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BUSINESS WORLD MAGAZINE

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DVL HOMES

INTEGROUS WOMEN

KALDI'S COFFEE

QUALITY HOMES,
QUALITY EXPERIENCES



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Dear Reader,

Welcome to the latest issue of Business World Magazine. Once again, we've spoken to industry leaders in both the private and public sectors across the US and Canada, and we're excited to share their stories of success.

For this edition, we've looked at award-winning builders from the coast to coast of Canada, and we found out what makes them successful, regardless of where they are in the country. In Alberta, for example, there's **San Rufo Homes**, a longstanding but always-evolving family business. They have endured both booms and downturns in the provincial housing market, but have continued to rise up and grow, and without ever compromising on the quality of their designs or workmanship. We spoke to John Stabile, President and CEO. He walked us through the company's resilience, the customer-centric approach that has made it possible, and the importance family has played every step of the way.

In Ontario, meanwhile, we looked at **Claxton + Marsh**, also known as **Timberworx Custom Homes**. They are the builder behind some of the province's freshest and most iconic homes. In recent years, the Canadian Home Builders Association (CHBA) National Awards have recognized their trailblazing with awards in a variety of categories. We caught up with Shawn Marsh and Eve Claxton, the married founders and principals of the company. They talked to us about the value of the industry recognition, and about some of the homes that earned it. In particular, they talked about their passion for building green without sacrificing style or luxury, and the 'Net Zero Award' that led to. They believe that net zero homes are "the way of the future," and they want to lead the way.

Then there's British Columbia, home of **DVL Homes** – yet another family business leading the pack in their region's custom home market. DVL Homes has been earning acclaim in the Lower Mainland for over 15 years now. They are known for delivering quality craftsmanship and sophisticated design without compromise to affordability or value. For their efforts, they have consistently earned both customer ratings – including an A+ from the Better Business Bureau – and industry accolades – including several nods from the 2019 Georgie Awards. Those profiles – and more like them – can be found in the coming pages. We hope you enjoy.

*All the best,
The Editorial Team*

From The Editor



“We will keep adding business units that enhance our offering and separate us from our competition.”

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Zach Janes

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e: info@businessworldinternational.com



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Business World Magazine

2201 - 250 Yonge St

Toronto, Ontario

M5B 2L7

E: info@businessworldinternational.com

IN THIS ISSUE JULY/AUGUST 2019

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Quality homes, quality experiences

DVL Homes

Quality meets Integrity

Timberworx Custom Homes

Leading the way

Ryan Properties

High end without high costs

Integrus Women

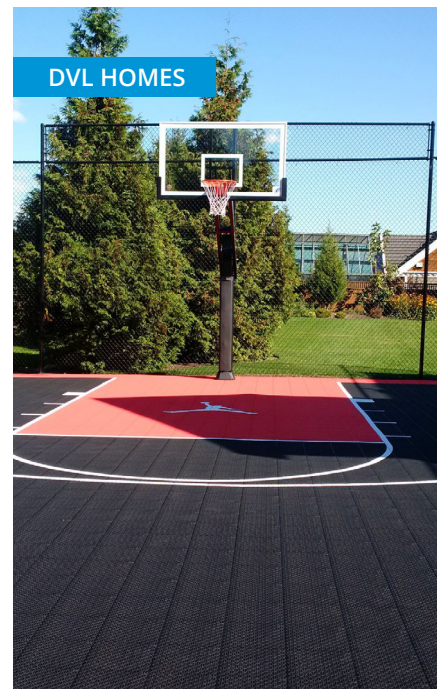
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RYAN PROPERTIES



INTEGROUS WOMEN

Industry

INNOVATIONS

Aluminum expected to accelerate worldwide adoption of electric and self-driving vehicles

Material takes on an ever-widening role in tomorrow's vehicles

For more than a decade, concerns about fuel efficiency have been encouraging OEMs to replace steel with aluminum on vehicle bodies, doors, trunks, hoods, bumpers, crash boxes, brakes, cables and wheels. With the advent of electric and autonomous vehicles, OEMs worldwide are discovering new uses for aluminum. The need for battery casings and heat exchangers in electric vehicles, combined

with autonomous vehicles' demands for high visibility and structural integrity, is expected to exponentially increase the use of sheet aluminum in tomorrow's cars, trucks and buses.

Supporting the transition to battery-powered vehicles

- Four major design challenges confront OEMs in their transition to electric vehicles.
- Extending vehicle range
- Improving battery and passenger safety
- Increasing passenger comfort
- Optimizing cooling systems for lithium-ion batteries

The substitution of sheet aluminum for steel helps resolve OEM concerns.



Extending range

The lighter the vehicle, the longer its range. According to Ducker Worldwide, aluminum is expected to contribute more than half of the anticipated vehicle mass reduction demanded by electric vehicles (EVs) to extend range. Ducker reports that in North America alone, aluminum content in EVs will increase to nearly 565 pounds (256 kilograms) per vehicle by 2028.

The larger the vehicle, the heavier the battery and casing required to optimize the EV's range. It is the larger EVs, i.e., sedans, SUVs, taxis, trucks and buses, that will realize the greatest benefits from a steel-to-aluminum conversion. In the U.S., a vehicle's gross weight determines which class of commercial driver's license (CDL) will be required. Without lightweighting, some EVs could demand a higher-class license or additional endorsements due to the added weight of the battery. In older European cities like Brussels or London, some bridges and tunnels only allow vehicles up to 3.5 tons in weight, a target that is very difficult to meet for larger EVs without lightweighting.

For heavier material transport EVs such as trucks, weight reduction enables an increased payload, providing a significant monetary benefit. Generally, the larger the vehicle, the higher the payback.

Particularly relevant for larger human transport EVs such as buses and taxis, the weight reduction made possible through aluminum provides the added benefit of reduced CO2 emissions and improved air quality, of value not only to vehicle operators, but to the communities they serve.

Optimizing battery and human safety

The thermal and anti-corrosion properties of aluminum make it ideal for battery frames. Sea-water resistant, highly formable, highly surfaced aluminum alloys provide the strength necessary to pass side-impact crashworthiness testing, protecting passengers and the battery should impact occur. Casing floor plates made out of aluminum are not only strong, but also capable of resisting corrosion related to weather exposure. These characteristics enable aluminum battery casings to resist weather-related deterioration and impact from road debris, minimizing the risk of related fires and further securing passenger safety.

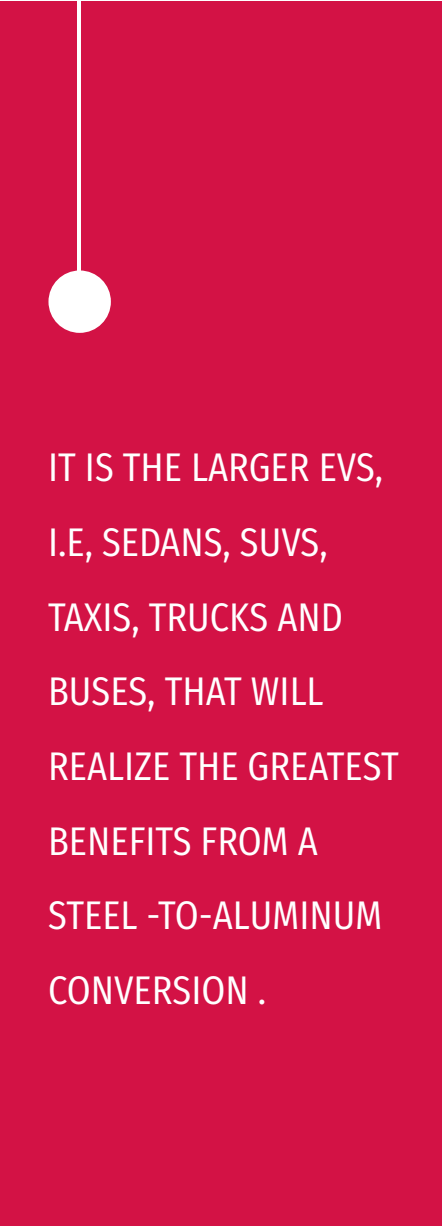
Dispersing heat

The batteries used in EVs produce energy while charging and discharging, requiring the use of heat exchangers to dissipate heat. But the types of heat exchangers used in vehicle air conditioning systems are inadequate to meet this new challenge.

Aluminum clad brazing (which connects multiple layers of aluminum together to disperse heat) requires heating in a controlled atmosphere (e.g., a vacuum) to achieve optimum joining. Aluminum heat exchangers designed specifically to meet the challenges presented by electric vehicles can use as many as five types of aluminum sandwiched together, with the layers providing gradient properties to optimize cooling.

These specialized processes and materials address OEM concerns, ensuring adequate dissipation of the heat

generated by battery-powered vehicles. An experienced aluminum processing partner can help OEMs specify the right process and alloys to meet specific vehicle temperature thresholds, ideally working side by side with OEM engineers early in the design process to maximize the performance of electric vehicles.



IT IS THE LARGER EVS,
I.E, SEDANS, SUVS,
TAXIS, TRUCKS AND
BUSES, THAT WILL
REALIZE THE GREATEST
BENEFITS FROM A
STEEL -TO-ALUMINUM
CONVERSION .

Supporting the eventual transition to autonomous vehicles

The luxury sedan market will likely be the first to transition to self-driving electric vehicles. Passenger comfort and safety, and an expansive view of the surrounding environment, are expected to be top priorities for this market.

The hefty B pillars used in conventional vehicles to meet structural requirements for crashworthiness are undesirable in a self-driving scenario. To enable large windows and an unobstructed view without sacrificing passenger safety, lightweight aluminum will be the strong material of choice.

Ongoing environmental concerns

In addition to the design challenges presented by EVs, society's demand for sustainable solutions will likely continue to be a driver in the transition to aluminum-lightweight vehicles. A Forschungsgesellschaft Kraftfahrzeugwesen mbH Aachen (fka) study, using a Volkswagen Golf as its reference vehicle, determined that an electric aluminum-based vehicle could meet the same safety standards as its steel-based equivalent, while emitting 1.5 tons less greenhouse gases over its lifecycle, taking into consideration production, a total driving distance of more than 93,000 miles (150,000 kilometers) and eventual recycling.

Conclusion

Aluminum alloys are ideally suited to the design challenges presented by electric and autonomous vehicles. By aligning with aluminum partners deeply experienced in developing processes and alloys to meet demanding performance requirements, transportation vehicle OEMs are accelerating the pace of EV and self-driving vehicle adoption throughout North America. .







CH...

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San Rufo Homes is an award-winning Edmonton builder that takes pride in the construction of unique, functional, and beautiful custom homes, all of them reflecting the needs and practicality of their clients.

