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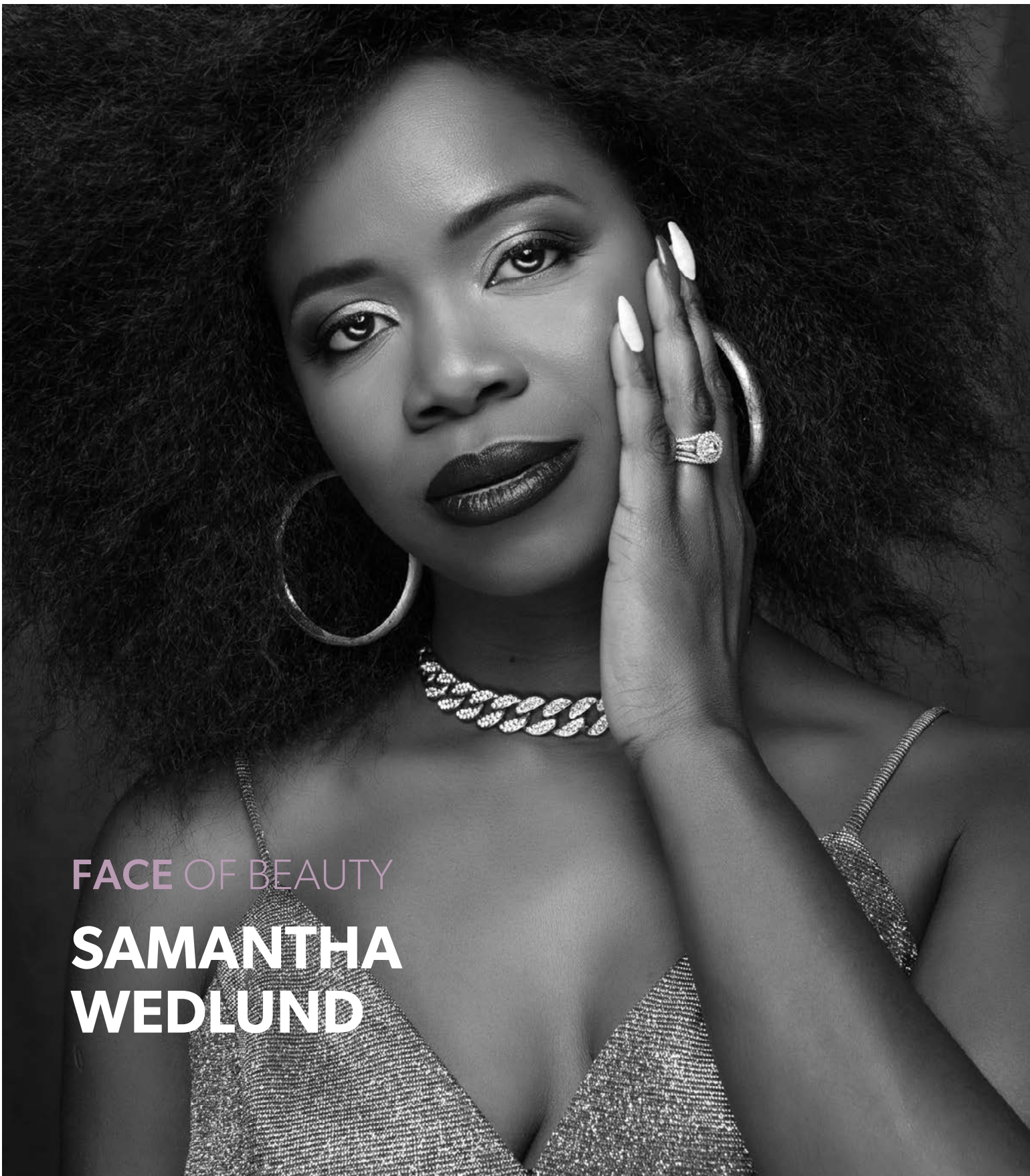
FACES OF KELOWNA

Leaders, Trailblazers, Influencers.



FACE OF BEAUTY

SAMANTHA WEDLUND

FACES OF KELOWNA 2024

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Our cover girl, Samantha Wedlund of Success21 Salon, says it best – passion, destiny, dedication, transformative, confidence, beautiful, inspiration, professional, empowerment, knowledge and exceptional customer service.

All those words are contained in her Faces of Kelowna cover story (page 21) and are a testament to what it takes to thrive in today's business climate.

Samantha and her business embody all those words.

But, so do the 25 other 'Faces' in this magazine.

They are the 'Face' of their business, the 'Face' that makes the company special and the 'Face' that delivers extraordinary goods and services to satisfied customers.

That's no easy feat in the current business environment.

Post-pandemic we are on the brink of recession with high interest rates, surging inflation and a labour shortage.

Through it all, the 'Faces' adopt a can-do attitude, adapt and find their way to success.

As you read through this magazine, I'm sure you will agree.

These 'Faces' are truly inspiring and exemplify innovation, leadership, achievement and accomplishment.

Steve MacNaull
Journalist and Editor
NowMedia Group

Reserve your place in the Faces of Kelowna 2025 issue.

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In the dynamic arena of land development and municipal works, Aplin Martin emerges as an unparalleled beacon of innovation and expertise, delivering a comprehensive suite of services that spans from meticulously planned hillside communities, to intricate industrial and commercial development. Nestled in the heart of British Columbia, the Kelowna division boldly positions itself at the forefront, spearheading a transformative era in municipal works and land development.

Aplin Martin's unwavering commitment to excellence finds vibrant expression in a diverse portfolio, featuring projects ranging from the picturesque Predator Ridge and Revelstoke Mountain Resort to urban gems like the UBCO downtown campus, Ledge on Lakeshore, and various subdivisions throughout the Okanagan. The firm's influence resonates nationally, establishing a legacy of transformative projects that showcase their unwavering dedication to elevating the Canadian landscape.

This influence is strategically amplified through Aplin Martin's network of offices in Nanaimo, Vancouver, Surrey, Kelowna, Calgary, Edmonton, Burlington, and Toronto. Aplin Martin's extensive footprint seamlessly enables them to offer a wide spectrum of services, including Development Engineering, Municipal Infrastructure Design, Architectural Design, Urban Planning, Land Surveying, and Environmental Services.

Josh Graff, a Project Manager at Aplin Martin, talks about the company's dynamic approach, expressing, "We're medium-sized, employee-owned, so we provide a more personalized experience to our clients while retaining capacity to support any scale of project." A tangible testament to Aplin Martin's commitment to innovation is their groundbreaking integration of augmented reality and virtual reality into designs for over eight years. This forward-thinking approach ensures the immediate confirmation of critical aspects, such as view corridors, to come to the best design, in the fastest amount of time.

Jordan Beach, another Project Manager at Aplin Martin further accentuates their extensive track record, "Our typical clients include everyone - public and private sector organizations engaged in land use planning and construction projects. Real estate developers, construction companies, municipalities, regional districts, we're the preferred partner for anyone seeking assistance with land development or land use assignments."

Beach shares his passion for the industry,

> "I enjoy looking at a raw piece of land and analyzing the contours to establish the best location for roads and homes, all the while minimizing earthworks and considering sensitive areas such as environmental pockets"

he says. "To see it constructed after months of planning is very rewarding."

Josh Graff echoes this sentiment, expressing his fascination with the intricacies of land development projects, especially hillside design. "When I had the chance to experience land development projects, especially hillside design where multiple aspects need to be taken into consideration, I was hooked," he states.

In the world of Aplin Martin, expertise, experience, and a commitment to innovation converge, setting a gold standard for excellence in land development and municipal works. As they continue to shape the Canadian landscape, their dedication to delivering successful projects ensures that their legacy remains etched in the nation's infrastructure for years to come.

CHRIS MONDOR

OAK; CATERED EVENTS

Locally sourced, thoughtfully prepared. Elevated dining experiences.

That's the mantra at Oak; Catered Events, Kelowna's premium full-service catering company owned and operated by Chef Chris Mondor.

"We do this by focusing on showcasing the seasonal bounty of the Okanagan harvest while working towards impacting sustainability through food sourcing, waste reduction and staff wages," says Chef Chris.

"From multi-course tasting menu dinners overlooking the sunset and canape cocktail hours on the terrace to 100-person wedding dinners at the vineyard, Oak; offers full coordination of all aspects of the catering service from rentals and staffing to, of course, the food."

