final walk-through.

Ryan says one of their favorite parts of the job is receiving invitations to their clients’ homes after closing and seeing the life they’ve created there. The relationship doesn’t just end when the transaction funds. They want the referrals, sure, but they also genuinely like people. Katie remembers a client recently telling them they made buying a house and relocating across the country fun. “That is exactly what the real estate journey should be,” she stresses.

Their approach to closing gifts—like their client service—is not cookie-cutter. Whether it’s a Mote Aquarium membership, a favorite local coffee shop, a beach kit, or house-cleaning services, each gift is thoughtfully customized to help clients feel connected to and excited about their new area.”

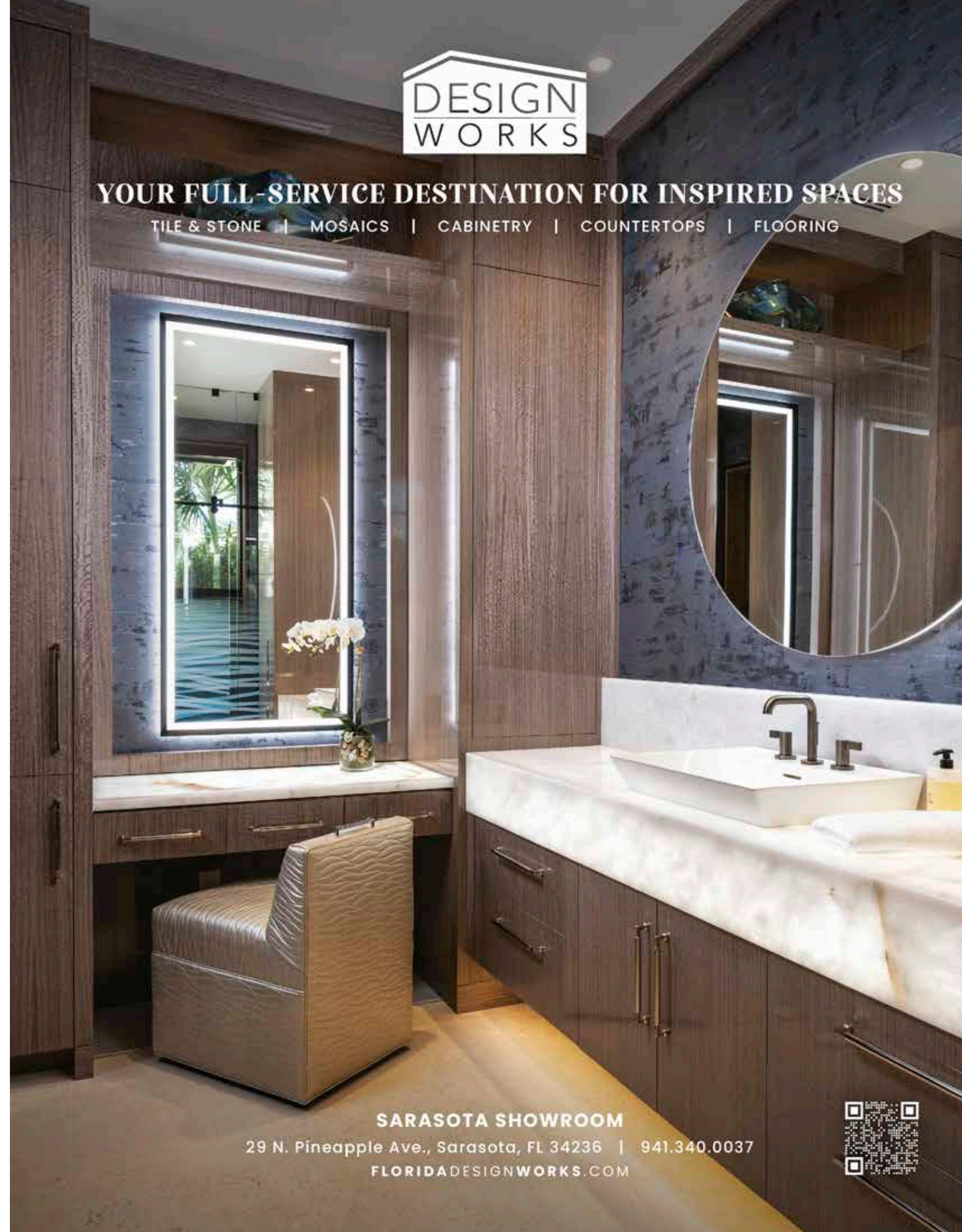
Outside of real estate, the Shermans fully embrace the Sarasota lifestyle. Their downtime looks like paddle boarding, beach days, concerts, gardening, cooking, farmers’ markets, and disc golf. Anything dog-friendly is usually a yes. Their dogs, Olive and Paisley, are part of the rhythm.

