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AVOIDING SCAMS & WASTED TIME ON SOCIAL MEDIA

BY ROBERT ORSO

I spend a fair amount of time on social media, both personally and professionally. And lately, I’ve noticed something that concerns me: **an astonishing number of advertisements that show up in my feed seem too good to be true—and many of them are.**

You’ve probably seen them too.

There’s the “business opportunity” that supposedly allows ordinary people to make thousands of dollars a month with almost no work. There’s the investment opportunity that promises incredible returns. There’s the miracle product that will eliminate pain, restore your memory, melt away belly fat, lower your blood pressure, or solve some other problem seemingly overnight.

And then there are those videos.

You know the ones I’m talking about. Someone tells you they are about to reveal an incredible secret, so you keep watching. Five minutes later, they still haven’t told you. Ten minutes later, you’re still waiting. Eventually, you discover that the entire presentation

was designed to get you emotionally invested enough to buy something.

I’ve fallen into the trap of wasting my time watching them myself.

But I’ve learned something that has saved me a tremendous amount of time: **before I watch the video, click the link, give them my information, or spend any money, I investigate the company first.**

One of the tools I use is ChatGPT.

I can simply type the name of the company and ask, “Is this company legitimate?” Or I can provide the website or information from the Facebook ad and ask ChatGPT to research it. Within minutes, I can often learn about customer complaints, questionable claims, lawsuits, regulatory actions, Better Business Bureau information, independent reviews, or other warning signs.

Of course, ChatGPT—or any AI tool—can make mistakes, so I don’t consider it the final authority. But it can be an excellent **first line of defense** and point

you toward information you should verify independently.

There are several warning signs I’ve learned to watch for.

First, beware of extraordinary promises. If someone has discovered a way to make \$10,000 a month working two hours a week, ask yourself why they need to buy Facebook ads to sell you the secret.

Second, be suspicious of urgency. “Only three spots remaining.” “This offer disappears tonight.” “You were specially selected.” Pressure is designed to make you act before you think.

Third, investigate before giving anyone money or personal information. Search the company name along with words such as “complaints,” “scam,” “reviews,” or “lawsuit.” Look beyond testimonials on the company’s own website.

Fourth, be especially careful with health claims. A polished video and someone wearing a white coat do not make a medical claim legitimate. Talk to your doctor before changing medications or spending significant money on a supposed miracle treatment.

And finally, remember something we already know from real estate: **relationships and reputations matter.**

Social media has given legitimate businesses an incredible way to reach customers. Unfortunately, it has given scammers the exact same opportunity.

Technology is wonderful, but it has made an old piece of advice more important than ever:

If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Before you click, buy, invest, subscribe, or give someone your personal information, take five minutes and investigate.

Those five minutes might save you five hours of wasted time—or thousands of dollars.



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Knowledge, Compassion, & Clients for Life

More Than an Inspection

For Blaine Olson, inspecting a house has never been simply about identifying what's wrong.

It's about helping someone understand the place they're considering calling home.

As owner of MagNola Property Services, Blaine often works with buyers who feel overwhelmed by the home-purchasing process. His goal is to replace some of that uncertainty with something far more useful: factual information, practical knowledge, and peace of mind.

"We take our time with each and every client," Blaine says.

In fact, he prefers when buyers attend their inspections. Being present gives clients an opportunity to see conditions firsthand, ask questions, and better understand both the strengths and defects of a property.

That personal approach is backed by an unusually broad range of professional expertise.

Blaine is a licensed home inspector, licensed general contractor, and licensed

pest control operator. He holds home inspection licenses in both Mississippi and Louisiana and has an additional Mississippi designation allowing him to inspect new construction homes.

Those credentials enable MagNOLA to offer something beyond a traditional inspection.

Three Licenses, One Resource

Blaine's experience with homes began long before MagNola.

As a teenager, he worked in construction alongside his father. After college, he



continued gaining hands-on experience throughout the industry, working for a trim carpenter, flooring company, framer/builder, and lumber supplier.