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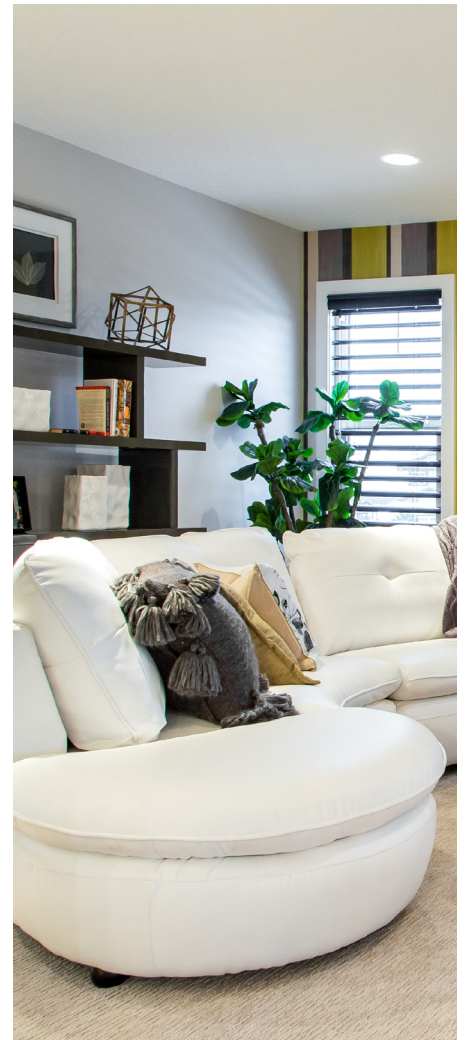
San Rufo Homes is an award-winning Edmonton builder that takes pride in the construction of unique, functional, and beautiful custom homes, all of them reflecting the needs and practicality of their clients. They also take pride in the experiences that clients have along the way. Their goal is to make those experiences as enjoyable and stress-free as possible. They achieve that by always being available to answer questions and concerns, keeping the client intimately involved throughout the entire design and building process, and providing incredible value for money every step of the way.

"We are proud to offer our clients a unique and custom-

er-driven home buying experience," says John Stabile, President and CEO.

"We consider customers as part of our extended family," he explains. "Therefore, every customer's experience - from the first time in one of our show homes, through to possession and even beyond the warranty - is of utmost importance to us."

San Rufo Homes understands the importance of family. The name of the company is derived from the village in Italy where Giuseppe Stabile, John's father, was born. The business was officially formed in Edmonton in 2002, when the Stabile family accepted the offer of a small developer to open a show home in







their new community. After operating there for several years, the quality of their product offering attracted a larger developer, who approached them with an opportunity in another community and momentum started to build. A year later, the same developer offered them another spot in yet another community, and the company really took-off.

Within a couple years of forming, San Rufo Homes grew to doing 10 to 15 homes per year. From there, their success continued, and persisted even through an economic downturn. Despite the challenges they have faced, the company has continued to rise up and grow because of their quality of their work. They

have never really participated in marketing campaigns, as their products speak for themselves. Last year, San Rufo Homes completed 52 homes. This year, they are projected to complete between 60 and 70. They now operate 10 show homes around the Greater Edmonton region, some of them duplex homes, some of them single family. They have become experts on all kinds of builds, and have developed roughly 40 customisable models that clients can review and choose from.

Those model plans are carefully researched and refined to ensure the best combination of design, efficiency and attention to detail. Each model is named after the children of the Stabile

“We are proud to offer our clients a unique and customer-driven home buying experience,”



family as well as the staff. All of their models are adjustable, and allow clients to customize the floorplan and all the finishes, in order to make it truly home.

Alternatively, those plans can simply be used for inspiration and ideas. If San Rufo doesn't have the perfect plan, they will work in collaboration with the client to make one from scratch. That's how a lot of their new homes begin, in fact – with a brand new design specifically tailored to meet the client's individual needs.

"We offer a very boutique service," John says. "We help the clients design their own unique home – and not by just merely

moving walls or picking colors. Instead, the clients tell us their dreams, and we turn those dreams into a reality."

When coming up with a new custom design, clients may use upwards of three or four of San Rufo's models as inspiration. They may also use anything else imaginable, including clippings from magazines and photos from the internet. The team at San Rufo Homes believes in taking whatever inspires the client, and turning that inspiration into a home design specifically tailored for them.

Once the process begins, clients receive access to San Rufo's established network of trusted industry partners and suppliers,

who guide them through the design and selection process. Over the years, the company has developed and maintained solid relationships with a number of local home designers and architectural firms. They are pleased to set up interviews with the client and these firms to determine which will best suit their project's needs. From there, they work in a closely coordinated effort with the selected designer or architect, sharing their resources of knowledge and expertise.

As the plans are developed, the team also discusses the construction details with the actual tradespeople who will perform the work. These discussions help to create details that en-

hance the design, while also being practical and cost efficient to construct. The home buyer's price point is always kept a top priority.

Before construction starts, San Rufo goes on to present the actual working drawings to the client for review, approval, discussion; as well as offer any suggestions to suit the client's lifestyle. They make sure the client clearly understands what they are looking at, and that they fully know what they are buying. The goal is to confirm that everybody is on the same page, and that expectations are

fully aligned. If the client is not getting exactly what they want or expected, that's a problem, and San Rufo makes it their mission to resolve that problem before construction begins.

"It's a very client-driven process," John says. "Our entire business model revolves around the client."

San Rufo's focus on customer satisfaction is the reason they have been so successful over the past 10 years. Their team devotes a lot of time and energy into building not just homes, but trust and accountability

with the people they work with. As a result, they have developed a longstanding reputation for honesty and integrity. That integrity has been rewarded by clients in their ratings and reviews, as well as acknowledged by the industry at large.

Recently, for example, San Rufo's focus was recognized at the 15th Annual Avid Awards in 2018, and then again in 2019. There, they received an Avid Benchmark Award for being in the top 25 per cent of customer ratings nationwide, two years in a row!

The Avid Awards were created



to honour builders in North America that provide extraordinary customer experiences. The winners are the builders that score the highest with their customers on home buying experience surveys, which are evaluated using Avid Ratings' award-winning, unbiased third-party survey platform. Every home buyer survey in the Avid database is meticulously analyzed, and the total scores are calculated using scores from the total home buying experience, the willingness to refer, and the actual number of recommendations a buyer has made.

In a statement announcing the awards, Tim Bailey, division president of Avid Ratings Canada, said that the winners "represent a list of builders that have all excelled in setting the bar of homebuilding and for customer service in Canada."

San Rufo Homes is to set that bar due to their internal mandate, which is to "guide and support the customer experience."

Truly, everything San Rufo does is about ensuring the customer experience is a positive one. Of course, that doesn't mean they

don't make mistakes. It means that if they do, they will own up to them and make them right.

"We're not perfect all the time," John says. "Nobody is. There's going to be the odd situation where the client isn't satisfied with something we've done, but we'll be the first to say that when we're wrong, we're wrong, and we're going to do whatever we can to correct it. I don't think there's a client out there who can say that we didn't own up to an error."

The vast majority of the time, however, it doesn't come to

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that, as San Rufo Homes is also known for going to the extra mile to ensure utmost quality. They dedicate time for multiple inspections and walk-throughs on every project, making sure every home meets their standards of excellence in both workmanship and function.

“My whole team cares about what we do,” John says. “We care about building a good home, and we care about our clients.”

San Rufo’s caring for clients does not end at the point of sale. Many in the construction industry consider that the “pin-

nacle of the process,” but San Rufo Homes recognizes it as is just the beginning. They continue to support clients at every point from then on – all the way from to possession, through the warranty period, and long after. They are committed to supporting their client at all times.

The proof of that commitment is not just the ratings and awards. San Rufo’s history of referrals is even more convincing evidence. From the start, the majority of the company’s work has been generated by past clients, and their client’s friends and business partners. San

Rufo encourages that with a referral program, which includes a \$2,500 cheque for when referred persons purchase a new home. With the way they take care of their clients, they expect to be handing out referral cheques well into the future.



Exceeding expectations

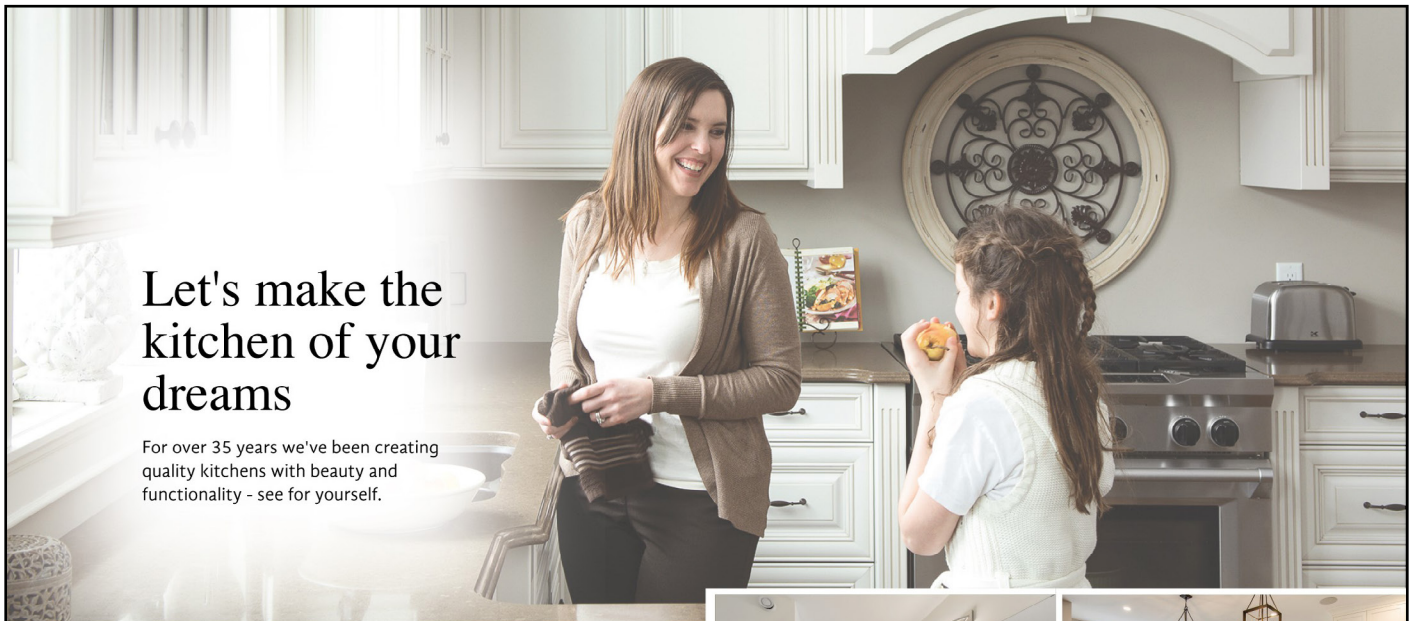


San Rufo Homes has not only been awarded for their customer service. The high quality of workmanship has also been recognized by industry peers. At the CHBA Albert and Edmonton Awards of Excellence, for example, their single-family and duplex homes have been winners and/or finalists in a number of categories over the years. That standard of excellence is a credit to the company's team – especially their in-house team of superintendents, drafters, warranty personnel, managers and more.

"We're very selective in our staffing," John says. "We don't let anyone near our homes unless we trust them to do the right thing."

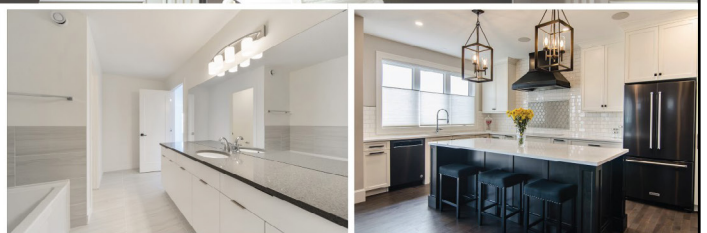
The same is true of the company's roster of suppliers and subcontractors. San Rufo Homes only works with contractors they trust, and who share the company's values of quality, integrity and accountability.