Oak; knows that every event and client are unique, so in-depth menu creation based on what's available at farms today is always the vision.

"It's one thing for your food to look amazing, and another for it to taste amazing, but if customer service is not exceptional from start to finish you won't remember anything else," says Chris.

"Our goal is to go above and beyond for our clients, taking care of all aspects so they can focus on other things."

The premium food, preparation, presentation and service attracts clients who expect – and receive – the best from Oak;

Oak; also sees a client trend to younger couples, not just for weddings, but private dinner parties.

Chris feels that's because the Oak; brand appeals to all demographics that seek quality and innovation.

Oak; caters dinner parties, receptions and weddings and is looking forward to working with more businesses that are looking to host customer, staff and community events.

Oak; is currently also planning ticketed winemaker's dinners and events..

"Having the opportunity to connect and build genuine relationships with my clients, farmers and the community while being challenged creatively is incredible," says Chris.

"I get to travel across the Okanagan, cooking in incredible homes looking at stunning views while sharing my love and knowledge for food with staff and clients alike."

Oak; and Chef Chris strive to be recognized and known in the Okanagan as a brand that exceeds expectations always, partners with artisan producers and showcases the Okanagan.

Chris' career in culinary arts started a decade ago with washing dishes at an Earls in Vancouver. A professional diploma from Northwest Culinary Academy followed as did working at a high-end catering company in Vancouver.

And then, a move to Kelowna six years ago to realize his dream of living in the Okanagan and establishing his own exceptional catering company.

ESTER PIKE & KRIS SIGMETH

ACTIONEDGE BUSINESS COACHING

Left: Kris Sigmeth
Right: Ester Pike

"Success is not the number of bodies in the office, success is the engagement and productivity of employees"

Success in 2023 looks completely different than it did in 2019.

Of course, the disruptor was the pandemic.

It changed the way we think, work, set goals, lead and define our accomplishments, achievements and happiness.

"Regardless of business size, executives and business owners post-pandemic are struggling with how to manage and lead in this new era," points out ActionEdge Business Coaching senior executive coach and director of organizational psychology Ester Pike.

"Leaders have to become incredibly people-focused and work on engagement, leadership, systems and processes to provide staff and clients with what they need and want."

Naturally, this is a tall, tall order.

However, ActionEdge, Pike and executive business coach Kris Sigmeth are here to help.

ActionEdge has a whole suite of services to help executives be the best they can be – personalized online and in-person coaching and private and public executive programs, workshops, leadership training and development.

"Business coaching is unregulated, so it's very much like the Wild Wild West out there," said ActionEdge managing partner Jarrod Stanton with a laugh.

"We're proud that everyone on our team is a dedicated and ActionCOACH-certified executive business coach. Ester and Kris are elite coaches and have an exceptional track record when it comes to success with clients."

Kris loves working with the owners and managers of businesses to help them develop their leadership style and work culture.

"When you care, your employees care," says Kris.

"If you help your employees achieve their goals, they will help your clients and business achieve theirs"

Kris likes leaders to commit to executive business coaching for a year so they can determine what's important to them personally and professionally, put the processes in place to make it happen and test and measure results along the way.

"Involve your teams in the processes," says Kris.

"It's all about teamwork and alignment. Find out what your employees want and get their buy-in for personalized, customized work tasks and rewards."

Ester echoes the sentiment.

"The pandemic changed what motivates people," says Ester.

"Time, energy and effort has become a lot more important to workers. They want reason and purpose and that requires a perspective shift on the management side."

Many people believe the post-pandemic work crisis is remote work vs. in-office work vs. hybrid work.

"Actually, success is not the number of bodies in the office, success is the engagement and productivity of employees," says Ester.

"Some businesses can be fully remote, others have to be all in-office and some can be hybrid. The key is a clear vision from management, with employee engagement, of what's needed to achieve success for everyone."

SCOTT MARSHALL

SCOTT MARSHALL
HOMES

Scott Marshall is not just a fifth generation Okanagan resident.

He's part of the Marshall family that's been farming and developing real estate in Kelowna since 1911 and the Thorlakson family that settled and farmed in the Carr's Landing and Commonage areas far before that.

"My family has had the pleasure of seeing the Okanagan evolve over the last five generations, and I look forward to leaving my own stamp on this community that we have been able to call home for well over a century," says Scott.

"Plus, I grew up seeing my dad be a very successful realtor in the Okanagan, and, as a result, I was surrounded by the business from a young age. I could see that it was a career that, when done right, could have an extremely meaningful impact on peoples' lives."

So, success in real estate is a family affair and real estate is naturally in Scott's genetics.

It's no wonder Scott is a realtor and associate broker with ReMax Kelowna.

And not just any realtor, but one driven by passion, trusted by many and backed by that aforementioned century-plus of real estate experience to be No. 1.

Scott is the No. 1 producing individual realtor at the No. 1 producing RE/MAX office in BC.

This success and lineage can't change the fact that real estate is cyclical and that the market has significantly slowed down.

"No one is immune to a market slowdown," states Scott.

"But, we've not been as impacted because we haven't cut back back on marketing the way other realtors have when times get tough. It's business as usual for us. Marketing is why people come to Scott Marshall Homes in the first place, so we don't let up. We're still sending out tens of thousands of marketing pieces, publishing magazines every quarter, printing flyers and reaching out to people online and in social media. We have offices in every major city in Canada and across over 110 countries, so our referral network is definitely helping us market these properties to out-of-town buyers."

As such, Scott's success is based on both data and exceptional people skills.

The aforementioned quarterly magazine is the 'Marshall Acreage Report,' which is available online and sent out as a 64-page print piece to over 11,000 acreage and farm owners.

The 'Marshall Lakeshore Report' is also available online and the physical magazine is sent to every owner of waterfront property in the Okanagan quarterly.

The reports expose thousands of prospective buyers and sellers to listings in a format that hasn't been seen before in the Okanagan.

Scott is as comfortable selling a single-family home, townhouse or condominium as he is a huge acreage, luxury lakeshore home, commercial or industrial property.

"With hundreds of millions of dollars in sales, I feel very comfortable with all property types that come across my desk, and genuinely get excited every time my phone rings," says Scott.

"My family has had the pleasure of seeing the Okanagan evolve over the last five generations, and I look forward to leaving my own stamp on this community that we have been able to call home for well over a century."

JEFF BALLARD & TERRI WILKINSON

COMFORT TECH
HEATING & COOLING

Comfort Tech Heating & Cooling guarantees your comfort with every job they do.

"Our core values are quality, integrity and respect," says Comfort Tech co-owner Terri Wilkinson.

"These values are our moral compass, giving our team the framework within which they can provide excellence in customer service every day. We often ask: 'If this was our family, what would you recommend?' This simple question empowers every team member, enabling them to make decisions on their own based on a guideline about what is best for both the customer and the company."

There are lots of HVAC companies out there – Comfort Tech knows this.

"I think our customers choose us for many reasons," says co-owner Jeff Ballard.

"We are available 24/7, even on weekends and holidays. We have won 6 Best of Kelowna Awards, hundreds of 5-star reviews and the best staff you could wish for."

Jeff and Terri are the ideal husband-and-wife team – Jeff is the technical expert with 36 years of HVAC experience and Terri takes care of the business side of the company.

Comfort Tech specializes in residential heating and cooling maintenance, service and installations. As such, they focus on what they know and don't branch out and spread themselves too thin.

"That way, our client base can count on us to be there for them when they need us," says Jeff.

Of course, the goal with this approach is building long-term relationships with clients.

"We have many customers we have been serving since 2005 when we started this business," says Terri.

"We are now also dealing with the next generation of homeowners. The relationships that we have nurtured over these many years gives us a sense of belonging in the community. Our loyal customers are like family. Our technicians are in their homes multiple times each year checking and maintaining their systems, and our office team is in touch with them to book their tune-ups and to offer priority service in the event they have a breakdown or need new equipment."

The biggest compliments Comfort Tech receives are the amazing reviews and referrals from existing customers that turn into new clients who identify with the company's values.

"Our perfect customers are those who understand that maintenance is the best way to protect their home comfort equipment and who want a HVAC company that backs up their services with long-term guarantees, discounts and priority service," says Jeff.

The future of Comfort Tech is continuing to serve clients with quality, integrity and respect and continuing to develop its incredible team.