Then, in 2016, Blaine and his wife built their own home from the ground up.

Years of experience eventually became a collection of professional credentials. Blaine became a licensed home inspector in 2022, a licensed general contractor in 2023, and a licensed pest control operator in 2025.

Today, he serves as MagNola's owner, lead inspector, general contractor, and lead pest control operator.

That combination allows him to look at properties through multiple lenses.

Along with home inspections, MagNola provides Wood Destroying Insect Reports at no additional charge to clients purchasing a home inspection. The company has also assisted clients with projects ranging from small handyman repairs to permitted major remodels.

Through its subcontractors, MagNola can help coordinate plumbing and electrical work, Sheetrock, painting, flooring, roofing, gutters, wood-burning stove installations, and more. The company has also installed termite contracts for clients.

Another priority is efficiency: MagNola provides same-day report delivery on nearly all home inspections.

Relationships Behind the Reports

Blaine believes technical knowledge alone doesn't make someone a great partner in a real estate transaction.

"Working with real estate agents and home-buying clients takes more skill than just filling out reports," he says.

Professionalism, in his view, includes relationships.

Most buyers may interact with an inspector only once, but REALTORS repeatedly place their clients—and therefore part of their own professional reputation—in an inspector's hands.

Blaine doesn't take that responsibility lightly.

Through relationships with agents along the Mississippi Gulf Coast and into areas north of Hattiesburg, MagNola has had repeated opportunities to help buyers navigate one of the largest investments they'll ever make.

Blaine believes agents continue recommending him not only because of the reports and services he provides, but because of the "friendly, compassionate professionalism" he brings to each client.

That compassion is particularly important when an inspection reveals problems. His job isn't simply to point out defects. It's to present unbiased facts, explain what they mean, and give buyers the knowledge they need to make their own informed decisions.

It's Personal

Integrity has been part of Blaine's foundation since childhood.

Born and raised in New Orleans, he attended Catholic schools and says the standards instilled in him early in life continue to guide how he operates today.

Those values—honesty, fairness, integrity, and compassion—shape both his professional and personal life.

Blaine attended college outside Jackson, Mississippi, where he met his wife, who grew up in Gulfport. The couple has now been married for 27 years and has one daughter.

"WE WERE NOT DESIGNED TO KEEP EVERYTHING FOR OURSELVES."

We believe in giving back by paying it forward to others who need help along the way."

When Blaine isn't working, family takes priority. His favorite moments are often simple ones: sharing meals, watching football, spending time with close friends, or cheering for nieces and nephews at youth sporting events.

Faith is also important to the Olson family. They attend church regularly and give through their local church and community fundraisers.

"We were not designed to keep everything for ourselves," Blaine says. "We believe in giving back by paying it

forward to others who need help along the way."

A Client for Life

As MagNola continues growing, Blaine hopes eventually to train and mentor others interested in becoming licensed professionals within the real estate industry.

He wants to see qualified people continue the legacy of hard work and professionalism that others have built before them, while growing MagNola across all three areas in which he holds licenses.

But regardless of how large the business becomes, Blaine wants one promise to remain unchanged.

"You are a client for life," he tells customers.

Whether a question comes a week after an inspection, a month later, or years down the road, Blaine encourages former clients to call. If he can answer a question, offer advice, or point someone in the right direction, he wants to help.