The company refuses to let price point dictate who they work with. Instead, they focus



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on the quality their partners can provide, as well as other key factors, such as their skillsets and organizational abilities. And while San Rufo has their own system of checks and balances when it comes to quality assurance, they ask their suppliers to have their own checklists and procedures in place as well.

"Those are the kinds of things we base our decisions on," John says. "It's not about price. We don't look for the cheapest guys. We don't even consider the cheapest guys. We look for the most proficient and skilled in their scope of work. We want

people who take pride and ownership in the work they do, who aren't just going through the motions."

"At the end of the day, your homes are only as good as your trade base," he continues. "If you have a weak trade base, you can have all the checks and balances in the world, but you're not going to get the quality you want."

One of the companies that San Rufo Homes relies on to provide excellence is Durabuilt Windows & Doors. Durabuilt is an Edmonton-based company that shares

"Our entire business model revolves around the client."



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a lot of values in common with San Rufo. They offer industry-leading service combined with expert-quality craftsmanship and design. They strive to be the best building partner on the market. And they take pride in making their partners look good, no matter the project or price point.

Another such company is Everest Exteriors. They are also Edmonton-based, and they also take pride in forming close partnerships with their clients. They work with a variety of exterior products, and spend a lot of time with clients and owners beforehand making sure they are achieving the desired look. Then, from start to finish, they work fast and efficiently. They make sure the project is completed on time and within budget, and make sure the work is done the right way, the first time.

Then there's Superior Cabinets – another longstanding company and industry leader, in Edmonton and beyond. They have been creating quality kitchens with beauty and functionality for more than 35 years. They have a long held and well-earned reputation for fine quality products, outstanding service, and dedicated employees. Like San Rufo, they believe in designing and building a truly custom product, one tailored specifically to the client and the way they live.

Over the years, San Rufo Homes has “weeded out” the subcontractors and suppliers that don't promote those kinds of values. The trades remaining – such as Durabuilt, Everest Exteriors, and Superior Cabinets – tend to be longstanding, and they enjoy extremely close relationships with the Stabile family and their team.

When that whole team comes together, they can achieve truly wonderful outcomes. A recent example is a show home San Rufo constructed called the 'Isaiah, is located in the company's latest community of Rocha in the Orchards. That project is a “show stopper,” with four bedrooms, a bonus room, and upper floor laundry. John is a particularly big fan of the master bedroom and ensuite, as well as the mud room on the main floor.

The company is equally proud of their new 'Joseph II' show home, which they believe is another beautiful illustration of their team's exceptional craftsmanship. That home opened in Jesperdale earlier this year. The detailing on that home is stunning, and reviews have particularly commended what the company accomplished in the kitchen and great room.



Always improving



Looking to the future, San Rufo Homes aims to grow – but grow organically and sustainably, and not just for the sake of it. In the past, they have endured both ups and downs in the Alberta economy, and they have always been very deliberate about the rate of their expansion. In the boom times, they have even turned down opportunities to do more work when they thought their quality might suffer as a result.

Soon after the company commenced, for example, there was a boom in the Alberta housing market. San Rufo Homes could have potentially sold a lot more, but they were very mindful about taking on trades they had no history with. They had heard horror stories from other builders about working with unproven subcontractors, and they didn't want any part of that.

"We didn't deviate from our trade base," John recalls. "That may have meant we didn't make as much money as we could have, but it's not all about the money. It's about creating something that's lasting. Something with substance. Something our clients love to call 'home.'"

Moving forward, San Rufo Homes is abiding by the same principals. They anticipate that they will eventually grow to doing 80 or even 100 homes a year, but never much more than that. It's more important – they believe – that they continue to grow their reputation, and keep getting better at what they do.

"I think we build a great product, but I think we can build a better product," John says. "And when we do, I'll think we can still build a better product after that. There's always room for improvement. Always."

For more on San Rufo Homes, their process, home models, and awards – and to get in touch the San Rufo Homes team – visit <https://sanrufo-homes.com/>



As much as they build homes, DVL has built trust. Their accreditation and A+ Rating with the Better Business Bureau (BBB) – combined with their volume of industry accolades and customer testimonials – reflects how trusted they truly are.





**QUALITY
MEETS
INTEGRITY**



DVL Homes is a family building business dedicated to delivering quality in the Lower Mainland – not only quality of construction, but customer service as well. Since forming in 2004, they have made it their mission to provide families with a homebuilding process that exceeds all expectations. They have made sure the journey is rewarding and exciting, not stress-filled and complicated. They have helped clients every step of the way, from financing to design to construction and handover, and they have built exceptional quality and value-for-money into every stage.

As much as they build homes, DVL has built trust. Their accreditation and A+ Rating with

the Better Business Bureau (BBB) – combined with their volume of industry accolades and customer testimonials – reflects how trusted they truly are.

“We’ve been doing this a long time, and we know what it takes to ensure a satisfied customer,” says Nick Dosanjh, founder and owner. “Our experience has only strengthened our commitment. We want to create excellent homes, deliver the best possible quality and craftsmanship, and the best possible customer experience.”

Today, DVL Homes works primarily on high-end single-family custom homes, but has a growing focus on commercial or multi-family projects as well. No

“Our experience has only strengthened our commitment. We want to create excellent homes, deliver the best possible quality and craftsmanship, and the best possible customer experience.”





matter the sector or client, however, Nick believes everyone is drawn to DVL for the same reasons:

"It's our quality, our service, our punctuality," he says. "I believe those are all large factors in our customers' decision-making." DVL Homes ticks all those boxes, and customers have come to recognize that. As a local builder, Nick has built a strong reputation in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. He is well known for being approachable and easy to work with, and for building good relationships with clients. He's also well recognized for the quality of his work - the company's award recognition and BBB rating backs that up.

As a result of Nick's reputation in the region, DVL Homes has rarely had to advertise in their 15 year history. The majority of their work has been generated by word of mouth and referrals. According to Nick, that's how he knows the company is doing the right thing - that's the proof that they are providing homes and experiences that satisfy.





Great value



For years, DVL Homes has grown their reputation by providing quality excellence without compromise to affordability and value. As a recent example of that combination, Nick cites a home they recently designed and built on spec in Morgan View Estates. He calls it a “truly remarkable home,” one that “showcases over 5,330 square feet of quality craftsmanship and sophisticated design.”

That home is not just excellent according to Nick – the industry at large agrees. At the

2019 Georgie Awards – which received a record number of submissions – the project was named a finalist for ‘Best Custom Home Valued between \$500,000 and \$899,999.’ It was also a finalist at the 2019 HAVAN Ovation Awards for Best Custom Home Under \$1 million.

“That’s great value,” Nick says of the award recognition. “We’re in categories with 300 to 400 applications, and they only nominate three or four finalists. It shows we’re in the top one per cent in our sector. That says a lot about



our product, it says a lot about the customer's buying our product, and it says a lot about the company as a whole."

The award-nominated Morgan View project was a custom-built home that Nick and his team designed with a growing family in mind. It has five bedrooms, five full bathrooms, and a finished basement. The basement features a media area, bar, home gym, and walkout access to the backyard, while the master suite features vaulted ceilings, a large walk-in closet, and an "amazing spa-like ensuite."

Nick says that his favorite room,

if he had to pick just one, would be the kitchen. He says they designed it to include a large island for entertaining and integrated high-end appliances for "an improved cooking experience." They also included floor-to-ceiling cabinetry and a stunning custom range hood along with a separate spice kitchen.

Overall, Nick says the design was planned to create a "bright, open feeling, with plenty of space for entertaining and luxurious finishes throughout." It was also designed to evoke a "natural feeling," as it sits on a lot that backs on to some open green space with a flowing

creek. The natural oak vintage hardwood flooring is an example.

As he does with all of the company's single-family homes, Nick personally reviewed and finalized the plans before going forward with construction. He made sure the design achieved all of the company's aesthetic objectives while still representing maximum value-for-money, just like he does when he's working with a client.

"I think we achieved everything we set out to do on that project," he says. "It turned out really well. I think the fact that we



were nominated for two awards shows that.”

Since completing the award-recognized Morgan View project, DVL Homes has been using it as a display while it remains on sale. Nick reports receiving “great feedback” from everyone they have walked through it.

“Great color choices’ is something we have heard a lot,” he says. “We’ve gotten great feedback on the quality, the products we’re using, the landscaping, the flow of the home, the furnishings we’ve used to bring out the accents of the home –

the cleanliness of the construction, even.”

“We have gotten some interest from lottery corporations, who want us to do a display for them,” he adds. “The reception has been amazing.”

Nick credits that reception to the high quality of both the design and the craftsmanship – which is another thing he personally ensures on every project. He does walkthroughs throughout the course of every build in order to ensure everything is progressing according to plan and schedule, and to

potentially identify any issues, usually before they even arise. He also emphasizes attention to detail, and if any of the finishes fail to meet his standards, he makes sure they are corrected.

“I go through finishing details with an intense focus,” he says. “I make sure the finished product is perfect. Nothing is left half-done or incomplete. When we hand over a job, it has to be ready for someone to move right into. Even if it’s a spec home, like that one was.”

Nick also praises the subcontractors and tradespeople who



A promotional graphic for Pine Lighting. The top half shows a wooden ceiling with several pendant lights of different styles, including a large black one and several smaller ones. The text "LOVE OUR LIGHTING" is written in white on the ceiling. Below the ceiling, there is a red background with white text. The text includes "We offer stylish chandeliers, designer ceiling fans, unique outdoor lighting, modern track and pendants and a huge variety of table and floor lamps." and "Our expertise covers small renovations, new home construction, restaurants, hotels and multiple unit townhouse and condominium projects." At the bottom, there is a red bar with the website "www.pinelighting.xolights.com" and the company name "PINE LIGHTING" in large white letters, with "SURREY - KELOWNA - VICTORIA" in smaller white letters below it.

“We have gotten some interest from lottery corporations, who want us to do a display for them.”

worked on that project – in fact; he says they deserve even more of the credit he does.

“Everybody did their job,” he says. “They all deserve a pat on the back. They’re all masters of their own trade, and they all came together, communicated, and got along very well.”

Most of those team members have been working with Nick and DVL Homes ever since the company started in 2004. As a result of that longevity, they have grown to know and respect not just Nick, but each other as well. That mutual re-

spect helps to resolve conflicts and helps ensure that every job progresses smoothly.

“They respect each other’s work,” Nick says. “They understand that if one person doesn’t finish, the next person can’t get in, and then there’s a domino effect. So they all work together, they sit down and communicate, if there are issues they work through them. The chemistry is very high.”



Continued success

In recent years, in addition to designing and building single family homes, DVL has also started developing some of their own multi-residential projects. They are currently in the process of building a six-storey condominium project, for example.

In the near future, however, Nick is particularly interested in exploring Vancouver's affordable and social housing market. The city has long had a deficit of those kinds of projects and has been offering incentives to build more. Moving forward, DVL Homes' goal is to take advantage of those incentives and do their part in addressing that problem.

At the same time, Nick says the company wants to maintain their hold on the single-family luxury home market. That's where DVL Homes has been enormously successful in the past, and Nick expects that success to continue.

"We want to maintain our space in the luxury home market," he says. "We also want to carve more space in the multi-family market, and build more high-rise condominiums."