Ryan and Katie are building a business around authenticity and follow-through. They want the experience to feel human. They want the relationship to feel real. They want clients to feel supported, not pushed. And they want to keep doing it in a way that stays true to who they are. ♣

Their version of real estate doesn’t come across as a polished elevator pitch. Katie describes their business as heart-centered and people-first rather than constant pushing, scripts, and sales meetings. “Housing is a super emotional experience that people tend to look at in a salesy way,” she comments. “We never want people to feel like just another transaction.”

Ryan agrees, adding that he doesn’t pretend to be someone else just to fit the industry. “I’m just going to be myself,” he says. He laughs and calls himself and Katie “two business hippies from the Midwest.”

Katie and Ryan’s business model quickly gained momentum. Ryan rose to become the #1 agent in their brokerage’s region, with Katie following closely behind at #2. To them, the rankings felt like confirmation that success in real estate didn’t have to come from pressure or becoming someone you’re not.



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FLORIDA'S REAL ESTATE ECONOMY: A FOUNDATION FOR OPPORTUNITY, GROWTH & WEALTH



BY CHUCK BONFIGLIO JR., 2026
PRESIDENT FLORIDA REALTORS®



Florida has long been recognized as one of the most desirable places to live, work, and build a future. Today, new research confirms what many Floridians already know: Real estate is not just part of Florida's economy. It is one of its defining strengths.

According to the recent National Association of REALTORS® research, real estate now accounts for more than one-quarter of Florida's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the highest percentage of any state in the nation. The industry contributes nearly \$474 billion to Florida's economy and supports countless jobs, businesses, and investment opportunities across our communities. Every home sale creates economic activity that extends far beyond a single transaction, supporting construction, lending, insurance, title services, local businesses, and the many professionals who help families achieve the dream of homeownership.

These numbers tell an important story about Florida's economic vitality. They also highlight why our state

continues to attract new residents, entrepreneurs, and investors from around the world.

Florida's business environment remains one of the strongest in the country. Our state offers a favorable tax structure, a growing and diverse workforce, a strategic location for domestic and international commerce, and a pro-business climate that encourages innovation and investment. Companies continue to relocate and expand here because they recognize the opportunities Florida provides for growth and success.

At the same time, Florida offers an unmatched quality of life. From our world-class beaches and natural resources to vibrant cities, thriving cultural centers, and year-round outdoor recreation, Florida continues to be a destination where people want to put down roots. Families, retirees, young professionals, and business leaders are all drawn to the opportunities that exist here.

For investors, the case for Florida is equally compelling. Population growth, economic expansion, and ongoing demand for housing continue to make real estate one of the most attractive long-term investments available. Whether purchasing a primary residence, a second home, commercial property, or investment real estate, Florida remains a market built on strong fundamentals and enduring demand.

As REALTORS®, we have a unique perspective on these opportunities because we help people build wealth through real estate every day. We see firsthand how homeownership creates financial stability, generational wealth, and stronger communities. We also understand that the opportunities available to our customers should inspire us to think about our own futures.

All REALTORS® spend their careers helping others achieve their real estate goals. But equally important is developing a plan for our own financial future. Florida offers an extraordinary opportunity for real estate professionals to build wealth through strategic ownership and investment. Whether through personal homeownership, investment properties, commercial real estate, or long-term portfolio growth, we have the knowledge and market insight to participate in one of the most powerful wealth-building tools available.

The future of Florida remains bright. Our economy is growing, our communities are thriving, and real estate continues to serve as a cornerstone of prosperity for millions of Floridians. We should take pride in the role we play in that success while also seizing the opportunities around us to build lasting financial security for ourselves and our families.

Florida is more than a great place to live. It is a great place to invest, do business, and build wealth. The data confirms it, the market demonstrates it, and our future depends on continuing to embrace the opportunities that make the Sunshine State unlike anywhere else in America.

CMG HOME LOANS



Q&A with Jason Schneider, Market Leader at CMG Home Loans Your partner in navigating today's mortgage market

Q: Jason, what sets you apart in the mortgage industry?

A: With over seven years in the business and closings across multiple states, I bring a wide range of lending knowledge to the table. Whether I'm working with a first-time buyer or a seasoned investor, my focus is always on finding the right solution that aligns with their financial goals.

Q: Real estate agents are busy—what can they expect when working with you?