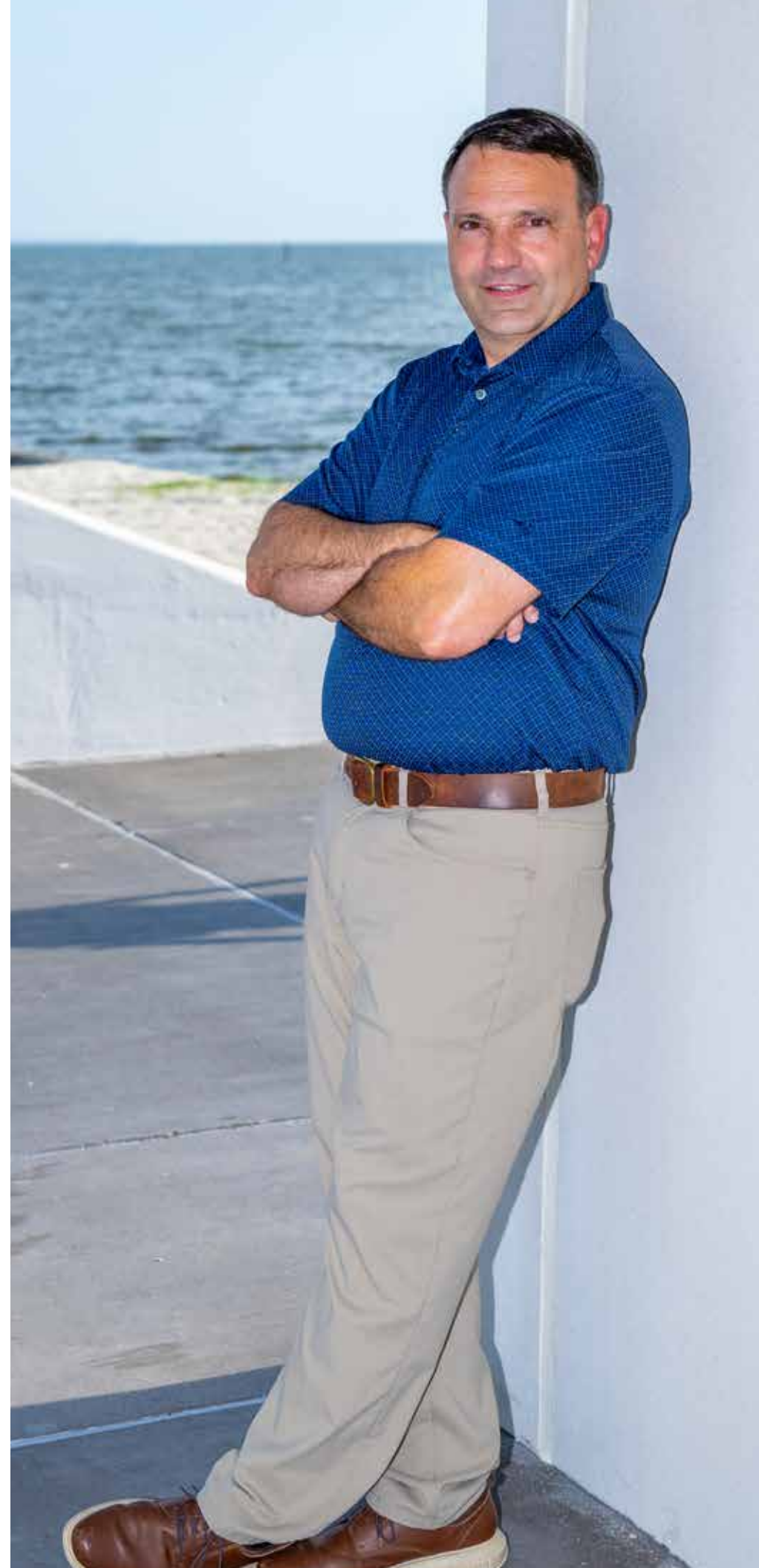
Some clients have returned to MagNola for multiple services, reinforcing Blaine's belief that the best businesses aren't built around one-time transactions.

They're built around trust.

"A healthy balance of knowledge and compassion makes a better experience for all," he says. "It's not just business; it's personal." ▼

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BUILDING A BUSINESS & A LEGACY TOGETHER

JAKE CARTER & CHRISTINA CARTER BURKS

PHOTOS BY OUTLAW
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Century 21
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Taking a Chance

Long before Jake Carter and Christina Carter Burks were in the real estate industry, Jake was working as a sheriff's deputy and serving as foreman on the family's ranch. Christina was an entertainment coordinator in the casino industry.

Neither felt completely fulfilled.