"I am particularly passionate about women in trades," says Terri. "Whether the men or women we employ choose to be in the office or in the field, it is amazing to have them represent our company as we move forward."

STEVEN HOPP

RUTLAND MEDICAL PHARMACY

Rutland Medical Pharmacy welcomes every customer like family.

"Our business model is based on serving the needs of our customers. We ensure we have time to speak with our customers, explaining their medication, answering any questions they have, and working to improve their overall health from a holistic point of view," says owner pharmacist Steven Hopp.

Rutland Medical Pharmacy embraces diversity.

"We welcome everyone and will individualize our service to each person's needs," says Steven.

> "We embrace our clients' differences and believe it is important that everyone feels safe and comfortable within the healthcare system."

Steven adds: "When new clients find us, they often tell us their previous pharmacy had long wait times and just seemed too busy. Our clients get fast service without feeling rushed."

Steven is the current chair of the board of the College of Pharmacists of BC.

"I get energized from human interaction and really enjoy working with people to improve their health," he says.

"Pharmacy is a perfect mix of those two things. Travel medicine and mental health awareness are two passions of mine. Being a pharmacist provides an amazing opportunity to make a difference to people, support them during hard times and happy times and to improve the health of our community."

As such, Steven has had the opportunity to work in small towns, provide care to long-term care homes, work in addiction and mental health-related care and be part of the first group of pharmacists to provide vaccines in BC.

"Every client that comes to our pharmacy is an opportunity," says Steven.

"An opportunity to make a difference, to share a life, to improve a life, to help someone, to make someone feel better. That is extremely rewarding."

Steven is excited for the future of pharmacy and his place in it.

The role of the pharmacist is expanding.

They can now prescribe contraception and treatment for many minor ailments, vaccinate, and refill many prescriptions when people can't get to their doctor.

"There is such a shortage of front line healthcare workers and pharmacists. With our expanding scope of practice, pharmacists have the expertise to help fill the void," says Steven.

"I believe public demand will result in the government expanding the scope of practice of pharmacists even more. This excites me."

"Rutland Medical Pharmacy is well-positioned to provide additional services because as an independent pharmacy operator we can truly put the customer first."

"We will always have the staff to deliver service with little wait time," says Steven.

"You, our customer, are what we appreciate most, and we are thankful for the opportunity to serve you."

DR. JON DAUTREMONT & DEANNE PILSNER, RN

BASIS CLINIC

Basis Clinic always stays true to its motto #NextToNatural.

"Natural beauty and confidence is always in style, despite the trends that we all see come and go," says Dr. Jon Dautremont, who co-founded Basic Clinic with Deanne Pilsner, RN.

"If you walk by someone on the street and it looks obvious they've had 'work done' or have fake-appearing features, they are likely not a client at Basis."

As such, Basis' typical clients are women and men that wish to look refreshed or rejuvenated, yet still look like themselves as they begin to see the effect of the aging process or wish to prevent aging changes.

"Our clients don't want to look obvious or that they 'had work done', they want to be noticed for the right reasons," says Deanne.

"Our results are natural and predictable. Our typical client is seeking a high-end experience and true expertise."

You'll notice that Basis refers to both men and women as its typical clients, but still feels that men are underserved.

"Healthy skin is for all, whether it is a daily skin care routine, facials or injectables," says Dr. Dautremont.

"We are committed to making this an experience men look forward to as much as women. Natural results that have even the closest friends and family wondering: Has he been working out? Getting lots of sleep? Or perhaps been on a restful holiday recently?"

Helping you feel comfortable and beautiful in your own skin without filters is what Basis does best.

Dr. Dautremont and Deanne created The Basis Way to elevate medical aesthetics using evidence-based, clinically proven treatments that are approachable, consistent and personalized in a luxury setting.

Basis is a boutique clinic, where the medical director – Dr. Dautremont – is a facial reconstruction trained head and neck surgeon, and the injector – Deanne – is an extensively trained registered nurse.

Expertly trained aesthetics providers help you achieve your desired results reliably, but also ensure safety and avoid serious complications.

An intimate knowledge of facial anatomy and function is imperative to the quality of results and to avoid a 'fake' look.

"Fortunately, complications from medical aesthetics treatments are rare," says Dr. Dautremont.

"However, it's important, regardless of where you go for treatment, to ask: 'Who is the surgeon here that will be responsible for addressing and fixing any unforeseen complications?' There is significant variation in training and qualifications levels that operate under the term 'medical aesthetics'."

With proper technique, injections should be nearly painless, without swelling or bruising.

Facial surgery has always been a part of Dr. Dautremont's practice, whether through managing skin cancer or performing corrective nasal or eyelid surgery.

Adding medical aesthetics is a natural extension of this, having seen a need for providing a higher level of expertise to patients wishing to improve their facial appearance, address their chronic pain issues, or prevent further aging and sun damage.

"Giving someone their confidence back aesthetically, or helping them manage chronic pain (TMJ and migraines) is very rewarding," says Deanne.

"We love being experts in this specialized field. We educate our clients, develop the best treatment plan to achieve their goals, and most importantly – a treatment plan that is in line with their desires and budget. When clients say things like: 'I feel ten years younger', 'I no longer wear makeup to the gym', or 'I can finally bite into a carrot without pain'- there is nothing more rewarding."

To learn more or to book a complimentary consultation, visit www.basisclinic.com

Talk about legacy.

Since 1987, Emil Anderson Properties and Dilworth Homes have created more than 30 communities and crafted more than 1,500 homes throughout the Okanagan Valley.

Naturally, their name is synonymous with the landmark Dilworth Mountain Estates, South Ridge and Stonebridge neighbourhoods right here in Kelowna, but if you ask the team, they are just getting started.

"The future of Emil Anderson Properties and Dilworth Homes is very bright," says Matthew Temple, vice-president - development and construction.

"Our 10-year vision is to continue developing and building in the Okanagan and Fraser valleys. Responsible growth throughout the next decade is the target."

With flagship communities such as Shorerise, Sage Water and Tower Ranch (final phase) anticipated for release by fall 2023, and a host of projects currently in development, there is much to look forward to in the years to come.

"For Dilworth Homes, our single-family home construction business has been the staple of the organization for many years and there is no doubt that will continue," adds director ofsSales and leasing, Colton Higgins.

"But, I am excited to see us venture into bigger developments, more density and home variety, including a focus on residential rentals and commercial leased space."

With a portfolio of projects to suggest that they've been in it for the long haul, the group's success has always been measured one client at a time.

"Beyond providing quality and value to our clients," says general manager, Kerry McDowell,

"Understanding their vision and pushing for innovation at every turn ensures that we'll deliver on our promise to build 'your home, your way'."

After decades of hillside development and thousands of homes that stand as a testament to the people that call them 'home', the team continues to be grateful for the moments and milestones they've shared in bringing communities to life.

"I'm always proud to tell the story of Emil Anderson Properties and Dilworth Homes," says Greg Asling, vice-president – properties and acquisitions.

"We've been a part of building something remarkable, but the true credit for our success lies with Emil Anderson himself".

EMIL ANDERSON PROPERTIES & DILWORTH HOMES

MATTHEW TEMPLE

GREG ASLING

KARMEN CHANASYK

KERRY MCDOWELL

ERIN PAGE

DR. JORDAN SANDERS
DR. LINDSAY BALFOUR

KNOX MOUNTAIN DENTISTRY

"Do the best you can until you know better, and then when you know better, do better."

That quote by renowned activist, writer, poet, actress and university professor Maya Angelou was on the first slide of a presentation Dr. Jordan Sanders gave his team on the first day of training at Knox Mountain Dentistry.

"It was foundational for us as an office," said Dr. Sanders, who owns and operates the practice with Dr. Lindsay Balfour.

"We always strive to do the best care possible for our patients. We are fundamentally a practice that takes a human-based approach. We acknowledge that what we do is personal, intimate and sometimes highly fear-inducing and we take every step to meet the individual needs of our patients head-on."

While recognizing that going to the dentist is terrifying for some people (try sedation dentistry), the team at Knox Mountain Dentistry invites everyone – regardless of level of fear – to come in for the positive vibe, advanced technology and amenities and then stay for the exceptional service.

"Our goal is to create a tailored experience that breaks any preconceived idea our patients have about what dental care looks like," says Dr. Balfour.