"Along the way, we want to col-

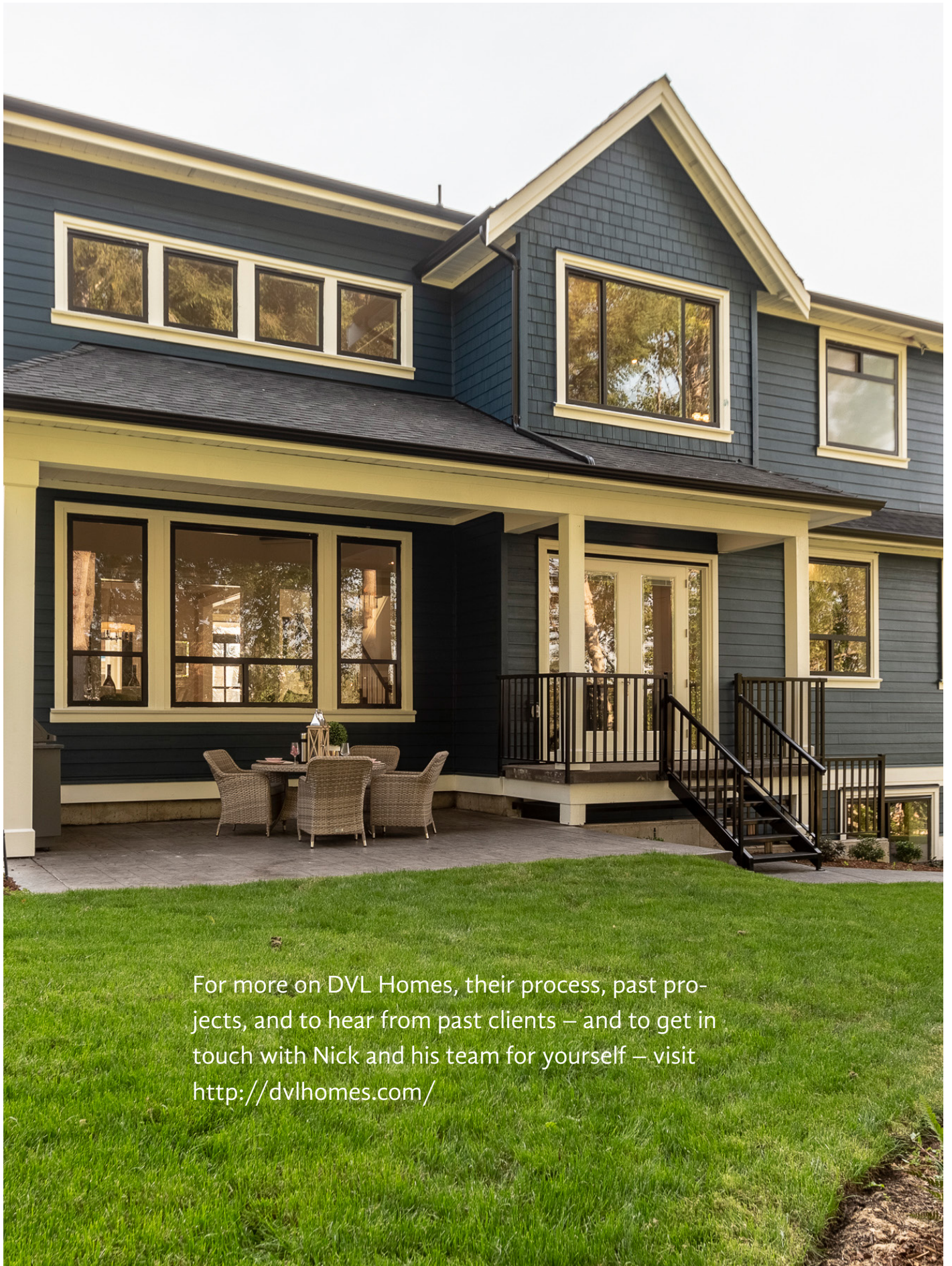
lect some properties to build commercial rentals on," he adds. "We want to build those, lease them out, and keep the cash flowing."

"We want to have lots of different avenues for growth," he says in summation

Currently, DVL Homes has a staff capable of taking on more projects and larger projects. As the company continues to grow, Nick says that the staff will grow along with it, but never to the point where he's not personally involved in everything they do.

"I want to stay hands-on," he says. "I have people on the ground that I trust, but when it comes to major decisions, when it comes to the choices that are really important - I will always want to have a look. I want to stay in the game."





For more on DVL Homes, their process, past projects, and to hear from past clients – and to get in touch with Nick and his team for yourself – visit <http://dvlhomes.com/>





LEADING THE WAY



TIMBERWORX
CUSTOM HOMES





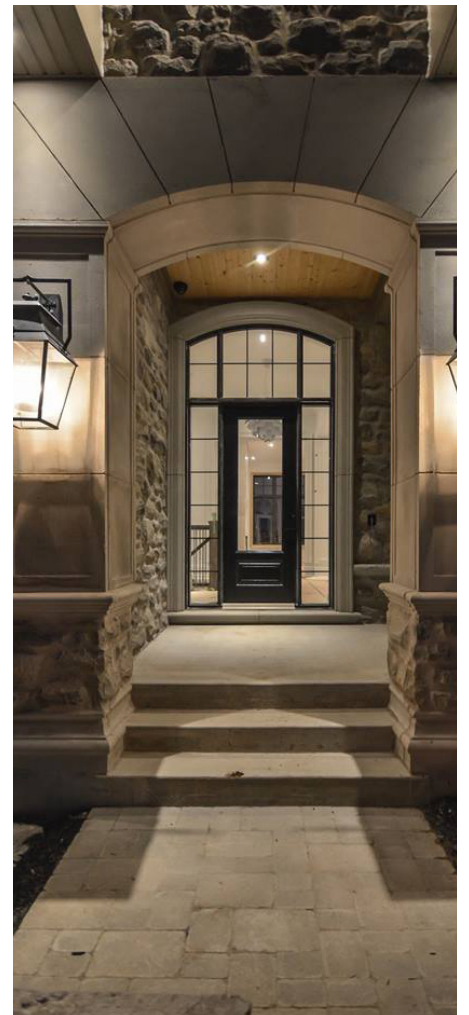
Claxton + Marsh – also known as Timberworx Custom Homes – is the builder behind some of Ontario’s freshest and most iconic homes. They are trailblazers, combining a classic focus on luxury with a modern focus on environmental sustainability. In recent years, their trailblazing has earned them a wave of attention and acclaim, and a long list industry accolades.

At the 2019 Canadian Home Builders Association (CHBA) National Awards, for example, Claxton + Marsh was held up as one of the best the industry has to offer in a variety of categories. They were recognized for everything from the workmanship of their homes, to their excellence in sustainability, to

their talent in interior decorating – they were even acknowledged for the design of their website.

“Those awards are hugely important to us,” says Shawn Marsh, founder and principal of the company. “To win at a national level is very special. It shows we’re among the best in the country. It shows we’re doing the right thing.”

“And it means a lot to our team,” adds Eve Claxton, also a founder and principal. “It gives everyone here a new level of appreciation for the quality that’s out there, and a new level of excitement about the quality we are delivering. It helps them understand why we do what we do. It’s been







very invigorating.”

Shawn and Eve are right to be proud of their recent recognition. According to CHBA CEO Kevin Lee, the awards this year were especially competitive: “Feedback from the judges was that the calibre of entries this year was especially high,” Lee said, in a statement announcing the finalists.

“This year, the competition increased its focus on the context of the project,” he added. “Who was the home or community built for? Why was the home renovated? So our judges really had to consider how well the project’s desired outcomes were met. The finalists this year truly represent the best in Can-

ada.”

Claxton + Marsh were a finalist in seven categories, and a winner in four. A home in Aberfoyle called ‘Green with Envy’ won the category for ‘Detached Homes – Custom | Under 2,500 square feet.’ A home called ‘Avant Garde,’ also in Aberfoyle, won ‘Detached Homes – Custom | 3,501 to 5,000 square feet.’

Avant Garde also won the award for ‘Interior Decorating,’ as well as the ‘Net Zero Home Award.’ Shawn is particularly proud of the latter accolade. He has been passionate about environmental efficiency for a long time now, and believes that net zero homes are “the future of building.”

“We really listen to our community.”





“We are proud to help lead the way to a more sustainable environment and future,” Shawn says.

Leading the way in sustainability does not mean sacrificing luxury, however. With Avant Garde – Canada’s first certified luxury net zero home – Claxton + Marsh has shown clients that they can have both.

Avant Garde is 4,500 square feet, and located in Guelph’s prestigious Heritage Lake Estates Community. It features 9,200 square feet of living space on an exclusive one-acre lot. It includes ceilings ranging from 12 to 20 feet, heated patios, walkways, and driveway, and smoked glass custom stair

railings. The main floor features four bedrooms, five bathrooms, and a diva-inspired kitchen and pantry. There’s also a temperature-controlled wine room with a black pearl racking system, a four-season room with a floor-to-ceiling hand-carved limestone fireplace and wall-to-wall windows, and a “stunning great room.”

Eve describes that home as having an “ambience of pure luxury throughout,” and a “permeating air of glamour.”

That kind of “luxury feeling” is rarely present in environmentally-friendly homes, but Claxton + Marsh is changing the game. The company designed and engineered the home to

reduce energy needs, they included on-site renewable energy systems – including a Tesla Powerwall – and they made sure the home produces at least as much energy as it consumes on a yearly basis. At the same time, they also designed the home maximum curb and aesthetic appeal. There are solar panels, but the roof was designed to keep them out of sight. Eve says the home looks “truly magnificent” from the road.

“The last thing we wanted was to have people drive by the home and say ‘Look at that lovely environmentally-friendly home,’” Eve says. “The goal was to build a big home with basically every luxury feature, everything a cli-

ent could want – but still have it run on its own power.”

Claxton + Marsh’s other recent award-winning home, called ‘Green with Envy,’ was similarly designed to exceed luxury expectations.

Green with Envy was a bungalow in Aberfoyle featuring over 4,600 square feet of living space. Eve describes it as “modern living in a whole new light.”

The home features a palate of whites, greys, and comforting

features such as heated flooring and multiple fireplaces. It also features floor-to-ceiling windows, allowing for an abundance of natural light. Meanwhile, the open concept and clean long lines of the cabinetry and trim “communicate a distinctly modern feel.”

The home was also designed and fitted to be extremely livable. It includes “the highest end fixtures, finishes, and appliances,” Shawn says.

Much like Avant Garde, Green

with Envy was also designed to be “net zero ready,” Eve says. The team at Claxton + Marsh wanted to show clients how efficient a home could be with a smaller foot-print – and clients responded. The home was built on spec, but the home had three buyers competing for it shortly after completion. They sold it for over the asking price not long after the CHBA awards. Avant Garde, meanwhile, was also built on spec, but Shawn and Eve liked the finished product so much they claimed it for themselves.



Always evolving

In addition to the national awards, Claxton + Marsh has also been extremely successful at earning acclaim at the local level. For example, the Guelph & District Home Builders' Association (GDHBA) hosts an annual Awards of Distinction & President's Ball Gala. At the 2018 event, Shawn and Eve earned eight separate accolades in recognition of virtually every facet of their business.

The wins included: 'Best Ad Campaign,' 'Most Outstanding New or Renovated Home Bathroom,'

'Most Outstanding Home Design (Estate or Custom),' 'Green Builder of the Year,' 'Best Interior Decorating Model Home/Suite,' 'Most Outstanding New or Renovated Home Kitchen,' 'Best New Home Sales office,' and 'Project of the Year.' Shawn Marsh was also personally honoured with the 'Past President Award.'