Jake found real estate first, becoming licensed in 2013. In a fitting twist, one of his clients was Christina—he sold his sister her first home.

Christina followed him into the industry in 2015, the same year they launched Century 21 J. Carter & Company.

"We simply saw an opportunity, took a chance, and worked hard to build something we believed in," they say.

Eleven years later, that leap of faith has become something neither could have imagined.

When One Wins, Everyone Wins

Today, Jake and Christina are owners of Century 21 J. Carter & Company

in Gulfport, Mississippi. They have a very successful team of 86 agents. In 2025 alone, the company closed 911 transactions totaling more than \$283.8 million in sales.

The brokerage has earned recognition as the No. 1 Century 21 company and office in Mississippi and is home to the No. 1 Century 21 team in Mississippi along with numerous top producers.

Those numbers are impressive.

But ask Jake and Christina what makes them proudest, and they talk about people.

"We truly treat our agents like family," they say. "When our agents succeed, we all succeed."

They've intentionally created a culture where agents root for one another, share energy, celebrate milestones, and feel supported in pursuing ambitious goals.

For Jake and Christina, watching an agent grow personally as well as professionally is one of the greatest privileges of leadership.

Their agents' victories feel like shared victories.

Two Passions, One Purpose

Although they lead the company together, Jake and Christina have developed different specialties within real estate.

Jake is particularly passionate about land, ranch, and hunting camp sales—a natural extension of his background and love of the outdoors. Christina gravitates toward residential real estate and the relationships that come with helping people find home.

Their individual strengths contribute to a shared philosophy about success.

"We believe success is building a life and business you're genuinely proud of," they say—one that allows room for ambition and meaningful impact while still providing the freedom to enjoy what all that hard work created.

It's a philosophy they want their agents to experience, too.

They aren't interested in building a brokerage centered solely around numbers, sales, or the bottom line. They want agents to feel valued, supported, and part of something larger than themselves.

The goal is more than a successful company.

It's a culture—and eventually a legacy.

Build a Reputation That Lasts

After more than a decade in the industry, Jake and Christina's advice to other agents begins with three fundamentals: stay humble, work hard, and never stop learning.

Real estate, they believe, is ultimately a relationship business.

"Your reputation is one of the most valuable things you will ever build," they say.

That means taking care of clients, keeping promises, going the extra mile,



“WE TRULY
TREAT OUR
AGENTS
LIKE FAMILY.
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SUCCEED,
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SUCCEED.”



and consistently showing up—even during difficult seasons.

For agents pursuing top-producer status, they emphasize consistency over shortcuts. Keep making the calls. Keep building relationships. Keep putting yourself out there.

Just as importantly, find people who encourage growth.

“Surround yourself with people who are willing to share their knowledge and celebrate your success.”

And don’t become so consumed with reaching the next closing that you forget to enjoy the journey.

Family Beyond the Office

Jake and Christina were both born in Lafayette, Louisiana, but grew up on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and graduated from Mercy Cross High School. Christina later graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi.

Today, family remains at the center of their lives outside the brokerage.

Jake and his wife, Misty, are parents to Mia, 23, Ava, 17, and Bella, 14. Their family enjoys time on the water and at their ranch, caring for their animals and enjoying the outdoors. Jake also loves hunting and fishing.

Christina and her husband, Wesley Burks, are parents to 8-year-old Hudson. These days, much of family life revolves around baseball and cheering Hudson on from the sidelines. Christina also loves reading, concerts, traveling, and spending time on the water.

Jake and his family are members of St. James Catholic Church, while Christina and her family are members of Trinity Methodist Church. Both are very involved in the Asher’s Army Foundation, a foundation formed after Jake’s nephew, Asher Bonura, was diagnosed with a very rare childhood cancer.

Dreaming Bigger

Jake and Christina have already surpassed what they envisioned when they took their first steps into real estate.

Now they’re asking a different question: How far can they take it?

They want Century 21 J. Carter & Company to continue evolving while helping agents think bigger about what’s possible—not simply building successful careers, but creating businesses and lives that provide freedom and fulfillment.