"We want them to walk out feeling informed and empowered to make the decisions about their care and what is right for them."

As such, Knox Mountain Dentistry's patient roster is diverse – families, children, the elderly and everyone in between.

The practice offers a safe space for LGBTQ2+, neurodiverse individuals and those with that aforementioned fear of dental work.

"I find joy in the smiles I help create and the lives I positively impact," says Dr. Sanders.

"There's a connection I share with my patients as they entrust me with their oral health. I cherish the opportunity to alleviate their pain, restore their confidence and enhance their overall well-being. Witnessing a patient's transformation from apprehension to relief in the dental chair is incredibly gratifying."

Modern dentistry is driven by rapidly changing technology and the latest techniques, but at its core, it's still a people business.

"Every day in the office is a unique and rewarding experience." says Dr. Balfour.

"Dentistry isn't just a profession for me, it's a vocation that allows me to combine my love for science and my desire to make a meaningful difference in people's lives."

Knox Mountain Dentistry is one of Kelowna's newest dental practices, located at 740 Clement Ave., and both Dr. Sanders and Dr. Balfour are young dentists.

As such, the dentists have long, rewarding careers in front of them.

"We are really excited to treat families throughout their lives," says Dr. Sanders.

"We want to be a staple in their households by being consistent and conscientious. I also want to keep things light-hearted. Life is full of stress and if I can make someone laugh with a bad dad joke I will be happy."

DR. PAUL ROLLETT

OKANAGAN VISION THERAPY

We don't see with our eyes, we see with our brain.

"Vision is learned," says Dr. Paul Rollett of Okanagan Vision Therapy.

"20/20 vision is not enough. It is only one component of visual performance."

In fact, there are at least 17 systems that need to function in consort for vision to be optimally operating - and nearly all of these systems are trainable.

As the head of the Okanagan's first and only dedicated centre for optometric vision therapy and rehabilitation, Dr. Rollett knows of which he speaks.

For the past 10 years, he has designed and supervised programs for three main groups of patients – children with vision-related learning difficulties, those with brain injuries from concussion, whiplash and stroke and athletes looking to optimize vision for sports.

Okanagan Vision Therapy is a special niche in optometry, and one many people may not have heard of.

However, awareness is growing, and with the intensity of sports and the amount of near work we do as a society, an increasing number of people would benefit from vision therapy. Receiving the right treatment at the right time is life-changing for patients, particularly when it comes to the developing visual systems of children, and rehabilitation after head injury.

Dr. Rollett loves his profession and career.

"Watching and experiencing the lives of people change for the better, each and every day, is why I enjoy it so much," he says.

"I couldn't do what I do without my incredible team. They are just as passionate about helping our clients as I am, and the reward of seeing our clients' success doesn't get old."

Dr. Rollett's path to being a vision therapy specialist is a very personal one.

After sustaining a concussion, he had difficulty reading for any length of time.

While at optometry school, he took matters into his own hands and solved the problem with a vision therapy program he designed for himself based on his learnings.

"It changed my life," he says.

Okanagan Vision Therapy's services can be covered partially by BC Medical, private insurance, ICBC and WorkSafeBC claims, funding from Autism organizations and private pay.

"We utilize glasses and contact lenses, of course," says Dr. Rollett.

"But glasses and contacts are static, while vision is dynamic."

That is why for children with vision-related learning difficulties, glasses may only be part of the solution.

"One in four children have trouble with eye tracking and focusing and they lose their place on the page when learning how to read," he explains.

"We help them develop skills by working muscles in and around the eye to keep images stable."

"The exercises aren't there to make the muscles stronger per say," explains Rollett. "Instead they create a feedback scenario, so that you can do things more effectively."

Kids with vision-related learning difficulties quickly lose confidence, suffer headaches while trying to read, avoid doing classwork and homework and disengage from the classroom. However if that same child receives vision therapy, they can become skilled readers, participate in the classroom, and are less likely to dread school work and homework.

Similarly, vision therapy helps those with a brain injury overcome dizziness, light sensitivity, balance challenges and reading, phone and computer intolerance.

Sports vision training can also improve an athlete's reaction time, hand-eye and dynamic depth perception.

If you or someone you know struggles with any of the issues discussed, contact Okanagan Vision Therapy for more information.

It could be the first step toward a clearer future.

> "Watching and experiencing the lives of people change for the better, each and every day, is why I enjoy it so much."

SAMANTHA WEDLUND

SUCCESS21 SALON

‘Find your passion and make it your destiny!’

This mantra has not only guided Samantha Wedlund throughout her life but has also led Success21 Salon to remarkable achievements.

This year, the salon has been honored with two prestigious awards: Extension Specialist and Hair Replacement Specialist for 2023, a testament to Samantha's dedication and skill.

At the heart of Orchard Park Shopping Centre lies a sanctuary of beauty and self-expression – Success21 Salon.

Founded by the visionary Samantha Wedlund in 2019, Success21 is not just a salon – it's a journey into the transformative power of hairstyling.

Success21, acclaimed for its expertise in hair extensions, offers a variety of techniques including braidless weave, braided weave, tape-ins, keratin, and micro & nano beads. Success21 transcends the typical salon experience.

"We're about more than just a haircut or a color. We offer a journey of self-discovery," Samantha explains.

Her eco-friendly vision elevates hairstyling into an art form, helping clients explore and express their individuality.

Whether it's a precision haircut, inspired color, or intricate braids and cornrows, the salon caters to all hair needs for both women and men.

"Our hair extensions have become a client favorite, offering voluminous, long hair that exudes confidence," says Samantha.

The salon's holistic approach is evident in every aspect.

"It's about personal connections, understanding individual needs, and ensuring each visit uplifts spirits," Samantha coos.

This ethos extends to their remarkable products, exceptional customer service, and an atmosphere that makes every visit enjoyable.

Samantha's personal and professional journey as a curly hair specialist is central to Success21's ethos.

Her understanding and skill in working with curly hair have made the salon a haven for those seeking expert care for their natural curls.

Success21's Facebook page is a hub of inspiration, showcasing before-and-after photos of real clients and humorous, relatable quotes.

From Calvin Klein's praise of finding the right hairdresser to lighthearted sayings like ‘Got 99 problems, but bad hair ain’t one,’ the salon's online presence is as vibrant and uplifting as its physical space.

Success21 celebrates its clients, referring to women as queens and men as kings, a testament to the empowerment they feel with their new looks.

"Our seasoned stylists understand the power of a good haircut and the magic of perfect color," Samantha shares.

The salon's distinction as a Hair Replacement Specialist is evidenced by its superior services in wigs, toupees, toppers, and clip-ins.

As an educator, Samantha shares her award-winning knowledge with aspiring stylists, empowering them to explore new opportunities in the beauty industry.

Her passion for teaching is a cornerstone of her professional philosophy.

Educating the future: The Success21 Hair Academy is an extension of this commitment to excellence, offering aspiring hairdressers and extension specialists the opportunity to learn through online courses and intensive in-class training.

The salon's recent awards are a celebration of its commitment to excellence in hair care, styling, and client satisfaction.

Here, every client’s journey becomes a story of beauty, confidence, and fulfillment of destiny.

At Success21, every service is an invitation to explore and embrace your unique beauty. Samantha Wedlund and her team of 'right hairdressers' are not just styling hair; they are crafting experiences that leave clients feeling confident, beautiful, and empowered.

This is more than a salon;it's a destination for those who seek to express their best selves through their hair.

Photos Contributed

NATALIE MACDONALD

REGISTERED THERAPEUTIC COUNSELLOR

TIDELINE WELLNESS

Natalie Macdonald is a Registered Therapeutic Counsellor who has opened her own practice – Tideline Wellness.

She has always been drawn to helping people and has always been fascinated by the mind- body connection. She says, "It's about helping people conquer their mental and emotional barriers so that they can realize their full potential. That's what it is all about. I get so much joy from seeing people break through and live their best lives."

Natalie has developed highly customized approaches for: individual counselling, trauma-focused counselling, business and career advancement counselling and athletic performance counselling, "I honestly don't have a 'typical client'. Each of my clients is a unique individual requiring an approach designed to be specific to their needs. Tideline is a place for everyone."