According to Shawn and Eve, those achievements are a result of their company's unrivalled attention to detail – which starts at the top. Eve personally over-



sees the design team, for example, and makes sure that no two projects are ever the same. Shawn, meanwhile, is personally on-site of every project. He works closely with both the design team and the tradesmen, and he makes sure every element is coordinated and installed correctly.

Both Shawn and Eve also credit their awards success to their clients, whose visions make their homes possible. They believe they attract those visionary clients with their honesty and transparency.

"We always do what we say

we're going to do," Eve says. "There are no surprises with us. I don't think we've ever had a client that walked away feeling jaded. When they tell us, 'This is our budget and we can't go over it,' we respect that. We give them exactly what they want and expect."

"And we always give them a beautiful product," she continues. "We've never had any client disappointed with the quality of our product. Not ever."

The company also has a "constant requirement to evolve," Shawn adds.

"After every home we build, we ask ourselves 'What did we hit out of the park? What could we have done better?'" he explains. "That's why we win awards. That's why we've been around as long as we have. We're never satisfied. It doesn't matter how well we do something, we can always do it better. That's the culture we've built here."

"We make sure everybody in our company thinks that way," he says. "It starts with design, and goes right through the carpentry, finish work, and beyond. We believe there's always a better way to do things, and we're always evolving."



An exciting future



Both Shawn Marsh and Eve Claxton come from longstanding careers in Guelph's high-end custom home sector – Shawn in framing, and Eve in real estate. Both are passionate about the industry, and care deeply about providing high quality homes that blend classic and modern concepts. They founded Claxton + Eve with the goal of working with likeminded clients to bring those homes to life.

Over the year, the company has grown steadily in strength, but not necessarily in size. Shawn

and Eve's focus has always remained fixed on quality, not quantity. They now limit themselves to eight homes per year, with the majority of their work valued at \$2 million or more. They feel that taking on any more work would mean compromising their attention to detail, or would require using subcontractors and suppliers that they don't trust – which is something they refuse to do.


Moving forward, for those reasons, Eve says the company's limits will remain in place. The



company will continue to work on a select number of jobs, for a select number of clients – the kind of clients who share their values and quality expectations. “We only want to work with clients that we can build a good relationship with,” Eve says. “We’re very connected with the client over the course of a build. We’re practically tied to the hip for almost 10 months. It’s important that we understand each other, that we communicate well, that we trust each other. It’s all about the relationship with us.”

In the future, it will also be increasingly important that the client cares about sustainability. Shawn is very proud of the work he’s done with the CHBA’s Net Zero Energy Housing Council (NZC), and he wants to take the capabilities he’s learned and apply them to everything he does. Not just single-family homes, either. As lots in the area diminish, he sees the company transitioning to luxury condos and townhouses, and delivering them to the same high level, and to the same green standards.

“We want to continue leading the way in terms of quality and green technology,” he concludes. “We want to take what we do here and apply it to what we do in the future. We’re not yet sure what that will be, but we know it’s going to be awesome. We’re excited about what comes next.”



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For more on Claxton + Marsh, their awards, and their award-winning projects – and to get in touch with Shawn, Eve, and their team – visit <https://www.claxtonmarsh.com/>



RAYN
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**HIGH END WITHOUT
HIGH COSTS**





For the past 20 years, Rayn Properties has been building exceptional new and custom homes across Vancouver Island. In that time, they have earned 14 CARE Awards from the Victoria Residential Builders Association, including five gold awards and 16 silver awards. They have also earned the trust and satisfaction of a long list of clients, whose referrals generate almost all the company's work. And, most importantly, they have earned a reputation for excellence. Throughout Greater Victoria, founder and director Rov Dosanjh has become known in Greater Victoria for his unwavering commitment to quality.

Rov has been building homes,

in some capacity, practically all his professional life. He was first exposed to the process in 1983, when he helped build a custom home for his parents, and found he really enjoyed it. In 1991, he joined the police force, but went on to build several homes for himself on the side. Those homes earned him some attention from external clients, and by the early 2000s, he was regularly taking on construction projects for others.

After retiring as a police officer in 2004, Rov decided to make building his full-time gig, and started a company with partner Joe Samra. That business – called Dosam Developments Limited – delivered roughly 20 projects in Victoria over the next







three years. In 2007, Joe took a step back from house building, Rov decided to go out on his own, and Rayn Properties was born.

These days, Rayn Properties is known for delivering high-end custom homes that aren't necessarily "high cost." They work across Greater Victoria, on projects that range greatly in size, value, and budget. No matter what kind of home they are building, however, Rov and his team ensure it is finished to a very high quality.

"We take a lot of pride in everything we do," he says. "We understand that a home is a big financial and emotional investment for the client, no mat-

ter what they're spending. We respect that. If we're involved, we're going to make sure the home is as good as it can be."

"We'll never just slap a home together," he adds. "We're heavily invested in all our projects. We won't hand over anything that doesn't live up to our own quality standards."

That commitment to quality is one of the main draws of Rayn Properties for clients. Another draw is Rov's experience – which he leverages at every stage of the process in order to help the client achieve a higher quality and more cost-effective result.

"I really care about all my proj-

"We take a lot of pride in everything we do."





ects,” he reiterates. “I’m always challenging myself, and I’m always thinking about how to make them better, even after hours.”

Rov is available to suggest those kinds of amendments and improvements because he’s on site every day. And he’s on site every day because he does not allow the company to take on more work than he can personally handle. There was a time when he took more work and used project managers, but the personal involvement was too important to him, so he consolidated and led the company back to the size they are at today.

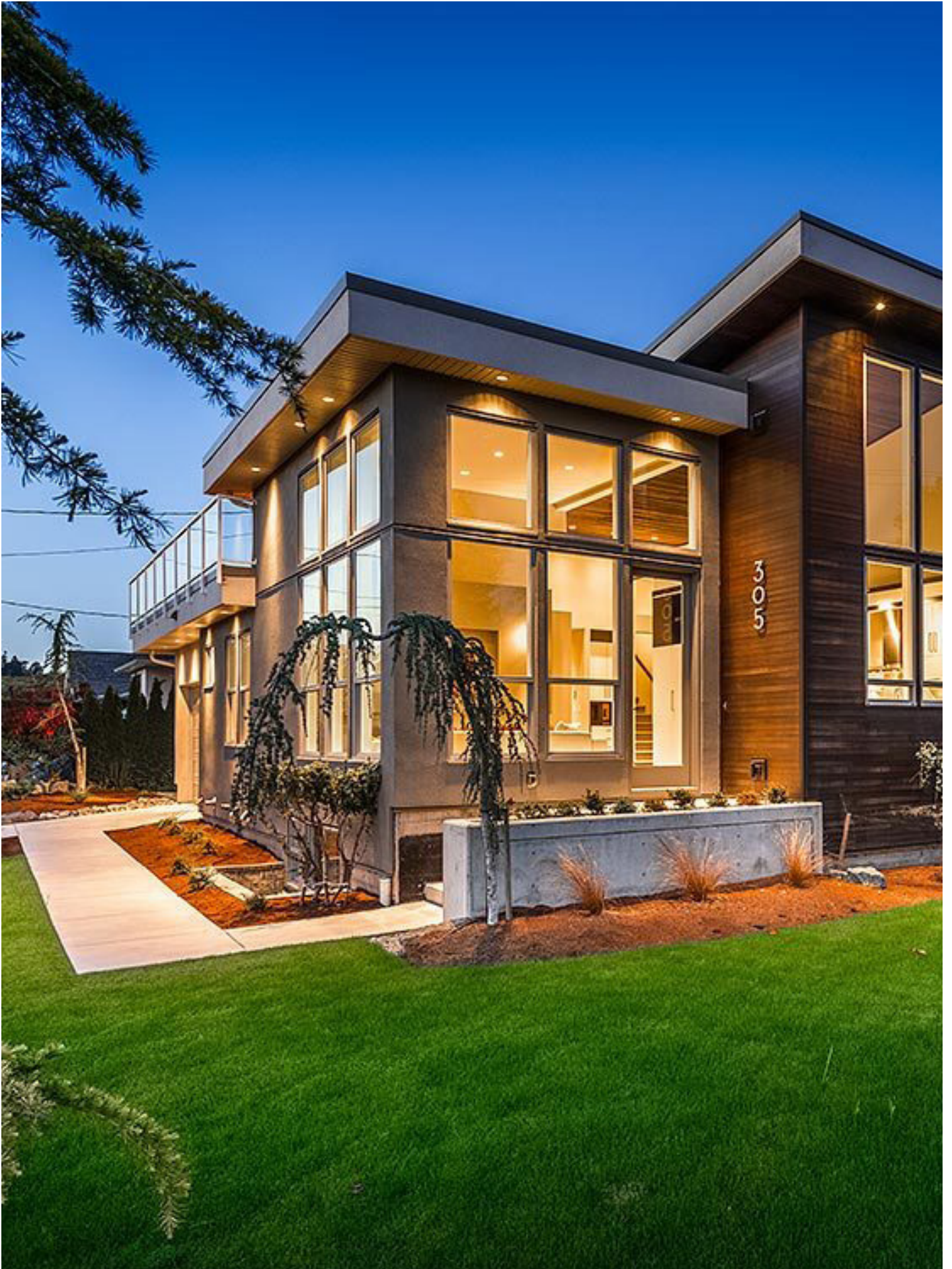
“Clients now work with me

throughout the process,” he says. “I’m there at the beginning, I’m there at the end when we hand over the keys, and I’m there every step in between.”

“I’m very involved with my clients, and very involved in each project,” he adds. “I think that’s important. I think that makes clients comfortable. I think it helps build trust.”



That commitment to quality is one of the main draws of Rayn Properties for clients.





For as long as Rayn Properties has been in business, they have been committed to creating homes that have “exceptional style and quality finishing.” A recent example of that commitment in action can be found on Goyette Road in Victoria, where the company constructed a 7,500 square foot home that pushes the envelope in both categories.

Rov and his team were involved in that project -- which was recently featured on the cover of Boulevard Magazine – from the

very beginning.

“Early on, we were brought in to look at the property,” Rov recalls. “From there, we introduced the client to a designer, and we all sat down together to design the home. It was quite an involved process, but it was awesome. The owners were amazing people and they gave us a lot of trust.”

The finished product includes a floating staircase, a wine room near the entrance, and a theatre room, among many other



amenities. The theatre room has 15 seats facing a 180-inch wide screen. In order to create a more immersive theatre experience, Rov and his team dropped part of the rear ceiling and hid the projector inside.

"The owner thought that was brilliant," he says. "He absolutely loved it. It's a simple little thing, but it goes a long way. It shows how every little detail is important."

Though the rest home is expansive, Rov says it still feels "cozy and comfortable." And while it's brand new, he says every room "feels like it's been there a long time."

Plus, Rov says the quality of finishing throughout is "truly outstanding."

"It's a home I'm very proud of," he says. "It turned out amazing." Achieving that level of quality would not have been possible, Rov explains, if not for the hard work and talent of the company's tradespeople. Over the last 20 years, he says he has whittled the roster down to a trusted group of select subcontractors that he can count on to deliver quality every time.

