

A change at Duane Johnson Real Estate



SEEN FROM SEASIDE
R.J. MARX

Celebrating its 30th year, Duane Johnson Real Estate is a locally owned and globally connected real estate brokerage located in Cannon Beach. Established in 1990 by Johnson with the intent of exclusively serving the real estate needs of the Cannon Beach and Arch Cape areas, this year saw the agency move to the next level with an infusion of venture capital and a new operating strategy.

Johnson remains principal broker as Realtor Michael Henderson takes over the day to day operations. We spoke with Johnson and Henderson in their Cannon Beach office.

Q: You grew up in Cannon Beach?
Johnson: No, in Portland. We moved down here in '78.

My wife Cheryl got the toy store, Gepetto's, a couple of years after that.

Q: How did you get started in real estate?

Johnson: I was working for a couple of guys who had it. We were on the corner of Second and Larch, for about five, six years.

One gentleman decided to retire and the other didn't want to do it on his own, so we formed a partnership. When he decided to sell, we moved down the road to Midtown. I was there for five years with my partner in North Coast Properties when I decided to go on my own.

I saw this building for sale from a Prineville realtor and we were very fortunate we could buy it.

Q: What was it like when you started?
Johnson: I was probably here the first year by myself seven days a week.

Chris Childress joined when she got her broker's license. We started in 1989.

Q: There was a recession at the time.

Johnson: We struggled at first, but by the end of January we had 30 listings, which is pretty good. People that knew us wanted to do business with us. We knew a lot of people in town.

It took off.

Q: Did you start with a philosophy?

Johnson: We started with the idea that we wanted to take care of each other. We help each other. We work as a team. In a small office like this, you can really do it.

Q: How has the audience changed in terms of the people that you see. looking for homes?

Johnson: Years ago people were coming down and buying homes because they wanted to be here. It's the same today, but there are people who have more money today. They come into town, they don't want to fix a window, fix the floor. They just want everything to be turnkey. A lot of these clients work a lot of hours. The last thing they want to do is go furniture shopping. They just want the key.

Q: Where does your territory stretch?
Henderson: Cannon Beach, Arch Cape, Falcon Cove, Cove Beach. That's our focus. We want to have the highest level of knowledge and experience in that market.

Q: Is there an influx of wealth as a result, and how has it affected quality of life?

Johnson: I don't think a whole lot. There are some nicer restaurants, upscale boutique shops, but as far as the people living here, I don't think so.

Q: Where are your buyers from?

Johnson: They're primarily from the Portland, Seattle area. Some from Canada, depending where their dollar is. A few from



Duane Johnson and Michael Henderson of Duane Johnson Real Estate in Cannon Beach.

Idaho — primarily the Northwest. Through the years people said the California people are going to come up here, "They're dumb and they're going to buy all the real estate."

Well, first of all, California people aren't that dumb, and second, they don't like our weather here.

Q: Michael, how did you become part of the team?

Henderson: I've always been in business marketing and management. My first interaction was when I was in action sports — skateboarding, snowboarding, surfing — as a brand manager. Myself, Duane and his son David sat on an ad hoc committee to the City Council to raise money and design for the new skate park and basketball court.

When it came down to the end of it and what we needed, Duane was the largest donor. Growing up in that world of skating, surfing and snowboarding, I thought the world of him for doing that.

That was the first time I really got to know Duane and his family.

Q: How long have you been here?

Henderson: I was 26 when I moved here in '99. I was constantly coming here from Mount Hood to surf. And I was drawn more to the surf than the mountain.

The first time I came here when I moved from Colorado to Mount Hood. My friends and I threw on a wetsuit and went surfing at Short Sands and I knew that this is where I wanted to be forever. I think that resonates for a lot of people. It's such a magical place. We eventually moved here.

When the economy went bad and people stopped buying action-related toys, I segued over to the beverage industry and was district manager for a beverage company — beer and wine — which is very resilient for hard times. I had an injury in that industry where I basically broke my back carrying product.

Q: You made it through action sports —

Henderson: — but the beverage industry took me down.

Q: How did you segue into the real estate market?

Henderson: I had been thinking about it. I had built my house in Arch Cape and then sold it. Through that process, I understood land development, general construction, marketing and selling. It had always been running around in my head I might make a decent broker.

I interviewed with most everybody in town, but the idea of being with an independent firm with Duane just resonated with me: the way he felt about community, business, about being independent.

I felt in a small town like Cannon Beach, with the small-town boutiques, Duane's retro feel and passion for antique cars, if we could move into the digital age and even the playing field with any of our franchise competition, people would feel really good about working with us.

Q: You've been developing your web presence, social media?

Henderson: Where are we getting the best return from a marketing standpoint?

There's a brand new website. It also hosts our customer resource management system at the back end where all of our past, present leads for future clients can be listed in a meaningful way.

We're looking at the way we do things operationally: moving from a paper environment where all of our accounting is done from paper ledger to paper checks, to putting all that into an electronic format, embracing Quickbooks and managing that.

Q: What's your approach to clients?

Henderson: It's all about point of contact. When a customer contacts me, what is it you're trying to do? I let that be my guide.

Operating within the highest level of fiduciary responsibility, being ethical, and not pressing, not pushing. I think that's boded well for me.

Once I get to the point of understanding what their motivations are, I enlist lifelong standing relationships in this community and give my clients multiple resources.

It's really exciting to see someone going to build a commercial business or residential home, to bring that to fruition, and do that with as little anxiety as possible.