Natalie knows that finding the right therapist is a deeply personal experience. "Everyone has unique backgrounds, experiences, uncertainties, goals and desires for their mental and emotional well-being," she explains. "In that sense, it's not that someone should come to me over any other counsellor, it's about creating a trusting and welcoming environment so that individuals feel comfortable and empowered when choosing to work with me."

As such, on a client's first visit, Natalie and the client talk about how to customize the counselling experience so that the individual's mental health and wellness goals can be addressed. It's not just sitting around the office talking either. Clients can choose 'Walk and Talk Sessions' where the counselling session is held while walking through various naturescapes. "Something about walking in nature can really free up and release thoughts and feelings," she says. "It's a very popular modality with my clients." Natalie understands the effects that nature has on the body and mind being a triathlete and competing in various Ironman and Ironman 70.3 races.

After earning Degrees in Psychology in Canada and Australia, Natalie published a research article regarding concussion reporting intentions of adolescent hockey players. She then did some of her own mind and body connecting by traveling around Australia, New Zealand, Europe and Vietnam. After becoming a Registered Therapeutic Counsellor, she built her own private practice, known as Tideline Wellness.

Tideline Wellness is in the planning stages of an expansion that will include other practitioners. "I am working on creating a beautiful and collaborative space that will house a variety of wellness services so that residents of the Okanagan Valley are supported in their wellness journeys. While Tideline Wellness' main focus is in providing individualized counselling services to people from all walks of life, we have also identified that organizations are in need of mental health services. We are looking to expand our reach further to create transformative programs for businesses and athletic programs that will help unlock your full potential."

REGENCY RETIREMENT RESORTS

ROB STEENWYK
CAROLE PRODGER
CHRISTIE HUGHES

Regency Retirement Resorts has been offering premiere 'resort-style' retirement living in the Okanagan for over 23 years.

With seven independent living resorts in Penticton, West Kelowna, Kelowna and Vernon, Regency is the largest retirement resort provider in the Valley.

With this honour comes the experience, leadership, and a professional understanding of Okanagan senior citizens that no other providers can begin to match.

While locations and some amenities differ (two have swimming pools), you will find the finest complexes offering a come-and-go lifestyle, large condo suites with kitchenettes, resort-quality food in elegant dining rooms, housekeeping services, 24-hour concierge, free bus shuttle services, exercise rooms, theatres, woodshops and wine rooms.

More than that, you will find caring staff like Christie and Rob alongside residents like Carole, catering to and supporting the wants and needs of Regency residents.

Christie Hughes has been the activities coordinator at Westwood Retirement Resort for almost 15 years.

"I feel blessed to be able to say, 'I REALLY LOVE MY JOB!' I honestly enjoy going to work every day. Not many people can say they get to plan parties, book entertainment, go out on bus adventures and so much more…for work," she says.

"All the employees at Westwood play a vital role in the health, comfort, and safety of the residents. I'm all about positive mental health."

Christie loves planning huge parties and getting the whole community involved, but also enjoys organizing the little things that are just as impactful.

"I like introducing a new resident to a group of card players, or inviting them to a Happy Hour," she says.

"It doesn't matter what age you are, meeting new people is hard. It also brings such a relief to family members knowing that their mom or dad are out being social and having fun. Every day I have someone saying to me that the best thing they ever did was either move or support the move of a loved one to Westwood, and it makes me proud to know I'm a part of that."

Rob Steenwyk started with Regency as a maintenance director before moving into general-manager roles.

Rob is always looking for ways to improve the lives of his Sandalwood residents.

One project he has been relentlessly working on is to bring virtual-reality opportunities for seniors.

Working alongside UBCO and VR designer RENDEVER VR (Impactful VR for Seniors), Sandalwood residents have the chance to travel the world in small groups, seeing things as if they are standing right there.

"Residents can travel to their old homes and neighbourhoods, explore new territories, or visit their ancestral origins," says Rob.

"Our VR system also has relaxation programs, games and much more."

Rob is confident, concurrent with research, that the virtual-reality platform will benefit not only Regency residents but pave the way to benefit seniors throughout the Okanagan.

Carole Prodger is an artist, retired R.N., Regency Summerwood resident, and Med Watch volunteer leader.

Med Watch is a volunteer program both for residents and by residents, to support the health of their community.

If enrolled in Med Watch, residents are guided to record prescriptions, and other health concerns in case of medical emergencies.

"As Regency offers independent living resorts, we do not have nurses or other health care staff," says Carole.

"This type of program provides all independent seniors a chance for life saving emergency preparedness for first responders to better assess an individual's situation."

Carole is a prolific artist, part of a group within Summerwood Art Club showcasing their talents in art exhibits, on greeting cards sold in the tuck shop and inviting new residents to find or continue their passions.

Christie, Rob and Carole are just a few of the 'Faces of Senior Living' in Kelowna.

Regency Retirement Resorts opens the opportunity for seniors to explore life, travel, make new friends, socialize and enjoy a vibrant life, without the mundane or overwhelming worries. It's retirement living at its best!

ROCHELLE CLARKE

MODERN STAYS CLEANING CO.

Let Modern Stays Cleaning Co. manage all your cleaning programs so you can concentrate on your business.

"As Canada's top hospitality cleaning service, we're focused on guest satisfaction and long-term partnerships," says Modern Stays founder Rochelle Clarke.

"We build teams specifically for our clients based on their cleaning requirements. Every partner operates differently and has different standards, so it's important we get to know absolutely everything, every detail that will make our partnership a success."

Modern Stays' has a wide range of clients from homeowners, hotels, property management companies that manage multiple vacation homes and Airbnbs, strata complexes and wineries to realtors, restaurants, rental buildings that need daily cleaning, suite cleanings, Big White vacation home units, move outs and post-construction.

"We prepare before we start and follow a proven step-by-step process that is proven to be successful," says Rochelle.

"This creates trust, understanding and long-term growth for our partners, our business and our employees. We're experienced not only in cleaning, but managing and customizing cleaning programs for our partners. We audit every clean to ensure nothing is missed."

Rochelle's cleaning career started 15 years ago when she met someone who needed help preparing numerous homes for short-term rentals.

She bought supplies, stocked shampoos, soaps and food and hired cleaning staff.

She loved it and founded her first company, Urban Mint Services, to not just do cleaning but provide whole-home management.

A stint of travel followed, staying in Airbnbs in Mexico and rescuing dogs for adoption.

A return to Canada saw Rochelle selling cleaning supplies to hospitality facilities and designing cleaning programs for hotels, restaurants and facilities across the country.

In 2023, Modern Stays Cleaning Co. was born to serve homeowners and property management companies that oversee corporate stays and vacation properties.

"The first thing I'm asked is: 'Can you make it so I don't have to worry about the cleaning'," says Rochelle.

"Yes! With my experience and our amazing team I am able to create successful programs that ensure 5-star reviews because cleanings are always organized, done on time, audited, communicated, updated and managed expertly by Modern Stays."

Rochelle enjoys each and every aspect of the business.

"I love the relationships we have," she says.

"I love seeing improvements in our partners' business and reviews go up. I love seeing our partners relaxed and able to focus on the operation of their business because they have someone they know and trust to manage their cleaning. And our team, I can't say enough. I am all about culture and creating a happy, positive work environment. I love that my team cares as much as I do about our partners. This is the best!"

JEREMY LEVEE

INTEGRATED SOLAR SOLUTIONS LTD.

Integrated Solar Solutions Ltd. is your go-to solar contractor for residential, commercial and industrial applications.

> "I love solar because it is the perfect combination of doing something right for the planet and it just makes sense financially,"

says Integrated Solar Solutions founder and president Jeremy Levee.

Integrated Solar Solutions Ltd., designs the most efficient system possible given the size of your home and the layout of your roof.

The ultimate goal is to say bye-bye to your electricity bills and hello to a net-zero house.

A typical residential installation can vary from $10,000 to $50,000 depending on the size of the system and the difficulty of installation.

But, in many cases, the system will pay for itself over 10 years via the 0% interest loan from the federal government, $5,000 federal rebate and the fact that FortisBC and BCHydro now offer net-metering.

"It's very affordable to get into and then the money savings and reduction of carbon footprint lasts forever," says Jeremy.

Why use Integrated over any other solar company?

Integrated is a family business with integrity that always puts the customer first.

And, it backs up that mantra with quality installations using only the best materials.

"Our typical client right now is a homeowner aged 40 or more who owns a single-family home, townhouse or acreage and business owners with larger commercial buildings," explains Jeremy.