"Those relationships are very important to us," he says. "Some of them we have been working with for a very long time, so they

Rayn Properties is known for delivering high-end custom homes that aren't necessarily "high cost."





understand what we want. They know the quality we expect, they know to keep the site clean, and they know how to conduct themselves with clients.”

“Those kinds of relationships have taken a long time to build,” he adds. “But it’s been worth it. They are now the backbone of our company. They are the reason we’re successful. We’re blessed to have such good trades.”

In the near future, Rov hopes that the team’s effort on Goyette Road will be recognised at the next CARE awards, where they will be submitting the project in multiple categories. No matter

what happens there, however, the company knows they have already earned the most important accolade – which is the happiness of their client.

“The owners are ecstatic about it,” Rov says. “You can see it in their eyes. They almost can’t believe it. What they started with compared to what they finished with – they think it’s amazing.”

In the longer-term future, the company’s goal is to continue delivering exciting projects like that one – and to continue creating happy clients along the way. Rov and his team recently completed two similarly-sized homes, and they are currently

in the process of building another in Oak Bay. Rov says he would love to keep going down that track, and hopefully get to a point where he only does one or two larger homes a year.

“I’ve learned the lesson that bigger isn’t always better,” he concludes. “I don’t want to grow to a point where I lose touch. I want to be as hands on as I can be. I want to work with clients who trust me, who value quality, and who let me do what I do best. That’s my vision for the future.”





For more on Rayn Properties – including past and present projects, client testimonials, and contact details – visit <http://raynproperties.com/>



 **adisa**
homes





Joe MacMullin is the founder and owner of Adisa Homes, and an almost-20-year veteran of Vancouver's building industry. Over the course of his career, he has done carpentry forming, framing, finishing, concrete finishing, he's worked in project management and development management, he's experienced the residential, civil, and commercial sectors, and he's delivered projects in the Okanagan, Fraser Valley, Lower Mainland, and the Sunshine Coast.

BUILDING EXCITEMENT



In the last 10 years in particular, Joe has focused on high-end, contemporary, architectural-driven custom homes. In that time, he has become well versed in that niche, and made a name for himself among clients, builders, and architects alike. He's witnessed what the industry typically does wrong, and he's become determined to get it right. He's heard the horror stories of "delays, poor estimating, and overall unwelcoming experiences."

"That stops here," he says.

"We enjoy what we do, and we want create an environment where everyone we work with enjoys it too," he adds. "We want to bring the fun back into

the business of building homes. We want people to feel excited when they work with us."

"We don't want clients walking away with a sour taste in their mouth," he says. "We want to flip that stigma on its head. We want clients walking away saying 'This brought us closer to the builder, this was an enjoyable experience.' Everybody is looking to end up in a home they love, but why can't they also have a process they love as well? That's what we want to provide."

Joe began forming his vision for a better customer experience in 2009, when his career in high-end custom homebuilding first began. At the time, he ran a







shop of carpentry subcontractors, and he and his team landed a contract for an “extremely high-end home,” one that was “way beyond the calibre of what we were used to.”

“I fancied myself the best thing since sliced bread in the construction industry,” Joe recalls. “I thought I was one of the very best, and then I was handed this piece of work that made me humble myself.”

Joe was already an experienced builder, but through that contract he experienced a “whole new world” of construction. He learned that high-end architecturally-driven homes were like “really large math equations,” where every element of the

build related to every other element, and where everything had to be delivered “exactly by the numbers” or the whole project could be compromised.

It was daunting at first, but Joe and his team embraced the challenge and enjoyed the experience. As did the general contractor, who awarded them four more contracts in quick succession, before ultimately bringing Joe – plus his whole team – directly on board. Joe worked five years there as a project manager, and then two more years with another company, bringing his team along with him every step of the way. “That was an incredible time, I really carved out my spot in the industry,” he says. “After

“We don’t want clients walking away with a sour taste in their mouth.”





a while, I could confidently go back to calling myself the best.” From there, Joe decided to take the lessons he learned and apply them to his own business. He formed Adisa Homes alongside many of the same core team members he had been working with all along – “the same people I’d known and loved for most of my professional life,” he says. Together, they came out of the gate strong, with architects and clients seeking them out specifically from the very beginning of the company’s life.

“We basically haven’t looked for work yet,” Joe says. “We’ve been given all our work. And I couldn’t have cherry picked a better collection of architects to work with.”

He credits the company’s quick success to the reputation he and his team had already developed in the Vancouver industry.

“My track record is something that I take a lot of pride in,” he says. “I think it gives people great comfort when their architect – who they’re embarking on this journey with, and who they’ve trusted to design their dream home – recommends us. It helps them feel safe, it lets them know they’re in good hands. It gives us a real leg up.” Because they haven’t yet had to chase work, Adisa Homes has been allowed to be selective in the projects they do take. So far, they have only pursued projects that they believe fit their culture. According to Joe,

those projects have to be architecturally stimulating, challenging to build, and driven by quality – but they do not have to be expensive.

“I think there might be some in the industry that think ‘We can’t afford Adisa Homes,’ but I’d like to squash that,” Joe says. “The truth is that I see no boundaries, budgetary or geographically. It doesn’t matter if it’s across the world or half the budget that I’m used to. It’s way more important that the project and the team is the right fit.”

The client also has to be passionate about the project, he adds – and if they want to be heavily involved in the process, Joe is happy to oblige.

"A lot of builders don't like it when the client wants to be so closely involved," he says. "Maybe they think it's inconvenient. I'm the opposite. I love an involved client, and I love a client who wants to know where they stand financially, because my systems compliment those wants and needs."

"For most of these people, they are building their dream home, usually their one and only dream home," he adds. "It makes sense that they want to be kept informed, and that they don't want to waste money. I welcome that."

By demonstrating that level of

accountability – and building the trust that goes with it – Joe and his team have formed exceptionally close relationships with every single one of their past clients. They have even formed relationships with their client's neighbours, who they send gift baskets to before construction commences, and who often give them unprompted feedback about how professional they are.

"We build these homes that are based on relationships, and at the end of the day those relationships don't stop with the building," Joe says. "Many of our clients have become lifetime friends."



The long game



Moving forward, Joe wants to continue building homes that challenge his team, as well as challenge him personally.

“The jobs that stimulate us with design, fits in our schedule, and where there’s a good culture fit with the client and the architect – that’s what makes my mouth water,” Joe says. “I want to keep delivering those.”

“We want to play the long game,” he adds. “We want to keep stacking our portfolio with the king of projects that allow us

to walk through any architect’s door and not have them question our ability.”

As part of that long game, Joe also hopes to add some awards and accolades to the company’s portfolio. That’s not something he has focused on yet, but in his previous role, the last project he managed won a Georgie award. He recently joined the CHBA and HAVAN homebuilding associations in order to pursue that recognition for Adisa Homes – mostly for the sake of his team, who he believes deserves much





of the credit for the company's success.

"Adisa Homes isn't Joe MacMullin," he says. "Adisa Homes is a team. I'm looking forward to grabbing that first Georgie award, and then more after that, and seeing the looks on the faces of the team. I want to make sure that they all know that we did it together, that we rose to that level together, and that we'll keep rising from here." Beyond that, Joe says he wants to see Adisa Homes grow – but grow very thoughtfully and carefully, at a pace dictated by them and never to them.

"I've seen it so much in the industry where a company is fully staffed, gets busy, and then an offer comes in on another project," Joe explains. "Too often, the fix is 'Oh, we have to quickly find more managers.' And then the quality is compromised, or morale suffers."

"So I want to grow, but I want to grow from roots," he says. "I don't just want to add branches. I want to bring in site technicians and carpenters apprentices and I want to give them the opportunity to advance their careers. I don't want to bring in new project managers. Even if they're the best of the best, I



don't want to bring them in and plunk them above some of my core people."

In the near term, Joe sees the company undertaking three new builds at any given time, with some smaller scale renovations also in the mix. At that size, he estimates they will be busy enough to bring in new crew members, and to give senior crew members opportunities to take on project management responsibilities. Then, four to five years from now, Joe sees the company adding a couple more concurrent jobs to their slate, and thus a couple more project managers to their

roster.

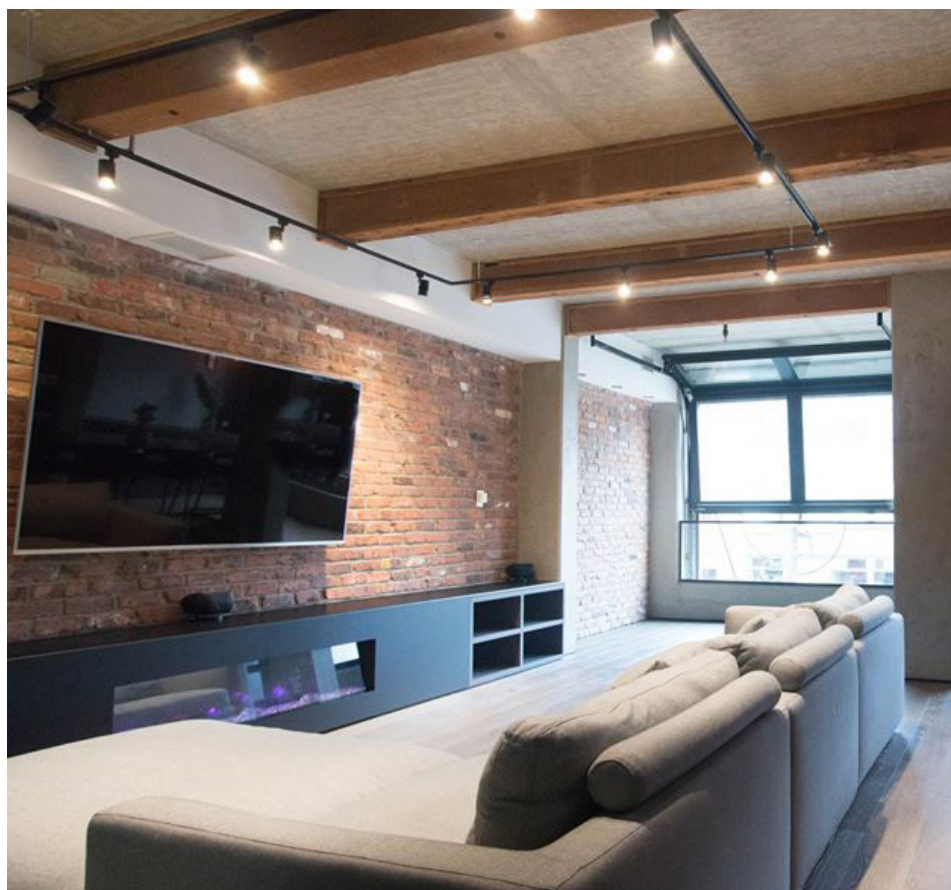
Somewhere in that time period, Joe also plans on introducing a development arm to the company – at least partly so that they can trial new project managers on their own projects.

Eventually, Joe says he will personally have to hang up his own project manager hat and focus solely on the higher levels of the company. Before that happens, however, his goal is to acquire and manage an even higher-end project that he's ever done.

"I want to be able to manage a

job that's \$1,500 a square foot, or close to that number," he says. "I've always joked that I won't stop being a project manager until I've managed a job that scares the shit out of me. I want to think 'How am I even going to build this?' That's the kind of challenge I want."

