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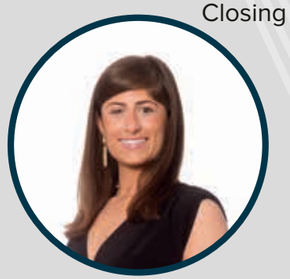
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Publisher's Note

It's Time for a New BRRP Class of 40 Under 40!

Five years. That's how long it's been since Baton Rouge Real Producers recognized our first class of 40 Under 40. And if there's one thing we know about five years in real estate, it's that a lot can change.

New faces emerge. Businesses grow. Leaders rise. And somewhere along the way, a new generation of professionals begins making their mark on our industry.

It's time to recognize them.

We're looking for more than impressive production numbers. We're looking for professionals who lead with integrity, earn the respect of their peers, build businesses worth emulating and understand that relationships matter just as much as results.

And here's where you come in. **Who comes to mind when you think of the future of real estate in Greater Baton Rouge?**

We want to hear about them. Self-nominations are welcome, too!

Time is ticking! Just a few days left so don't hesitate! Scan the QR code on the next page.

Nominations close Friday, October 30, at 5 p.m.

Five years later, it's time for a new class. I can't wait to see who makes the list.

Gina Miller
Publisher,
Baton Rouge Real Producers



2026
40 UNDER 40
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Recognizing the next generation of leaders in Greater Baton Rouge real estate.

Baton Rouge Real Producers will be recognizing 40 outstanding real estate professionals under the age of 40 who are making their mark on our industry, elevating professional standards and helping shape the future of real estate in Greater Baton Rouge.

This recognition is about more than production. It's about the professional behind the numbers.

We are seeking current licensed agents who have built successful real estate businesses while demonstrating exceptional character, integrity, leadership and a commitment to serving others. These are professionals who earn the respect of their peers, cultivate meaningful relationships and represent the real estate industry with distinction.

Scan the code to submit your nominees and for more information.

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Fall Planting for Better CURB APPEAL



Q&A with **Joseph King**, Owner of Landscape King

For Louisiana agents helping sellers prepare a listing, or buyers settle into a home, November is an opportunity to improve the landscape thoughtfully. And good curb appeal starts with healthy plants, appropriate scale, and attention to the conditions beneath the surface.

Hey Joseph...

Why plant in the fall?
Fall is one of the best times to plant most hardy trees and shrubs. Cooler air reduces heat stress and water loss, while our soil remains warm enough for roots to grow. Plants have several cooler months to begin establishing before their first Louisiana summer. For a spring listing, planting now gives the landscape time to settle in. New plants still need moisture checks and good drainage.

What should agents and homeowners watch for?
Underwatering is easy during summer's heat. Overwatering is equally easy when summer irrigation schedules continue into cooler weather. Yellowing or wilting does not automatically mean a plant needs more water. At Landscape King, we often see boxwoods, compacta hollies, and other Japanese hollies struggling at the front of beds. That edge may be the lowest point, where water collects. Our often clay-heavy soils can hold moisture and drain slowly.

Homeowners see declining plants and water more, but saturated soil deprives roots of oxygen and encourages root-rot diseases. Damaged roots can leave a plant looking thirsty even when the soil is wet. Check below the surface in both the root ball and surrounding soil before watering. Before replacing shrubs for listing photos, investigate persistent wetness, drainage, and planting depth so replacements do not face the same problem.

Where is it worth spending on plant size?
Start with the home's proportions and the desired view from the street. Check mature height, width, and growth rate so plants frame windows and entrances without eventually hiding them. A dwarf plant may never provide the screening you want. Match purchase size to the timeline. Smaller, fast-growing plants can save money when there is time to wait. Larger, healthy specimens may justify the cost for slow-growing varieties or focal points needed before listing.

Leave room for mature growth regardless of purchase size.

Which plants are your favorites?
Camellias bring seasonal color: sasanquas bloom in fall and early winter and tolerate full to partial sun; japonicas prefer partial shade to shade and bloom from late fall through spring, depending on variety. We favor ShiShi Gashira for its smaller habit and pink flowers.