At the same time, Jake and Christina don’t want growth to distract them from why they began.

They want time with their families. They want experiences and memories. They want to enjoy the ride.

And someday, they hope to look back knowing they created something meaningful enough to continue long after them.



“We’re incredibly proud of how far we’ve come,” they say, “but we’re even more excited about what’s still ahead.”

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Continuing the Legacy

Devoting many years to the world of real estate, Susanne Ashman, Broker and owner of the 95-year-old Ashman-Mollere Realty, Incorporated continues the family legacy with unwavering commitment and vigor.



“I’m just here to help them,” she says about her dedicated service to the Agents of her brokerage, imparting invaluable knowledge and wisdom, advancing that cycle of success.

Originally, Susanne, or Sue, is from Canada, moving to Mississippi with her family in 1959. Her father Dix was an Agent and Contractor. When the original owner of Mollere Realty what is now called Ashman-Mollere Realty Incorporated decided to sell the company, the legacy of real estate began.

Working in different capacities involving real estate, Sue has a diverse set of skills. She started as a painting contractor in 1968 before going into home design and holding a General contractor’s license for Waveland. In 1978, she joined her family and became a licensed Real Estate Agent, getting her Broker’s license only a year later. Sue became the official Broker and Owner in 1994, which is a title she continues to hold to this day.

Throughout these 4 decades, Sue has gained experience in working with family, partnering alongside her parents and siblings, of which she is the youngest. Her passion for the business and the industry itself is evident in the way she cares for her agents. At the office every single day, running operations, she is there to equip them for success rather than compete with them as some Brokers may have a tendency towards doing.

With her background in painting, home design and building experience, she is able to answer numerous questions during

home showings. She can spot fine details that others do not notice. She has several credentials, such as: college credits in Real Estate Management, GRI, CRS, ABR and SRS. She also has received many awards for her hard work, including: Million Dollar Club– of which she is now a Lifetime Member–Gulf Coast Realtor of the Year and Hall of Fame: Gulf Coast Association of Realtors.

She spent many years on the Realtor board holding titles from Director to President Sue is now focusing her efforts in training the next generations of her family for Ashman-Mollere.

Her son Anthony Sheffield joined the brokerage a few years ago and has impressively scaled his business at a rapid pace. Her niece is also a part of the team and her grandson is beginning to express interest in the family business as well.

Anthony, who is working on getting his Broker’s license currently, plans to take over Ashman-Mollere once Sue retires, however, she doesn’t have any plans of doing that soon. Undoubtedly, Sue is passionate about her work and “helping everyone”, which has played a key role in her massive, continuous success over the past 45 years.





Right now, Sue is fascinated with showing and selling land, much like Anthony. She is in the process of helping sellers with large tracts of land and dividing it into smaller acres. This approach to real estate is beneficial to clients due to the fact that more people desire to move to the countryside now. Plus, the affordability is quite appealing.

Her brokerage also manages approximately 300 rental properties. “Getting people into houses who normally can’t buy is fulfilling to me,” she adds. Sue has 2 sons, Anthony, and Jonathan, and she has 3 grandchildren, along with 1 great-grandchild. She also has plenty of nieces and nephews. Although it can be a challenge to get them together, the family typically gathers for Thanksgiving.

When Sue isn’t running the office, she is enjoying life on the water on her 43-foot sailboat, serving as “just the deckhand” as she jokingly refers to herself. She applies her creative talents to paint the floats for the annual Mardi Gras Parade, which she started doing with her mom in 1978. She was even the “Queen of Nereids at the Ball” in 1993, riding atop a float herself.

She and her team enjoy decorating trees for the library and office. These trees have been decorated for Christmas, Mardi Gras, and Easter. Thoughtful and articulate, Sue has worked steadily and diligently to further develop Ashman-Mollere Realty, creating great opportunities for her own family for generations to come and agents that join the brokerage.

She is grateful that her business has had its doors open for this long and that her children and grandchildren value what she



has accomplished. Having led her brokerage with integrity and honesty, Sue strives to help everyone from her father to all she leads, and now to the next generation.