"More businesses of all sizes need to take advantage of the 30% solar investment tax credit (ITC) available from the government. Solar is a no brainer for medium-and-large-size businesses."

Jeremy strongly believes every building will have solar panels eventually.

"It just makes sense," he says.

"With the way things are going with the whole electrification movement (Tesla, anyone?) makes it inevitable. If you look around at all the unused roof space out there, the potential is endless. Let's utilize that real estate and turn it into clean power generating facilities."

Lastly, we have to mention that some people are hesitant to go solar because the panels aesthetically disrupt the roofline.

"Looks are subjective," says Jeremy.

"Actually, the presence of solar panels means you're going green and saving money. Your neighbours will think it looks good and want a solar system, too."

TREVOR WALKER

TREVOR WALKER PHOTOGRAPHY

Everyone is photogenic.

If you think not, you just have the wrong photographer.

Trevor Walker of Trevor Walker Photography is the right photographer.

"Most people fear being in front of the camera for their headshot or portrait," explains Trevor.

"It's my job to take an amazing picture, not the client's, so I spend a lot of time getting people to relax and coaching them through expressions. It's a totally customized solution to get the absolute best headshot."

Trevor says the 'magic sauce' usually ends up to be a headshot that portrays the client as happy, confident and approachable.

After all, your headshot is the photo that represents you and your profession to clients, colleagues and the public, so you want it to be perfect.

"If people are nervous about having their headshot taken, I simply ask them why and listen," says Trevor.

"And then it's really just about us having a chit-chat about their job and getting them to talk about themselves. The goal is to have a good, fun and relaxing time and that's when I start taking pictures. It's definitely not about asking the client to say cheese every 10 seconds."

This approach to the ideal headshot can take anywhere from two to 20 minutes.

"It takes as long as it takes," says Trevor with a laugh.

"It's always a customized solution."

Oddly enough, Trevor was inspired to become a photographer after his own irritating encounter with a photographer while getting his headshot taken when he was a corporate headhunter.

"The photographer was so awkward and made me so uncomfortable and kept yelling at me to smile," remembers Trevor.

"Funnily, the photo ended up to be good, but I hated it anyway because of the bad experience."

That was in 2010 and by 2013 Trevor launched his own photography business in Vancouver doing everything a photographer is expected to do – weddings, pregnancy shots, family portraits and events.

A move to Kelowna in 2017 saw Trevor make the wise decision to focus solely on headshots.

"I find it very rewarding to give an individual a photo they're happy with," he says.

For the first few years, Trevor Walker Photography operated out of his home in the Upper Mission.

But, in early 2023, Trevor secured a 1,400-square-foot studio at 339 Bernard Ave. downtown that's become the central go-to location for businesspeople from throughout the Okanagan and Thompson to get their headshots.

Trevor will also travel to businesses and events to take headshots of multiple people.

Trevor has shared his perfect-headshot philosophy with others so he could hire two other photographers to work with him out of the Kelowna studio.

As well, he has photographers across the country – in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal – using his techniques to take headshots of confident and approachable people.

> "It's my job to take an amazing picture, not the client's, so I spend a lot of time getting people to relax and coaching them through expressions"

Photo Contributed

SHIVANI SHARMA

SHIVANI SHARMA
NOTARY CORPORATION

Shivani and her amazing team Jenni Guillemette (Right) and Adele Joyce (Left).

Meet Shivani Sharma, a notary public dedicated to serving our community with integrity and expertise.

"My mantra is excellence through integrity, one document at a time," says Shivani.

"In admiration of the noble notarial profession, I, like many dedicated notaries, am committed to providing trustworthy and reliable notarial services, ensuring the community's needs are met with professionalism and care."

Shivani serves a diverse range of clients, including those seeking assistance with notarization of simple documents, such as affidavits, statutory declarations and travel consent letters, to helping those who need assistance with complex transactions like real estate conveyancing (purchase, sale mortgage and refinance) and drafting of personal planning documents, such as wills, power of attorneys and representation agreements.

"I ensure clients' documents are handled with the utmost care and attention to detail," says Shivani.

"My goal is to connect with a varied spectrum of individuals and organizations from real estate professionals, mortgage brokers and legal experts to local businesses, seniors and non-profit organizations."

Shivani's journey to become a notary is a testament to resilience and unwavering commitment. As a landed immigrant to Canada, she faced the initial challenges of adapting to a new country and building a career.

"I persevered, ultimately becoming a Canadian citizen, an achievement that filled me with pride and a deep sense of belonging," she says.

Her professional journey ran from junior legal assistant to professional conveyancer to being commissioned as a notary public by the BC Supreme Court.

Initially, Shivani was a staff notary at a well-established notary corporation.

"Then, I realized my calling – to launch my own notary practice, committed to upholding the values of integrity, precision and a personal touch in every professional service I provide," she says.

"I enjoy my work immensely because it allows me to play a crucial role in peoples' lives. Every document I draft or notarize represents a significant moment in someone's life, whether it's a will, a real estate transaction, or any other crucial legal document. Being able to provide a service that helps individuals and businesses navigate these important milestones is incredibly rewarding."

Shivani sees herself as a bridge between traditional notarial practices and the future of notarial services using all kinds of technology, all the while preserving the core values of integrity, precision, and trust.

"By embracing these changes while maintaining a strong commitment to the community, I aim to provide notarial services that meet the changing needs of our clients in a rapidly evolving world, ensuring they receive the highest quality notarial services with the utmost care and dedication," sums up Shivani.

JAMES SEABROOK

VITALIS INNOVATION

Start doing things differently.

There is no silver bullet to address climate change challenges.

What we can do is start asking questions about what alternative options exist, and start adopting new solutions.

Incremental progress ultimately leads to big results.

As consumers (individual or corporate) making decisions on what to support drives change.

Our communities need to start adopting clean technologies like natural refrigerant solutions and upcycling or recycling technologies and products to break the status quo of massive energy waste.

That's where Kelowna-based Vitalis Innovations comes in.

It has CO2-based cleantech solutions used in heating and cooling, refinement, extraction and CO2 recovery systems.

"When Vitalis was founded, my BHAG (big hairy audacious goal) was to power Kelowna with clean energy, specifically low quality geothermal heat and power," says Vitalis president James Seabrook.

"At the time our immediate opportunity was not in the energy sector, but we're now able to align our products and solutions with my original vision."

Vitalis launched into the newly legalized cannabis market and was the first to make large-scale CO2 extraction accessible to processors.

"Fast forward to now, we've been granted numerous patents on CO2 extraction methods and continue to develop novel CO2 process solutions," explains James.

"We're really passionate about CO2, and we now apply our talents toward novel R744(CO2) heat pump technology, thermal energy systems, and CO2 recovery."

As James so succinctly puts it: "We have an unrelenting desire to make cool shit."

Vitalis' vertical integration gives it the ability to be so innovative.

It invests heavily in research and developing IP.

It has super talented design and fabrication teams, which bring these innovations to life.

"As we grow R744 heating and cooling applications, we're entering a well established and structured market of HVAC and refrigeration," explains James.

"With new technology there is always an inherent gap of education and acceptance which drives resistance to change. Vitalis' CO2 handling expertise brings new light to moving CO2 as a refrigerant beyond conventional system designs. For many applications, these nuanced design approaches keep our systems simple and cost-competitive with old-school synthetic refrigerant solutions."

Vitalis' teams work well – literally and figuratively – under pressure, making discussions around the perceived pressure barrier of R744 fun.

Vitalis extraction equipment utilizes CO2 at pressure up to 10x higher than regular R744 systems.

Vitalis has a diverse client base of future-facing companies who buy based on total cost of ownership.

As a vertically integrated original equipment manufacturer (OEM) of CO2-based technologies, Vitalis has become known for reliable solutions that provide great economics, high performance, and environmental sustainability.

Clients choose Vitalis because they understand what that value proposition brings to them both now and in the future.

"Nothing beats the feeling that comes from making a positive, tangible difference in the world by making and deploying cool shit," sums up James.

ECORA
THE ENVIRONMENTAL TEAM

Ecora, a distinguished leader in environmental services in Kelowna, stands out for its commitment to environmental stewardship and commitment to fostering a sustainable future. With a transparent, knowledgeable approach grounded in strong ethical principles, Ecora is not just a company but a catalyst for sustainable change, positively impacting local communities and contributing to a global movement towards a greener future.