For more on
Adisa Homes,
their process,
and their past
projects – and to
get in touch with
Joe and his team
– visit [https://
www.adisahomes.
com/](https://www.adisahomes.com/)





A LEGACY OF INTEGRITY

Integrus Women is a membership group that empowers heart-centered women to “leave a legacy with integrity,” according to founder Stephanie Courtillier. She calls the group a social enterprise – which is what happens “when a non-profit meets a business, and they have a baby” – and she founded it in order to help women become the best versions of themselves possible, both personally and professionally. At the same time, she wanted to make a positive impact in the world, and she wanted to help other women make an impact too.







Stephanie's journey to that point – much like the journeys of most members – started with her stepping out of her comfort zone. She started her career in the corporate world of marketing and communication, but despite some early success, she hit “burnout mode” multiple times. Eventually, she forced herself to look inward.

“I started to myself questions like ‘Where do I belong?’ ‘What do I want to make of my life?’ ‘What kind of legacy do I want to leave?’” she recalls.

She went through a “journey of personal development,” she says, and really got to know herself and her strengths and weaknesses. But then, instead

of focusing on the weaknesses, she focused entirely on her strengths, and began to hone in on her true calling. She created and tested systems, read and studied books from experts, and networked constantly. As a result of that process, she came up with the “3P process” –the three Ps being ‘personal development,’ ‘professional development,’ and ‘philanthropy.’

At the same time, Stephanie also came up with a mission statement, which was informed by her own life's journey:

“Get to know your why,” she says.

“You have to know where you want to go, and you have to







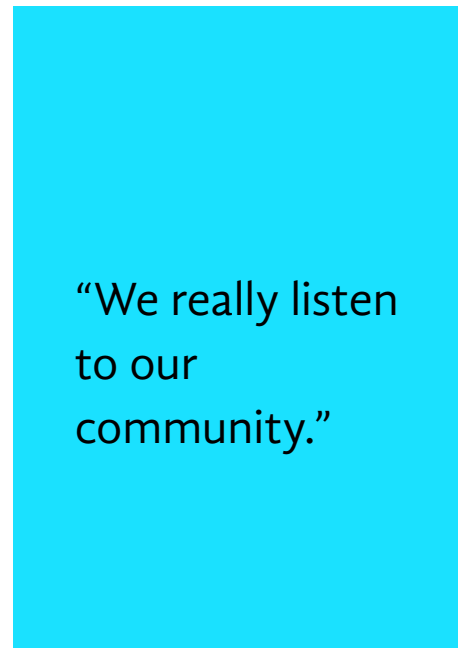
know ‘why’ you want to get there,” she explains. “Most people focus on the ‘how.’ They focus on the business model, the logistics, how they going to get from A to Z. They try to figure out the steps they need to take.” “That’s great, but first we need to spend time figuring out who we are and why we want the things we want,” she continues. “We need to be clear about our purpose, about our central interests and strengths.”

In Stephanie’s case, she figured out her purpose was helping others find their purpose, and then helping them take the steps they needed to take to get where they want to go. In other words, “inspiring and empowering heart-centric leaders to take

action towards their dreams.”

“I love it when I can help someone,” she says. “I love it when I can provide a resource, or connect someone to the perfect person who is going to help them accelerate their path.”

That’s what Integrous Women does through its various programs and events – they provide women with resources, connections, they help them learn new skills. But first, “the work has to be done by the individual,” Stephanie says. The individual has to figure out their ‘why,’ and Integrous Women helps them figure out the ‘how.’



“We really listen to our community.”





Authentic women



Integrus Women officially commenced in November of 2017, which is when they hosted their first event, attended by their first eight members. Right from the beginning, Stephanie figured they were on to something special.

“We had a group of inspiring women come together, and we went around the table and everyone shared a deep challenge,” she recalls. “What we found is that this was a safe space. Women were coming in with their authentic selves.”

“They were sharing some of the harder things that they don’t normally talk about, especially in a networking setting,” she continues. “In these situations, people typically come in and they posture, they put on a different face, they’re not their authentic selves. But this was a different type of environment. That’s the feedback I received, and that has informed everything we have done.”

In the roughly year-and-half since that event, Integrus Women has grown organical-





ly and considerably. Stephanie credits that growth to the power and sincerity of their mission, and the kind of woman it attracts.

“When you bring in women who are seeking that transformation, who want to be the best versions of themselves – not selfishly, but so they can make a greater impact in the world – it’s hard not to have magical events,” she says.

“Those are the kind of members we have,” she adds. “They are people who are really about giving. They are coming because, even if they’re successful by

typical societal measures, they are seeking more. They know they’re meant for more.”

Today, Integrous Women offers affordable monthly and annual memberships, and is open to women of all ages and experiences. They host monthly events which Stephanie describes as “truly transformational,” and which are deeply informed by the needs of their members.

“We really listen to our community,” she says. “When they say they’re having trouble with social media, you can anticipate that next month we’re going to have a social media workshop.



We're real quick to take action, we listen, and we make sure we're implementing what is really needed."

The members of Integrous Women frequently attest to getting a lot out of those events, and their participation in Integrous Women in general. Stephanie says she receives a tremendous amount of positive feedback virtually every day, and the group's website is full of glowing testimonials that back her up.

"My biggest takeaway from my time as an Integrous Woman is that it's a group of women who

want to inspire each other," says Kim Eaves, a realtor and member. "They're a group of women who want to take action. And I think that because of Integrous Women I feel more confident in all areas of my life, whether it's personal or professional."

"I joined Integrous Women, honestly, because of the leadership," agrees Sera Chalayan, insurance broker. These women are amazing and they naturally and genuinely want to help you get to the next phase in not just your career, but in your personal life, and mentally and emotionally. These are the kind of authentic women you wish you

"What I love about Integrous Women is that it creates a space for women to expand their view."



could surround yourself with, and they're right here, they're all in one place."

"Everytime I leave an event I feel very inspired to take some sort of action, like every time," adds Alia Tomaszewski, chiropractor and nutrition coach. "They are really good at whatever they do, you feel very motivated and very inspired afterwards."

Stephanie is inspired by the stories of those members, and others' too. She cites an example of a younger woman who joined the organization with "high hopes and dreams of starting a business," but with

self-esteem issues that were holding her back.

"She came to us, and within a year she ended up starting a business, and the majority of her clients ended up being our members," Stephanie calls. "Watching someone like her come through and build that confidence, build that self-esteem, and learn valuable skills that she gets to use in her life - it was wonderful."

That member was also inspired by social enterprise as a concept, and has since donated some of the proceeds of her business to some of the same

charitable causes that Integrous Women contributes to.

"What I love about Integrous Women is that it creates a space for women to expand their view," Stephanie says. "It helps them not just start a business, but start a business that helps creates the impact that they want to see in the world. We've seen that time and time again."



Sustainable impact



The for-profit side of Integrous Women is largely comprised of membership and event fees, plus some occasional event sponsorships. Recently, however, the organization has bolstered their revenue by taking on speaking engagements at training seminars and workshops for other companies.

For those, Stephanie and her team use a framework called “appreciative inquiry,” which is all about “using the collective wisdom in the room” to “co-create” whatever needs creating –

whether it’s a value statement, a future vision, a program, or anything else.

“I love it because it’s human-centric,” Stephanie explains. “We’re taking the best of the people in the room, and they’re the leaders. It’s not a CEO coming in and dictating what’s going to happen. It’s about creating an environment where everyone has a voice.”

Those engagements are one more way that Integrous Women generates profit – but again,



they are not a business, they are a social enterprise. Stephanie believes their non-profit activities are just as important, if not more so. She reiterates that one of the '3Ps' is "philanthropy."

To organise their philanthropy, Integrous Women devised something they call their '10/20/30 Sustainable Impact Model.'

The 10 represents the 10 per cent of all the group's proceeds, which are invested in empowerment and mental health programs at a partner orphanage in Guatemala. The 20, meanwhile, is the percentage of their membership dues they invest in underserved women in partnership with non-profits such as 'My Safe Harbor' and 'Project Self Sufficiency.' The 30, finally, is the per cent of time their team and community supports local charities and social enterprises, through workshops, impact socials, and individual volunteering.

Integrous Women is heavily invested in that model, and Stephanie is encouraged by the tangible differences they have already made in people's lives. One of the very first women they originally sponsored, for example, has since got out of an abusive relationship, joined

one of the non-profit partners, and is helping Integrous Women run that program.

Moving forward, those are the kind of stories that Stephanie hopes to continue creating, except on a bigger scale. She says the goal is to become a national organization, and eventually an international one. Though they currently have members across the United States, they only have the one chapter in Orange County, and they aim to introduce more.

Stephanie also hopes to inspire other organizations. She would love to see other companies adopt something similar to their 10/20/30 model.

"I want to see more businesses commit to being a social enterprise," she says. "Don't just do corporate social responsibility, don't just donate money – in-grain it into the DNA of your organization. There's a new millennial wave of workers coming through, and I believe that's what they are seeking. They want to make more of an impact."



For more on Integrous Women, what they do, and what they believe – and to find out how to get involved – visit <https://integrouswomen.com/>

KALDI'S COFFEE



KALDI'S COFFEE
ROASTING CO.

est. 1994

Kaldi's Coffee is a specialty coffee roaster that's been creating memorable coffee experiences for 25 years. Since first opening their doors in St. Louis in 1994, the company has been committed to sustainable business practices, providing educational opportunities, and supporting the communities they serve. By living up to those commitments, Kaldi's has grown to include 20 retail stores and over 800 wholesale accounts, and has become one of the most recognised and respected specialty coffee companies in the nation.

E ROASTING CO.



A premium
coffee experience



The first Kaldi's location was started in the DeMun neighborhood, which straddles the city of limits of St. Louis and Clayton, Missouri. The business was founded by friends Howard Lerner and Suzanne Langlois, whose original goal was to create a fun place to go have coffee, in a city where coffee options were limited – there wasn't even a Starbucks in the airport at the time. Soon after achieving that goal, they started roasting their own coffee, which they began selling to other local businesses.

For a little over a decade, Kaldi's remained a popular local business with just the one retail location. Then, in 2005, Tricia Zimmer Ferguson took an interest.