Sue has played a crucial role in developing a legacy that has continued for nearly a century, and there is no doubt that it will continue due to her dedication and deep-rooted love for the business.

She and her life love, Jim Gurley, teamed up 27 years ago. Jim is an engineer, and builder and has developed Subdivisions. Together they helped make Ashman-Mollere a bigger legacy. 🏡

For questions or comments about this article, contact Sue at (228) 216-7864 or sueashman@aol.com

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Finding Purpose in a New Season

Andrea
eAgent Solutions
Borst

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Right Where She Belongs

For more than a decade, Andrea Borst had someone telling her she should get her real estate license.

Her aunt, a broker, saw something in Andrea that perhaps Andrea wasn't ready to see in herself. At the time, however, real estate wasn't the priority. Andrea was busy raising her two sons and embracing her role as a stay-at-home wife and mother.

Then her boys grew up, the house became quieter, and Andrea found herself facing a question familiar to many parents entering a new season of life: *What now?*

Her aunt was still there with the same suggestion.

This time, Andrea listened.

She entered real estate at the end of 2023 and joined eAgent Solutions in Biloxi. What began as a new direction after motherhood quickly became something much greater—a career Andrea believes she was meant to find at exactly the right time.

"I thank God daily that He dropped this middle-aged lady right where He wants her to be," Andrea says.

And in a remarkably short time, "Your HOMEgirl," as Andrea is known, has proven she belongs.

In 2025, she produced \$5.8 million in sales and earned both Epic Top Producer and Rookie of the Year honors.



A Servant's Heart

The numbers are impressive, but Andrea isn't particularly interested in them.



"I keep my head down and do good work for my people," she says. "The proof is in the pudding."

For Andrea, real estate is about helping people secure their own piece of the American dream—and nowhere is that more meaningful than with first-time homebuyers.

"The big-money home sales aren't what it's about for me," she explains. "It's

about that first home, because your first home gets you to your future home."

She loves the entire roller coaster: the excitement, uncertainty, stress, and ultimately, the moment buyers receive their keys at the closing table.

Those transactions also require something that isn't taught in real estate school.

“Don’t worry about production or other REALTORS’ names. Keep your head down and grind with true honesty and grit.”

Andrea jokes that she sometimes wonders why she didn’t become a therapist because “managing people’s emotions is 50% of this job.”

Fortunately, caring for people comes naturally.

“I’m a lover by nature, so it’s easy to want to help or solve people’s wants and needs,” she says.

That doesn’t mean telling clients only what they want to hear. Andrea considers straightforward honesty one of the qualities that sets her apart. Her goal isn’t simply to reach the closing table; it’s to advocate for her clients and help them make decisions that genuinely serve them.

Faith Over Numbers
Andrea’s approach to business is grounded deeply in faith.

Her favorite reminder is, “If it is for you, it will be for you.”

She believes the Lord provides what is needed, a perspective that allows her to concentrate less on comparing production and more on serving the person in front of her.

Her advice to other agents follows the same philosophy.

“Stay in it, even on the hard days,” she says. “Don’t worry about production or other REALTORS’ names. Keep your head down and grind with true honesty and grit.”

Andrea is also grateful for the culture she’s found at eAgent Solutions. She describes the brokerage as “small but mighty,” where agents genuinely cheer one another on.

That camaraderie matters to someone who believes real estate works best when professionals cooperate rather than compete.

Andrea appreciates working alongside agents who are willing to find solutions for the good of their clients—and even difficult experiences have value. Encounters with agents who don’t operate the way she would simply motivate her to become better.

Above everything else, she hopes people understand the source behind the way she lives and works.

“I am a daughter of the King,” Andrea says, “and He lights my way.”





Home at the Heart of It All

Long before Andrea was helping other families find home, she was building one of her own.

Born in Biloxi, Andrea moved to Texas in sixth grade and remained there for 25 years before eventually returning to the Mississippi Gulf Coast with her family 16 years ago. They quickly fell

back in love with the slower pace of coastal living.