American beautyberry offers purple fall berries, distylium adds evergreen structure, and Limelight hydrangeas provide summer flowers. Among trees, we love Natchez crape myrtles for cinnamon-colored bark, Eagleston hollies for evergreen structure, Drake elms for graceful form and attractive bark, and live oaks where there is ample room.



CONTACT US!

If you have any more landscape questions, or if you are wondering how to make your listing standout with attractive landscaping, give Joseph King a call. You will find all of his contact information by visiting his website at landscapekingla.com.

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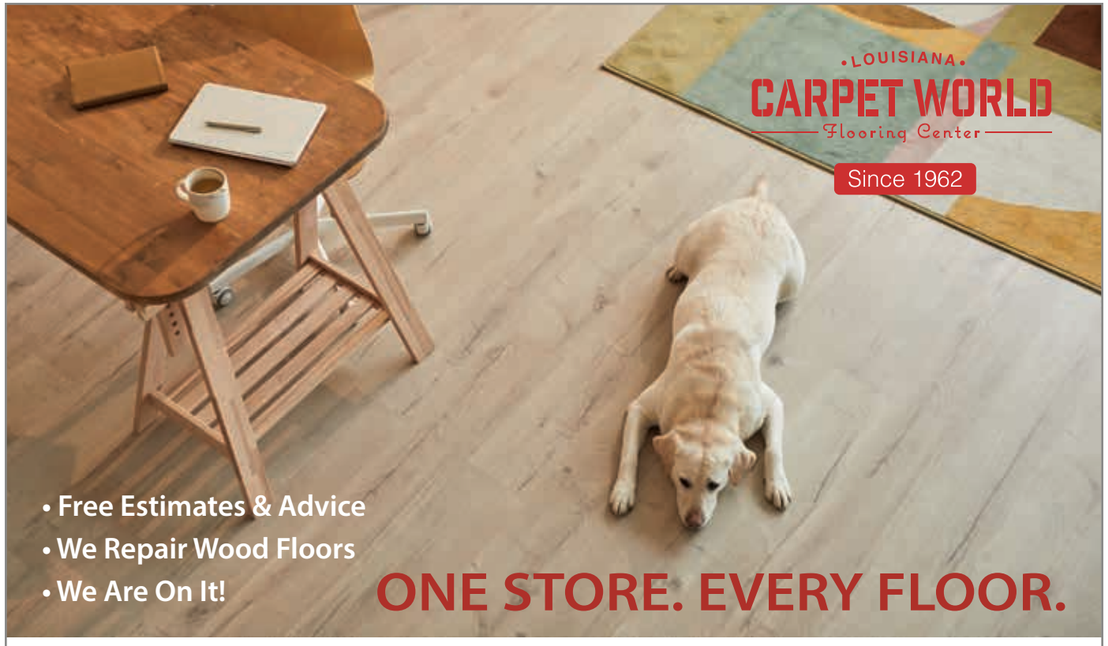
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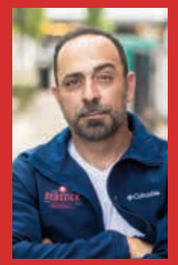
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THE GOOD LIFE BLUEPRINT

WRITTEN BY JESS WELLAR
PHOTOS BY WESLEY SUN CHEE FORE

Wyatt Graves

"My #1 goal as a human — which is what I bring to my business — is to help others live #thegoodlife supported by healthy finances," Wyatt begins. "Essentially, we are a training and mentorship community who happens to have a broker's license."

Wyatt Graves entered real estate at 19, has since brokered more than half a billion dollars in career volume and today oversees a growing collection of interconnected businesses. Yet the numbers tell only part of what the Baton Rouge entrepreneur is pursuing. These days, his focus has shifted from personally producing to helping other people see possibilities for their lives that they may not yet see themselves.

A Glimpse Of Possible

Raised in Watson, Wyatt grew up in a paycheck-to-paycheck family where financial stress created plenty of friction. College wasn't commonplace in his family, either, but he earned a business management and entrepreneurship degree while simultaneously launching his real estate career.