A: Clear communication and proactive updates. I make sure every client fully understands the process, from start to finish. That means no surprises, just well-managed expectations and smooth transactions.

Q: What types of clients do you work with most?

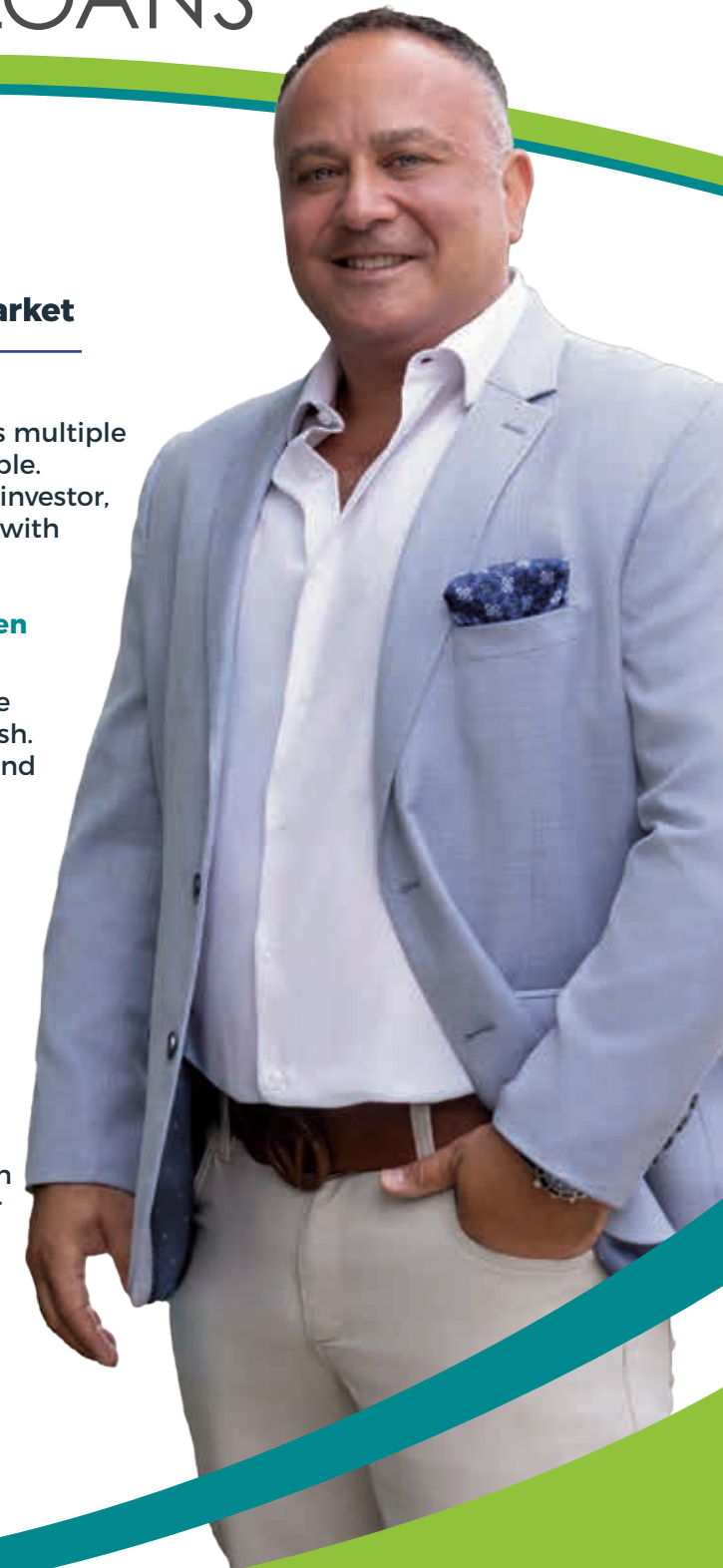
A: Everyone—from families purchasing their very first home to investors building their portfolios. I've worked with a variety of loan programs, so I can tailor solutions no matter the situation.

Q: How does your personal background shape the way you work?

A: Having spent most of my life in New York and now splitting time in Florida, I understand the needs of clients in diverse markets. Outside of work, I've been married for over 25 years, have kids from teens to adults, and stay active in my community. I believe the discipline I put into staying mentally and physically strong also translates into how I serve my clients and partners.

Q: Why should agents connect with you?

A: Because I make their clients' success my top priority. Agents can trust me to keep deals moving forward and clients informed every step of the way. That partnership makes all the difference.



Jason Schneider

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