Andrea and her husband, Chad, have been married for 32 years. Their oldest son, Canon, 27, teaches in the Biloxi school system and coaches golf. Their younger son, Cooper, 23, graduated from LSU and works in the cannabis industry using his agricultural degree.

With their sons grown, Andrea jokes that the couple's French bulldogs, Gravy and Pepper, are their children now.

Family time often means traveling, gathering with their boys, or spending football Sundays cooking out at home. Andrea and Chad also enjoy escaping to their condo in Gulf Shores and spending time on the water.

Her faith and community remain equally important. Andrea attends New Life Family Church and She Rises Bible study, and she uses another entrepreneurial venture—her traveling hat bar—to help with school fundraisers.

Just Getting Started

Entrepreneurship isn't new for Andrea. Before real estate, she owned Dixie Gypsy, a small boutique in Biloxi, and says she has always had some type of side hustle.

But real estate feels different.

Andrea can't imagine leaving it.

She hopes the years ahead include plenty of family travel, destinations still waiting to be explored, and eventually, grandchildren. And when those grandchildren arrive, don't expect them to slow down 'Your HOMEgirl.'

Andrea can already picture herself continuing to open doors with future grandbabies in tow.

For someone who once wondered what life after raising her children would hold, she has found an answer more fulfilling than she could have anticipated.

Real estate didn't arrive too late.

For Andrea Borst, it arrived right on time. 🏡

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Welcome to *Real Producers*! Some of you may be wondering what this publication is all about, which is why we have created this FAQ page. Here, we will answer the most commonly asked questions from around the country regarding our program. My door is always open to discuss anything regarding this community — this publication is 100% designed to be your voice!

Q: WHO RECEIVES THIS MAGAZINE?

A: The top 300 agents in the Gulf Coast Area. We pulled the MLS numbers (by volume) from Jan. 1, 2022, through Dec. 31, 2022, in the MS Gulf Coast market. We cut the list off at number 300, and the distribution was born. For this year's list, the minimum production level for our group is \$5 million in 2022. The list will reset at the end of 2023 for next year and will continue to update annually.

Q: WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR BEING FEATURED IN THIS MAGAZINE?

A: The process is simple. Every feature you see has first been nominated. You can nominate REALTORS®, agents, affiliates, brokers, owners, or even yourself. Office leaders can also nominate real estate agents. We will consider anyone you bring to our attention because we don't know everyone's story, and we need your help to learn more.

A nomination currently looks like this: Email us at robert.orso@realproducersmag.com with the subject line "Nomination: (Name of Nominee)" and explain why you are nominating the individual. Maybe the person has an amazing story that we need to tell, or perhaps someone overcame extreme obstacles, is an exceptional leader, has the best customer service, or gives back to the community in a big way. The next step is an interview with us to ensure a good fit, and then we put the wheels in motion for our writer to conduct an interview and for our photographer to schedule a photo shoot.

Q: WHAT IS THE COST TO FEATURE A REALTOR®, AGENT, OR TEAM?

A: Zero, zilch, zippo, nada, nil. **The feature costs nothing**, my friends, so nominate away! We are not a pay-to-play model. We share real stories of Real Producers.

Q: WHO ARE THE PREFERRED PARTNERS?

A: Anyone listed as a preferred partner in the front of the magazine is a part of this community and will have an ad in every issue of the magazine, attend our quarterly events, and be a part of our online community. We don't just find these businesses off the street, nor do we work with all businesses that approach us. One or many of you have recommended every preferred partner you see in this publication. We won't even meet with a business that you have not vetted and stamped for approval, in a sense. Our goal is to create a powerhouse network for the REALTORS® and agents in the area and for the best affiliates so we can grow stronger together.

Q: HOW CAN I RECOMMEND A PREFERRED PARTNER?

A: If you have a recommendation for a local business that works with top real estate agents, please let us know. Send an email to robert.orso@realproducersmag.com.

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