The original spark arrived even earlier. As a ninth grader riding the school bus, Wyatt noticed a successful local real estate agent driving a luxury car and became fascinated by a career with flexibility and no ceiling on income. His grandmother later gave him another perspective on real estate: once homeless in her younger years, she eventually became an investor, and Wyatt came to understand the investing side of the business while managing her rentals.

"I went out and bought a brand-new suit when I started in real estate," he recalls with a chuckle. "There were a handful of us kids being trained by people 20 or 30 years older than us, living legends in our parish."

Among them was Mary Ann Allen, whom Wyatt still credits for giving an inexperienced 19-year-old a chance. The decades since would bring far bigger lessons, including the 2008 mortgage meltdown and the 2016 Louisiana flood, when Wyatt's home took on three feet of water, his office five, and nearly every pending deal disappeared. He, his wife and their three young children moved into a single-wide trailer. The experience ultimately intensified a resolve that he notes was already there.

Beyond The Hustle

Wyatt founded Kaizen Home Sales and Services in 2018 as one component of Kaizen Growth Partners, the vertically integrated holding company he leads as CEO. Today, its ventures span brokerage, construction, multifamily investment, property management, mortgage, childcare and coworking and event space.

The 40-agent brokerage operates more like a business mastermind community than a traditional real estate office. Agents can supplement their own books of business with leads generated internally through new construction and property management, while training,



workshops, technology and mentorship are designed to help them think beyond their next commission.

Wyatt is also quick to credit his "legit" support team who helps run the back office and executes extremely well.

"I have the map to get people from Point A to Point B; but I want agents that want more than just hustling deals," Wyatt states. "I want agents that want to build a portfolio of business investments to live a good life."

For Wyatt, that "good life" requires four ingredients: physical health, money, free time and meaningful relationships. Creating income that isn't entirely dependent on trading hours for dollars is therefore central to what he teaches.

Wyatt certainly practices what he preaches. In addition to nearly 2,000 homes sold through his businesses during the past six years, he has built and sold 45 new construction homes and completed 30 flips, with more projects underway. To further validate the extent of his practicing leadership, Wyatt will finish the year with over 500 doors that totals nearly $50 million in assets under management.

He no longer personally produces, even giving up his MLS key last year, and directs his new construction leads to his agents instead.

"When someone works with Kaizen — whether they are buying their first home, investing in rental property, or joining the brokerage as an agent — they are plugging into an ecosystem that thinks about their entire financial picture," he offers.

That impressive ecosystem of economic mobility is also why Wyatt willingly shares strategies and relationships that took him 25 years to acquire. His goal isn't simply creating more productive agents, but helping them create wealth and options of their own.



A Wider Reach

Wyatt's desire to shorten the learning curve for others extends well outside the brokerage. As Head of Member Success for Gobundance, he works within a men's mastermind community that has profoundly influenced his own thinking. He also hosts The Mentee Podcast, which he acquired in 2018 and is preparing to relaunch next year after more than 500 episodes and listeners across 91 countries.

His interests extend to an even more vulnerable audience. Years spent in the childcare industry, including through KPG's Fundamentals Early Learning Center, have given Wyatt a close look at how childhood experiences can follow people into adulthood. He plans to launch a nonprofit serving foster children aging out of the system and already helps on a smaller scale through mentorship, housing and workforce opportunities.

"I never really had a life coach or a mentor believe in myself as a human. I fought a lot of personal challenges in becoming successful because I didn't have a blueprint. I'm here now and wonder what if I had a cheerleader and life coach in my corner?"

That question helps explain the scope of what Wyatt has created now. His vision includes helping working families and early-stage entrepreneurs connect housing, financial education, career development and wealth creation rather than addressing those needs independently. A book is also in the works for next year alongside the podcast relaunch, giving him another platform to share what he has learned.

At heart, Wyatt considers himself a teacher; but most importantly, one speaking from experience.