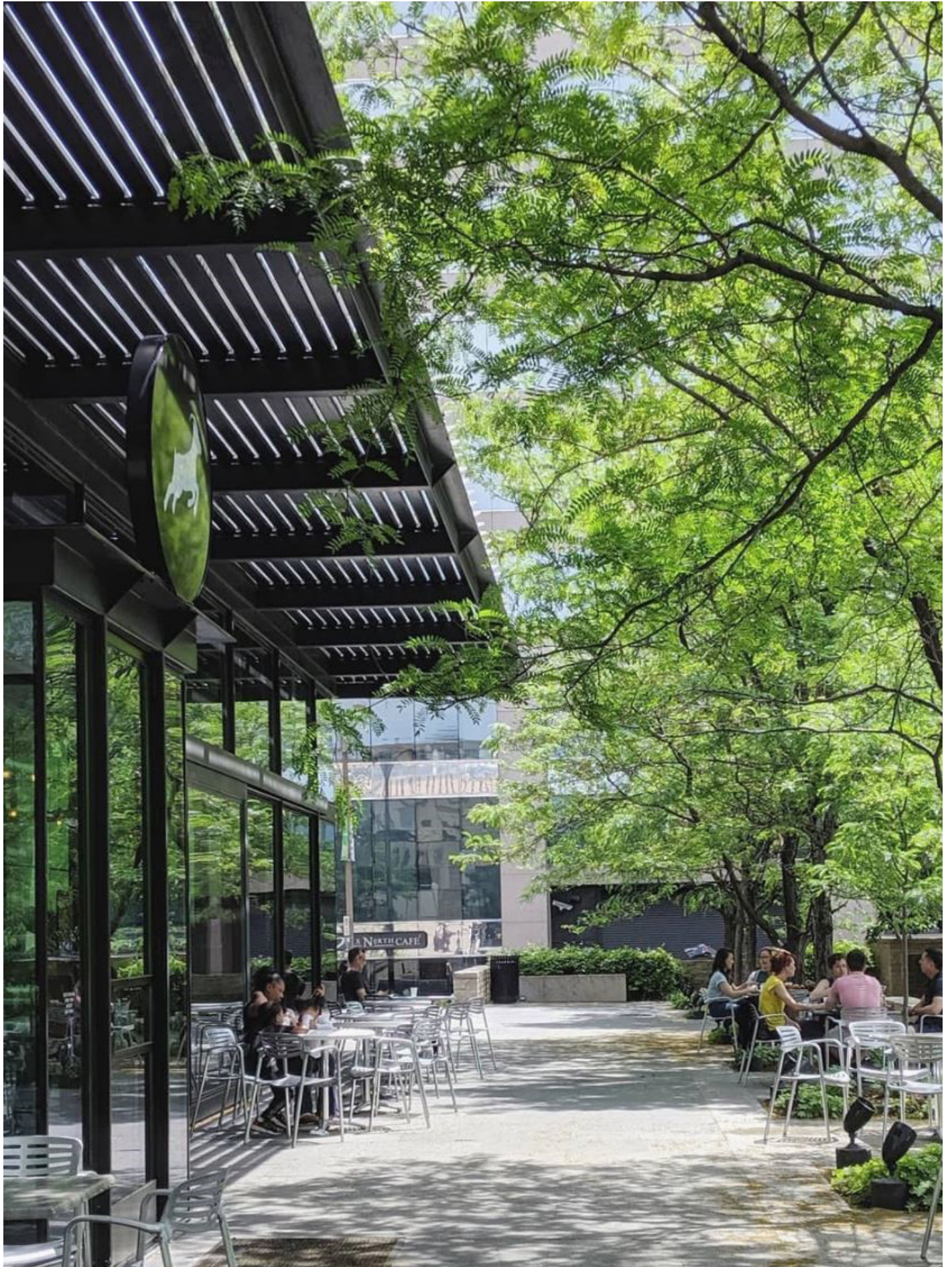
Originally, Tricia and her family – including her brother Tyler Zimmer and her soon-to-be husband Josh Ferguson – were interested in opening a fast casual concept and were looking for a coffee program. They fell in love with the ambience at Kaldi's, however, and their plans changed. They saw an opportunity to take a niche brand and turn it into a national leader, and they convinced Howard and Suzanne to sell them the retail portion of the business, and two years later, the rest of it.

“Since then, we've really grown really quickly,” says Brett Israelson, Operations Manager.

Immediately following 2007, the

“Immediately following 2007, the company aggressively expanded both their retail and wholesale operations.”





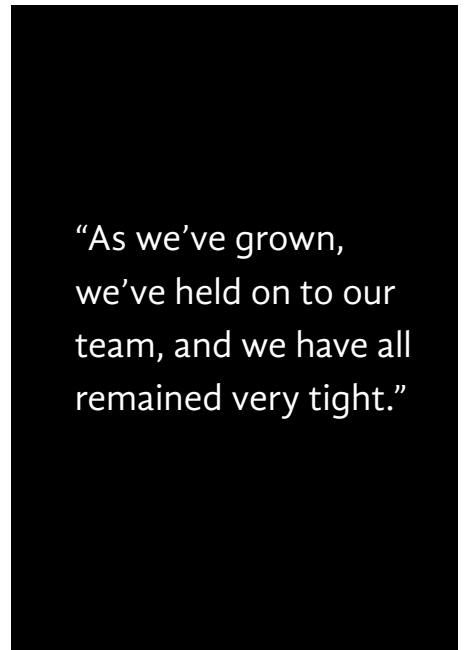


company aggressively expanded both their retail and wholesale operations. They opened a new café in Columbia, another one in Clayton, as well as several kiosks in local grocery stores. They slowed down during the recession, but around 2012, the growth picked up again. They expanded into Kansas City, earned some significant wholesale accounts in Nashville, Tennessee, and eventually began opening stores in Atlanta, Georgia. This summer, they will open their fourth store in Atlanta.

Brett himself joined the business in 2007, during the company's initial period of rapid expansion. He initially project managed the construction of the new stores, but once the

recession hit, he was forced to turn his attention elsewhere. He started working at the company's roastery in Clayton, where he went from bagging coffee to working with the tech department - which, at the time, meant one full-time coffee and espresso mechanic. That department now employs six full-time technicians and has become a "business within a business," as they also do service work for external brands like McDonalds and Panera.

Four years ago, in April, Kaldi's Coffee moved into from a 10,000 square foot space into a new 35,000 square foot headquarters and roastery. Around that time, Brett graduated to a larger operations role. He has





now been a part of Kaldi's Coffee for over 10 years now, and at no point in his journey has he wanted to step away and do something else. He credits that to the "infectious culture" within the company.

"It's a culture that definitely engages entrepreneurs," he says. "There's a lot of focus on personal development and continuous improvement, and that's what really has kept me close."

Brett is not the only employee to have risen through the ranks, either. He regularly gives tours of the roastery, and he says his favorite part is to point out team members who started in retail and then advanced their careers. He estimates that al-

most 70 per cent of the people there fit that description.

"We've been very fortunate," he says. "As we've grown, we've held on to our team, and we have all remained very tight."

"The culture here is infectious," he reiterates. "That's the feedback we get from all new employees, and I think that stems from the ownership group on down. Once people get involved, they tend to fall in love with the brand and what we're trying to do."

What exactly Kaldi's is trying to do is different depending on the stakeholder. For employees, they are trying to create lasting career opportunities for

people in the communities in which they work. For customers – at all levels of the business, from retail to wholesale – they are trying to provide exceptional coffee experiences.

At the retail level, Kaldi's that experience starts with exceptional service and hospitality

"Coffee can have a reputation as a snooty business," Brett says. "We don't want anything to do with that. We want Kaldi's to be a coffee shop our moms are comfortable going to. We still want to have specialty coffee, but we really want to be approachable in everything we do."

"We also want to 'wow' our

guests," he adds. "We have initiatives to do that. If it's a customer's birthday, we want to be able to know that before they come in the door, we want to be able to surprise them. We want to know our most frequent customers drinks, and have them available sometimes before they even get in line."

Another key part of providing an exceptional experience is specificity. No two Kaldi's locations are the same, Brett explains. Each is catered to the specific community in which it resides.

"From an outside perspective, it

may not make sense that each store is completely different, but we're really trying to cater to our neighborhoods," he says.

"We do that because in order to better cater to our guests."

Of course, quality is also important. Kaldi's Coffee ensures consistency by carefully selecting their suppliers and extensively training their staff. Their onboarding process takes 90 days, and the importance of quality – as well as the importance of the guest experience – is stressed throughout.

As a result of all the above, the

company tends to earn a high degree of customer loyalty wherever they go.

"We have a tremendous amount of loyalty," Brett says. "We track through digital loyalty programs, through newsletters, through social media – our customers definitely keep coming back."

The same is true of the company's wholesale clients. For example, they are still working with the first ever vendor they partnered with, all the way back in 1994. Brett credits that kind of longevity to the company's approachability:



"We want to be the Sam Adams of coffee," he explains. "We don't want to be Bud Light, and we don't want to be the micro-brewery that is too niche or too intimidating to approach."

Brett also credits the company's history of transparency:

"We open up our facility," he says. "We have an amazing training room here at our roastery that's open to all of our customers."

"We also try to be as open as possible with our purchasing habits," he adds. "We're open about the relationships that

we've established with producers. We want to provide transparency regarding the whole supply chain."

Mostly, Brett says the success of their vendor relationships comes down to working with people who share their values to begin with.

"We only work with people that we know are going to treat us fairly, and who, like us, want to make every situation win-win," he says. "There are going to be issues, things are going to come up, but as long as everyone is open and honest, we believe everything will almost always

work out."

"It's nice to think that people are that fond of Kaldi's, but we know that being a leader in the community isn't just about sharing a quality product,"



Committed to community



Over the years, Kaldi's Coffee has been recognized by numerous local agencies and media for the high quality of their coffee. A long list of publications have featured Kaldi's in 'Best Of' lists and have rewarded the company with 'Reader's Choice' awards. That list includes: Town & Style, Columbia Magazine, Columbia Business Times, Chesterfield Lifestyle Magazine, Feast Magazine, Sauce Magazine, St. Louis Magazine, Inside Columbia, Ladue News, and more.

According to Brett, the team at

Kaldi's highly values that recognition, but it is not what drives them to do what they do.

"It's nice to think that people are that fond of Kaldi's, but we know that being a leader in the community isn't just about sharing a quality product," he says. "It's also about sharing your resources."

For that reason, Kaldi's Coffee has made community participation one of their most important priorities. Over the years, they have acted on that priori-





ty in a number of ways, including hosting community events in their cafes, raising over \$1.2 million for the National MS Society, supporting the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, donating scholarships to local universities, and much more.

"I think we do something like 60 events a year," Brett says. "That's over one a week. For a company our size, that's pretty considerable. The vast majority of our marketing budget just goes to events – not our events, community events. That's helped us build some really strong relationships with the people in our communities."

Kaldi's Coffee has also demonstrated a strong commitment to the environment. They recycle coffee grounds, plastic cups, and many to-go items, and they build with recycled materials. In addition, they were one of the first business leaders to enrol in Ameren Missouri's Pure Power program – which matches electricity usage with clean, renewable energy generated from wind farms in the Midwest.

Furthermore, the company's purchasing decisions are driven by their commitment to social and environmental responsibility. They go even farther than Fair Trade Certified in ensuring their coffee is grown in a sustainable way. They are

committed to only working with farmers and importers whose agricultural practices preserve the soil and protect the ecosystem. They form clear, honest, and mutually beneficial relationships with those partners, and they work with them to improve the lives of the farmers they work.

According to Brett, the company does all the above because they believe it's the right thing to do – but they also believe it makes their coffee taste better. "Our philosophy is simple," he says. "We believe premium-priced coffees should taste premium. We select with our palates, ensure that our farmer friends are rewarded for their efforts, and that the coffee is grown in a sustainable, ecologically sound manner."



Growing smartly



In celebration of their 25th anniversary, Kaldi's Coffee is preparing internally to host a pretty big party in order to celebrate their team, vendors, and suppliers – “everyone who has got us where we are today,” Brett says. Externally, meanwhile, the company will launch a new packaging for their coffee bags. They are also in the midst of introducing a new canned cold brew product.

Looking forward, beyond the anniversary, Brett says the company's goal is to continue to

“grow smartly.” That means continuing to expand into new regions with retail stores, building their brand in the community through events, and then gradually introducing their wholesale offering. It also means continuing to get better, at every level.

“That's the key to our success,” Brett concludes. “Every day we're trying to continually improve. We trying to hire the best people we can, we try to retain them to the best of our ability, and we try to provide the best coffee experience possible.”



For more on Kaldi's Coffee, their story, their values, and to order online, visit <https://kaldiscoffee.com/>



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