At the core of Ecora's operations is its multidisciplinary environmental team. These professionals, known for their wide-ranging expertise and adaptability, offer services that span from engineering to GIS and Landscape architecture. Their work, especially with First Nations communities, is rooted in mutual respect, open communication, and a transparent approach. This philosophy of collaboration is integral to Ecora's services and client relationships.

Ecora's client engagement strategy focuses on understanding and addressing the unique needs of each client. The team, composed of environmental experts and additional specialists as needed, is dedicated to crafting solutions that are not just effective but also specifically tailored to each client's requirements.

Ecora's diverse client base includes First Nations communities, government agencies, industry leaders, land developers, and private landowners. With offices extending from Kelowna across seven other locations in British Columbia, Ecora is equipped to manage a wide array of environmental projects with efficiency and expertise.

Ecora is ideally positioned to successfully manage complex, multidisciplinary projects that involve a variety of stakeholders and span multiple levels of government. This capability is fueled by a team deeply committed to environmental conservation. The team's diverse range of skills and interests, which include specialties like aquatic biology and entomology, creates a dynamic environment conducive to continuous learning and professional development. This diversity not only enhances Ecora's ability to address a broad spectrum of environmental challenges but also fosters a culture of innovation and expertise crucial for tackling intricate projects.

Integral to Ecora's ethos are its core values: People, Environment, Relationships, and Community (PERC). As a people-first company, Ecora places a high priority on the well-being and professional growth of its team members. Their unwavering commitment to Ecora's environmental value is evident in both their professional endeavours and active participation in community activities, such as stream cleanups, tree planting, and events with First Nations communities.

As environmental standards evolve, particularly with the increasing focus on climate change and stringent regulatory requirements, Ecora remains a crucial advisor and leader for its clients. Additionally, the company's alignment with the principles of Truth and Reconciliation further strengthens its role in positively shaping Canada's social and environmental landscapes.

In summary, Ecora stands as a beacon in the field of environmental services. Its team, adept at handling contemporary environmental challenges, is committed to driving sustainable development and fostering community engagement. Ecora's approach goes beyond mere compliance to set new benchmarks in environmental responsibility, ensuring a substantial and enduring impact in Kelowna and beyond.

ALLISON GRAFTON

ROCKWOOD CUSTOM HOMES

Legacy homes delivered with the utmost care, top quality, craftsmanship and comprehensive stewardship.

In its nearly 15 years of designing and building luxury custom residential products, Rockwood Custom Homes has always held true to that founding vision of president Allison Grafton.

“Excellence is the standard,” says Allison.

“Excellence in the quality of products we specify, in the care and customer service we extend to our clientele, and in the overall financial stewardship we administer across our build process.”

In fact, Rockwood’s full integration of the build process is unprecedented in the custom residential home building market.

All under one roof, Rockwood takes clients from initial pen to paper architectural vision through full interior design, home construction, and all the way to a magical handover with homes completed down to all furniture, rugs, lamps, linens, flowers and lit candles.

“Our business model, by its very nature, demands accountability and alignment between Rockwood and our clients,” stresses Allison.

“We are involved and driving every stage of the home design and build process through our robust team encompassing divisions of architecture, interior design (who still execute the remarkable art of hand drafting), design project management, construction project management, accounting (with an in-house CFO), and business operations. The level of communication, attention to detail, customer care and, therefore, financial protection, resulting from our integrated business model is second to none.”

Rockwood interviews every potential client and vice versa.

“What unifies us is an alignment in expectation,” says Allison.

“Our clients are often entrepreneurial, financially savvy and hold high expectations on quality, custom care and investment protection, which we are pleased to meet and surpass on all fronts.”

Through careers in pharmaceutical sales and investment banking, Allison and her husband built, renovated and lived in nearly 20 homes, spurred by Allison’s passion for home design.

Also along the way, Allison experienced firsthand the cost overruns, lack of transparency and stress associated with dealing with many builders and renovators.

“I lived it firsthand and knew there had to be a different, and better, way of doing things,” remembers Allison.

“I knew in combining my business acumen, with my passion and wisdom in design and home building, I could and would build a company that not only addressed all of the shortcomings I personally experienced within the industry, but disrupted an accepted status quo that was, in my opinion, unacceptable for the discerning clientele.”

Allison lives and breathes Rockwood.

“To be truly great at anything, I believe it has to be fuelled not only by skill and ability, but also by passion,” she states.

“I am deeply invested in the product we create, the values we espouse and the clients we take on."

> "We don’t just build houses, we design and build homes and sanctuaries, we transform communities and leave lasting legacy impact in the physical landscape."

What has and will continue to drive Rockwood’s future is its intersection with the environment, a commitment to advancing and integrating sustainable building practices and energy efficiencies.

As well, there will forever be a deep respect for the natural surroundings in which it builds, a fluidity with the land, where architecture and design work in symbiosis with the communities and landscape that surround them.

Photo Contributed

TRAVIS FORMAN

STRATEGIC PRIVATE WEALTH COUNSEL - HARBOURFRONT WEALTH MANAGEMENT

In less than five years, and over the course of the pandemic, Travis Forman has grown his wealth management business three-fold and led the growth of a suite of private funds to over $1.2 billion in assets under management.

"We do what we say we're going to do," says Travis, the principal of Strategic Private Wealth Counsel and one of the lead developers and creators of private funds for Harbourfront Wealth Management.

"The client comes first. Recently, we did a survey and clients are over the moon."

Forman's specialty is a philosophy of private investments for clients that reduce volatility, but maximizes portfolio returns paired with financial and tax planning.

The unique approach has put Strategic's advisory team on the national stage four years running.

Travis brought this distinctive system to Kelowna in 2020.

"One of the things I love about Kelowna is it's one of the fastest-growing cities in the country and it pulls from inter-provincial and provincial generational wealth," he says.

Strategic is a 100% referred business and this has translated it to being the number one growth practice at Harbourfront for four years in a row.

"No other advisory team can say this," says Travis.

Strategic's typical client is 45 to 60 years old, likely a business owner, and planning for and nearing retirement.

They are the investors who need complex strategy to reduce taxes and maximize investment.

"It's important to us to help Canadians see what is often overlooked," says Travis.

"Watercooler talk is always investment focused. However, taxes are just as important as investment performance. If we can shave 6% average tax for a client, it likely adds more to plan probability of success than adding 2% more to investment performance."

As such, Strategic is changing wealth management for Canadians for the better.

"I wanted to get into finance because I knew the script changed all the time and I did not want to do something prescribed," says Travis.

"All clients' needs are different, even if the circumstances are the same."

As Strategic grows, it's able to help more Canadians without sacrificing client experience.

Travis started as a teller at Royal Bank 25 years ago and was exposed to financial planning and wealth management.

He soon landed a job as a financial planner and his career skyrocketed.

"With certainty, it was the best move I have ever made," sums up Travis.

DR. RICHARD VAN DER ROSS & RICHARD CUDMORE

THE ALPHA CLINIC

'Alpha' carries a sense of confidence, excellence, strength and empowerment, about being at the top and being the best you can be.

"Our name embodies all that we are striving to achieve – for us to be the best, so that you can be your best," says Dr. Richard van der Ross, co-founder and medical director of The Alpha Clinic.

"We know that individuals seeking hormone optimization at The Alpha Clinic are taking a proactive and empowering approach to their health, aligning with the idea of being in control and at the forefront of their well-being, alongside wanting to be at their best."

Hormone Replacement Therapy, such as TRT for men and BHRT for women, is truly personalized for every patient and is backed by the latest cutting-edge research.

"To be able to pass the latest cutting-edge practises on to our patients and seeing their lives transform for the better, is truly satisfying and makes what we do for our patients and ourselves intrinsically, incredibly fulfilling," says the other Richard and co-founder, Richard Cudmore, who is The Alpha Clinic's managing director.

"We are very passionate about what we do."

Aging is an inevitable process that affects every individual.

"We are focused on fostering understanding as well as educating, to dispel myths and provide accurate information about hormone optimisation and the treatment options available."

The decline in hormone production as we age can lead to various physical and psychological symptoms that significantly impact our wellbeing and quality of life.

"Hormone Replacement Therapy offers a valuable approach to managing the challenges associated with aging," says Richard van der Ross.