"I am a practicing leader. I teach from the floor of the arena and with real experience," he points out. "I am in it



> I AM A PRACTICING LEADER. I TEACH FROM THE FLOOR OF THE ARENA AND WITH REAL EXPERIENCE. I AM IN IT RIGHT NOW, BUILDING IN REAL TIME, SHARING WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOES NOT AS I GO.”

right now, building in real time, sharing what works and what does not as I go.”

Thinking Much Bigger

For all Wyatt’s ventures, family remains sacred. He and his wife, Janae — his “ride or die” — will celebrate 20 years of marriage in February. Their oldest, Baylor, 18, recently left for Auburn University, while Emmy, 16, just started driving and Maggie entered junior high, putting the Graves family squarely in a season of rapid, emotional change.

“Every season of fatherhood has been the best one yet,” he grins. “This one is no different.”

Wyatt and Janae love concerts and sporting events, preferably with great seats, while the family prioritizes travel and experiences over things. Wyatt also values solo retreats surrounded by nature, where coffee and uninterrupted time to think give his naturally analytical and creative mind room to wander.

The future he’s contemplating is appropriately expansive. Wyatt is entering year two of a five-year plan that envisions a holding company encompassing a spectrum of home-service businesses alongside 25,000 apartment doors and a personal-growth and education community.

Somewhere beyond that is his “big bodacious goal” of owning a ranch that brings many of those ideas together “around a moat of personal education and development.” His book, speaking, podcast and foster initiative are all intended to expand the same goal.

“What keeps me motivated is the gap between where I am and where I am going,” Wyatt concludes. “I am not done, not even close. And the mission underneath the business is what gets me out of bed before the sun comes up. I’m never just chasing ‘more’ — I am chasing meaning.”



What's On Your Desk?

Meet **Sydnee Gautreau** with Keller Williams First Choice

Louisiana native, wife, mom of two. When she's not showing houses, negotiating contracts, or dreaming about her next endeavor, you'll find her spending time with family and friends, getting involved in her church community, or finding another reason to celebrate life's little moments.





ORGANIZED CHAOS: My calendar, pens and Post-its help keep the organized chaos under control. And the "Stay Wild" candle is a little reminder that not everything needs a plan—to loosen up, leave room for creativity and roll with whatever real estate throws at me that day.



I CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT MY PHONE CHARGER. Because my phone battery has never made it through a full day in real estate.



MY LAPTOP, PLANNER AND HEADPHONES are my desk-day essentials. Between managing transactions, answering emails and keeping up with clients, there's always something that needs my attention. The headphones are my secret weapon for tuning out distractions and getting into a productive groove.



THE TRIFECTA: Water keeps me hydrated, coffee powers my daily productivity, and a piece of gum helps those listing-description ideas flow!

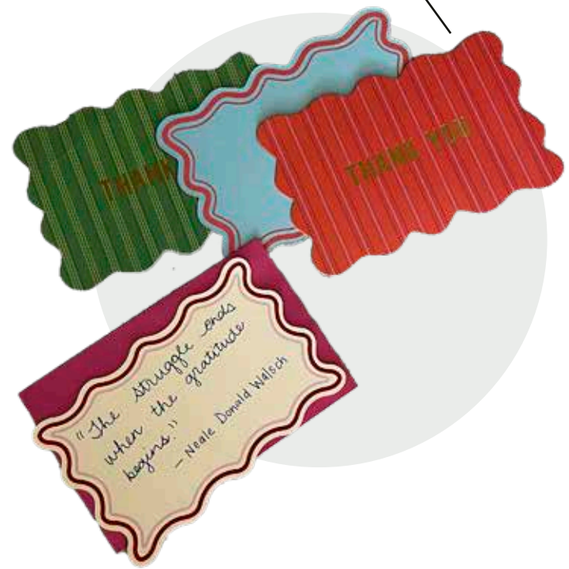
MY FAMILY is my "why," and these little snapshots of my kids through the years keep that reminder close.

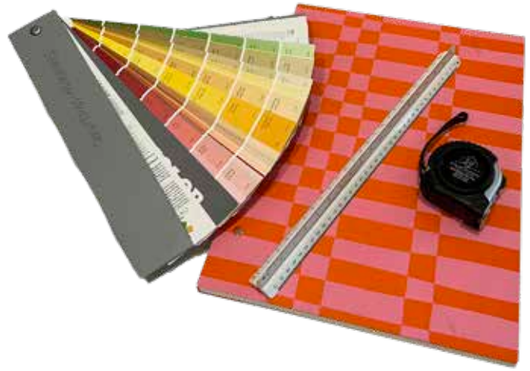




MY DAILY DEVOTIONAL AND GRATITUDE JOURNAL helps me start with the right perspective. Taking a few minutes to pray, reflect and recognize what I'm grateful for keeps me grounded—especially in a business where every day can look completely different.

I also keep **THANK-YOU CARDS** close by because gratitude isn't something I just want to feel; I want to express it.





PAINT COLORS, MEASUREMENTS, FLOOR PLANS AND DESIGN IDEAS are some of my favorite parts of real estate. These tools come out when I'm helping a client envision a space, working through new construction or convincing someone that, yes, a fresh coat of paint really can make that big of a difference. **Shout out to Olivier for the paint wheel!!



These are the **TOOLS BEHIND MY LISTING VIDEOS, PROPERTY TOURS AND SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT.** Marketing is one of my favorite creative outlets, and I love finding ways to showcase properties that feel fresh, fun and a little unexpected.



The wooden name sign came straight from my childhood bedroom, and the fabulous '90s flip-flop frame holds a baby picture of my childhood best friend. Add a few inspirational quotes and a calendar, and you've got **A COLLECTION OF THINGS THAT MAKE ME SMILE** and remind me to stay true to myself.



A souvenir from one of my listings! Believe it or not, this was the **MASTER SET OF KEYS** to ONE house. I couldn't bring myself to part with them. Every home has a story, and sometimes you get to take a little piece of that story with you.

Running Her Own Race

STEPHANIE FONTÉ

WRITTEN BY
JESS WELLAR
PHOTOS BY
WESLEY SUN
CHEE FORE

"I'm really just here following Jesus!" Stephanie Fonté offers. "People sometimes ask how I have been successful as a new agent in this market, and honestly, my 'secret sauce' is that I bathe my business in prayer."

For someone who only began actively selling real estate at the dawn of 2025, Stephanie has found her footing in record time. The Magnolia Roots Realty agent closed 15 transactions during her first full year while still working another job for most of it. Now, as year two in the business winds down, the former dental hygienist is gaining serious momentum without losing sight of the faith and relationships behind every deal.



> "I try to soak it all in and make every moment count."

A New Calling

After attending the University of Georgia and later earning her degree in dental hygiene, becoming the first college graduate in her family, Stephanie spent 25 years as a registered dental hygienist. By 2021, following a six-month COVID hiatus, the longtime Ascension Parish resident knew she was ready for a change.

A subdivision going up behind her home further piqued her curiosity in a new career. Stephanie loved watching the construction unfold, already had a weakness for HGTV and began dragging her husband, Brad, to open houses. In 2023, Brad suggested real estate, and her pastor later told her he thought she'd be good at it. After months of prayer and letting the idea simmer while she completed her discipleship course, Stephanie enrolled in real estate school in January 2024 and became licensed that June.

Close friend and now-broker Kelly Mitchell helped her navigate the learning curve, including several complicated early transactions. Stephanie also discovered that decades spent in a dental office translated surprisingly well. "I had been having difficult conversations with people for years, explaining the benefits of routine dental care and flossing!" she recalls. "And my very first clients were my dental patients."

No Door Knocking Needed

Stephanie spent her first six months learning the industry and setting up her business before jumping in fully in early 2025. She remained a full-time hygienist until last October, yet still earned Top Producer recognition within her brokerage several months during her rookie year and again this year.

More impressive still is the fact her growth hasn't come from buying leads or cold calls. Business has developed strictly through her sphere of influence, word of mouth, and social media, where Stephanie made sure people knew about her new career from the outset.

"When I decided to get started in real estate, I really came out swinging on social media!" she chuckles. "I'm still very active across Facebook, Instagram and TikTok."