"Optimising our male and female hormones can help alleviate physical symptoms, enhance psychological well-being, reduce the risk of chronic conditions and improve overall quality of life. It's about promoting health and addressing imbalances that can impact both physical and emotional aspects of life as we age."

"We have most certainly seen there is a stigma attached to HRT," explains Richard Cudmore.

"Generationally, we were taught to suffer in silence. Talking about your problems and your age-related health concerns in the past was considered taboo. Unless it was something obvious and physical, we just accepted that the symptoms we felt were a natural part of aging."

However, the narrative is changing and The Alpha Clinic is at the forefront of discussing aging, making it more mainstream and normal.

"Many of our patients grew up in this generation and breaking down these barriers now is something we are excited to be a part of," continues Richard Cudmore.

"We are focused on fostering understanding as well as educating, to dispel myths and provide accurate information about hormone optimization and the treatment options available. We are focused on opening doors to normalize aging discussions especially around male and female hormones and are showing that seeking hormone optimization is a proactive and positive choice toward enhanced well-being."

RALPH GARDNER

STERLING BENEFITS

"We are set up to do for them what seems impossible otherwise."

Sometimes great tragedies can propel us to a new, greater purpose in life.

Often people accidentally fall into the insurance business, but it was a family tragedy that propelled Ralph Gardner of Sterling Benefits to pursue purpose in the insurance space, and years later he still loves solving problems for people.

“People and businesses are finding real solutions with Sterling Benefits, and we look forward to helping many more,” says owner Ralph.

“Small businesses in the Okanagan have often felt set aside by limited and restrictive benefits options, while at the same time suffering from premium instability from year to year. Thankfully, Sterling Benefits has been able to help many small businesses kick the door down on their benefits troubles and relax into something generous, flexible and stable.”

When a local business owner becomes a Sterling Benefits client, they stay, on average, for over 14 years.

That is a staggering statistic – several times longer than the industry average.

‘Sterling,’ of course, is a word that means ‘of high quality,’ an ideal moniker that embodies Sterling Benefits.

However, Sterling is also Ralph’s younger brother’s name.

At age 18 he suffered severe brain injury in a quad accident and became disabled for life.

The accident greatly impacted Ralph, who honoured his brother by naming the company Sterling Benefits and offering disability insurance.

Sterling Benefits has expanded to focus on group health and dental benefits and remains true to its roots of helping others in their time of need.

“I aim to offer every single client something of worth and value,” says Ralph.

“When explaining my offerings and capabilities to other colleagues in the insurance space, I often get a jaw drop. One advisor exclaimed, ‘that’s not fair!’ However, it’s plain and simple – Sterling Benefits does have an unfair advantage when it comes to working with small businesses and sole proprietors because of our structure. We are set up to do for them what seems impossible otherwise.”

"That means business owners can focus on their business and enjoy having our systems support their desires to attract and retain great staff."

Sterling Benefits’ typical clients are sole proprietors and small businesses, usually with 25 or fewer employees.

They are offered a wider selection of plan design options, from basic to very generous, all within a fully pooled platform so premiums don’t jump up erratically from year to year.

“All plans come with a pay direct card so that you don't have to pay out of pocket first for dental, prescriptions, or many of the other services, and then wait for reimbursement,” explains Ralph.

“Employees of a small company do not need to all be on the same benefits package. They can choose from the available options, to find one that meets their individual needs best. It’s really about bringing solutions in each situation. Every business owner has a unique set of problems, and our incredible tool belt allows us to bring industry-leading solutions.”

DAVID & MEAGAN HERRINGTON

KELOWNA SOFTWARE

In today's business landscape, technology is no longer the exclusive domain of industry giants like Microsoft; it has become an essential element for all businesses.

Technology serves a critical role in enhancing operational efficiencies, boosting productivity, gaining competitive advantages, expanding customer reach, providing valuable insights, fostering customer engagement, and safeguarding security.

Kelowna Software, founded and led by David and Meagan Herrington, has emerged as a pivotal partner supporting businesses' journeys to leverage technology. Offering tailored, expert technical and IT support, website design, and software and application development, Kelowna Software is transforming businesses and adding value to its clients.

Full-Service Technology Excellence

Kelowna Software stands as the foremost full-service technology company in the Okanagan region, boasting a holistic range of services encompassing IT consulting, website design, software and app development. By providing comprehensive solutions under one roof, Kelowna Software empowers businesses to seamlessly integrate various facets of their operations. This synergy enhances operational efficiencies, bolsters cybersecurity measures, and facilitates informed tech decisions that align with the present and future needs of each organization.

An Award-Winning Trailblazer

Kelowna Software's commitment to excellence is evident through its community accolades:

- In 2023, they were crowned #1 for IT Services, #1 Software Company, and #1 Website Design Company in the Central Okanagan.
- Kelowna Software emerged triumphant in 2023 as winners in the Software Developer, Technology Company, and Tech Startup categories in Best of Kelowna.
- Kelowna Software maintains a stellar 5-star Google review rating, showing they have earned the trust and admiration of their clients.
- For the third consecutive year, Kelowna Software and David Herrington have graced the pages of Faces of Kelowna magazine as the 'Face of Technology.'
- Recognized as a certified affinity program provider for the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce, Kelowna Software's delivers on their commitment to its local community.

Tailored Solutions for Diverse Clients

The strength of Kelowna Software's expertise lies in its ability to understand and cater to a broad spectrum of clients, from local entrepreneurs to large corporations. The Kelowna Software team has over 130 combined years of technology experience across many domains and industries helping to provide actionable solutions to local businesses.

David Herrington, named to Kelowna's 2022 Top 40 Under 40, is the driving force behind Kelowna Software. He is fueled by a passion for learning and applying new technology to solve real-world problems. His genuine enthusiasm for providing solutions to businesses sets the tone for the company's culture of innovation.

A Bright Future in a Growing City

Kelowna Software anticipates a rising demand for full-service technology providers. With increased competition, continual workforce challenges, and erosion of profit margins, businesses must continuously innovate and stay competitive. Kelowna Software is poised to be the natural partner for Okanagan-based organizations seeking to grow their businesses both now and in the future.

Kelowna Software's commitment to solving problems, expanding customer reach, optimizing organizational efficiencies, and increasing company value makes it a strategic ally for local businesses of all sizes. With a relentless focus on innovation, excellence, and community engagement, Kelowna Software is set to help lead the way in transforming the business landscape in the Okanagan region and beyond.

SCOTT DEDELS

BLOCK REWARDS

There is no face of Bitcoin because the inventor never took personal credit.

But Scott Dedels believes it is the new frontier for compensation and benefits.

Scott has founded Block Rewards to help Canadian companies navigate this emerging space.

"We are a one-of-a-kind company in Canada, helping employers implement Bitcoin into their compensation and rewards strategies," says Scott.

In fact, Block Rewards' motto is: Earn better money.

"When most people say earn better money, what they mean is earn more money," says Scott. "When we say it, we mean it."

Persistent inflation, higher prices and diminishing purchasing power are going to be the norm.

So, companies need to understand how to adapt recruitment and retention strategies to reflect economic reality and bitcoin will be a huge part of it.

"I believe it is impossible to pay employees fairly when the currency they're being paid in is being inflated away," explains Scott.

"That's not the fault of the employers but it will force them to entertain new ideas to stay competitive."

Scott admits embracing Bitcoin requires people to leave behind a lot of preconceived notions about the way money works.

"We are so used to our money becoming less valuable over time, we complain about it but generally don't question it. It's hard for most people to imagine what it would look like if that wasn't the case."

"Inflation destroys our ability to save by making our money worth less in the future," says Scott.

"Bitcoin provides the opportunity to save in a currency that can't be diluted."

Scott views Bitcoin as an innovation similar to email, only for sending value instead of messages.

The first email was sent in 1969 and it was 25 years before it went mainstream.

Bitcoin turns 15 next year, so are still very early in the adoption of the cryptocurrency.

"Bitcoin is the most significant technological advancement we've seen in our lifetimes," states Scott.

Scott and his expert guests explain the significance in Scott's recently launched Bitcoin-for-beginners podcast called 'The Block Reward,' now available on all major platforms.

Scott started his journey with Bitcoin in the spring of 2020 watching the government print an unprecedented amount of money.

"I knew I had to help others with what I had learned," sums up Scott.

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