Behind that visibility is the same personal care that defined her dental career. Stephanie listens closely, notices the smallest details, and takes time to make complicated information understandable. She isn't afraid to deliver an answer clients may not want to hear, either, believing protecting their interests matters more than taking the easiest path to closing.

That thoroughness has become something of a calling card. Stephanie wants people to feel comfortable asking questions, particularly when they're overwhelmed by a decision they don't make every day. And once closing is over, she has no intention of disappearing. "My most



common feedback is when clients say 'Thank you for answering all my stupid questions!' and I tell them, 'No question is stupid!'" she laughs. "But they are genuinely grateful that I'm very thorough in educating them."

Faith Over Fear

Faith isn't simply one aspect of Stephanie's life; it's the bedrock beneath it. She completed three years of discipleship training from 2021 through 2023 and is currently pursuing a two-year leadership certification through Highlands College. But her relationship with God was forged deeply through a loss that changed her perspective forever.

Stephanie's sister died in the Champlain Towers building collapse in June of 2021 and just months later her mom passed away from a drug overdose. Grief and healing became a daily exercise in surrender.

"There are some losses you don't simply 'get over,' and that was one of them," she admits. "It confronted me with the reality that tragedy and evil exist in this world and left me carrying a burden that was far too heavy to carry on my own."

Faith, family and community helped Stephanie continue moving forward, while the experience deepened her compassion for what others may be carrying quietly. Today, serving others is a constant throughout her week. For four years, she has helped facilitate Next Gen, a faith-based club at St. Amant High School; she serves



as Admin Team leader for The Church International's new Prairieville campus; leads a Wednesday morning women's devotional at Life House University, a faith-based women's recovery home; and twice monthly leads a women's connect group centered on Scripture, prayer and fellowship.

Through it all, Stephanie has learned to trust the path God has marked out for her rather than measure her progress against anyone else's. Hebrews 12:1 has become one of her favorite Scriptures these days. "Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us," Stephanie recites. "This verse reminds me that I don't have to run anyone else's race."

Home And Beyond

Stephanie's biggest cheerleader is Brad, a veteran whom she calls her best friend. He's also an indispensable behind-the-scenes partner, holding down the home front during long real estate days and rolling up his sleeves when one of her listings needs attention.

Their family includes Stephanie's oldest son, Mason, 30, who lives in Georgia with his wife; Brody, 23, whom Stephanie had the joy of helping purchase his first home; then there are her "bonus babies," Aidan, 11, and Jacob, 8. Rounding out the household are Rambo, a 14-year-old black Lab, and Winnie, a 7-year-old Shih Tzu who is really "the queen of the castle."

"What I love more than anything though is any opportunity for us to all be together; it doesn't have to be anything big or fancy," she shares. "I try to soak it all in and make every moment count." When she's not working, Stephanie enjoys exercising, running, biking, traveling and being outdoors, with the beach holding the top spot among her favorite escapes. She and Brad are looking forward to a couple's getaway to Antigua in February and a 10-day trip to Israel next April.

Businesswise, Stephanie is already looking several chapters ahead. After graduating from Highlands College next year, she plans to begin pursuing her broker path, with the eventual goal of owning a brokerage. Personally, she'd love to find the family's forever home, although she readily admits she may be her own pickiest client.

For all those plans, Stephanie has learned not to assume she knows precisely where life will take her next though. "The Lord orders my steps," she concludes with a smile. "I'm not sure what the future holds but I know it will all turn out okay if I trust in Him."

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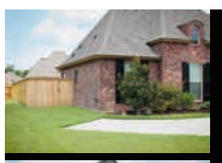
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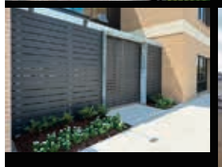
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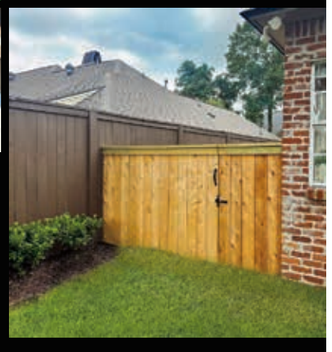




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