We have already said the relationship never stop with the transaction. We're always there for our clients. The buyer ends up being a seller, and vice versa. If you build that relationship and foster it, it's always there.

Q: Have you weighed into the workforce housing issue?

Henderson: We want to be involved in that. Duane wants to be involved.

Johnson: We are trying now to with our new partners that come in here to see if we can get some workforce housing. It's going to be a lot of work, but we'd like to see that. These aren't going to be big houses. They're smaller homes. You don't need 4,000-square-foot homes. We've seen some here that are really small that are cute as can be and very livable. We're really interested in putting that together so we can help people who otherwise wouldn't be able to afford to buy something.

Q: What were your considerations in deciding to sell?

Johnson: It was really important to me when I sold this I didn't sell to a franchise. I really wanted the name "Duane Johnson" to stick around and be more of a local real estate market. rather than run by somebody wherever they're at, keep it smaller real estate and not have to deal with franchises.

Henderson: The venture capitalist is a silent partner. We are partnering with the best firm we could find in Portland that specifically has a branch that works with real estate.

We want to make sure we are always acting within compliance and then we want to reduce any liability for the firm and for our clients, And that we are in the very best hands that we can have in the entire state.

Q: How is the Cannon Beach real estate market?

Henderson: It's fun. I've really enjoyed it. It's resilient. And there's only so much of it. The property values keep going up. I think we'll always have people interested in having a home here. How could you not? I look at it as a very resilient market.

Q: Do you warn customers about the tsunami?

Henderson: I say if you're going to live in fear, you probably shouldn't live here.

Johnson: I don't know where you go if you're going to live in fear, it seems everywhere you go. I'm way more scared of dying of cancer.

Johnson: Is it going to happen someday? It may. We don't know. But to live in fear — but I'd rather be here than in downtown Portland with buildings dropping down on top of you.

Henderson: But to answer your question, when a client comes in and if they do say they have a concern with flood issues or concerns with the tsunami, we immediately go to the county and city web maps. I show them the overlays, the low risk to the higher risk. We start pinpointing houses close to evacuation sites or not even in the tsunami zone — it's a concern for sure.

Q: How many people in this building?

Henderson: There's Duane, myself, Chris Childress, Jeff Etchison and Jeremy Youngquist, the newest addition to our team. We're looking to possibly bring one more to our team within the next year. But for this market and this firm, that's probably where we'll leave it.

Johnson: I think one of the most important parts for me was that I wanted to try to continue this business the way it was as an independent office, because I've worked hard to get to the point it is now. It was important for me to see it grow. I did not want to sell it to a franchise. I was approached by three different franchises, two here in town, that wanted to buy the property and the business. I didn't want to do that. We finally found the guy who wanted to come in and wanted to be an investor.

Q: What do you see in the future?

Johnson: I think we have an opportunity here in Cannon Beach, a very strong market. We have so many buyers in the Hillsboro area, just an hour away. It's Cannon Beach, everybody wants to be here.

Henderson: As far as the business is concerned, now we have an influx of capital to really take his legacy and be able to compete with what the franchises have to offer, which is only going to make us stronger. We love our clients, we hold them close, it never ends with the transaction and we just want to give them confidence that what we're doing is only going to make our relationship stronger, our business stronger and we will never lose that sense of community.

Grain-free fears make feeding time complicated



VIEW FROM THE PORCH
EVE MARX

I was seriously bummed out a couple of weeks ago when it was widely reported that Zantac, a popular over the counter anti-acid medication, was being pulled from drugstore shelves.

I've been taking Zantac nearly every day for about a year after having been given the diagnoses of GERT, or gastroesophageal reflux. I went online to research alternative remedies, which is how I fell down the rabbit hole of reading about high-end dog foods, the very brands in fact, I've been feeding my dogs for four years, that have recently been targeted as foods not to feed.

Last week the FDA chimed in to say my expensive, grain-free dog food choices could cause serious, even fatal, canine heart disease.

This might be a good time to say that I'm relatively new to the high-end dog food scene. Dolly, a Pekingese I had as a preteen, ate a steady diet of chicken livers sautéed in butter. Peaches and Stasha, a Lhasa apso and a shih tzu I had in my 20s, ate what I ate at the time, which was pizza, souvlaki, and hummus. I offered them a more-well rounded diet of Purina O.N.E., but they would never eat it unless it was dressed in human food. They were what you might call picky.

Subsequent dogs — a couple of Lhasas apsos, Maisie and Gigi, and a Chihuahua named Rinaldo who we adopted when he was a senior, ate a mix of commercial dog food and human food I cooked.

In recent years for my current dogs, I've caved to the allure of premium brand dog foods featuring limited ingredients, in particular grain-free. The min-pin has serious food allergies (no poultry of any sort for her). It was tough to find a commercial food that met her requirements. So I was dismayed to see my primary choice listed as the No. 2 food to avoid.



Lucy licks the plate of yesterday's Chinese dinner.

Since 2018, the FDA has been investigating more than 500 reports of canine dilated cardiomyopathy that appears to be linked to dog foods marketed as grain free.

But for the majority of dogs, it's not yet clear what is causing the heart disease, experts say. Some believe it could be the grain-free element, or possibly the new proteins being offered, exotic fare including alligator, venison, kangaroo, and ostrich.

Not ready to throw out the baby with the bathwater, I am still feeding my dogs this

particular brand of food. (The main ingredient is salmon and maybe I should be concerned how much mercury is in it.) What I've been doing is cooking for them and adding what I've cooked to their commercial brand of food.

What I cook for them is liver. Beef liver, organic beef liver, cooked sans seasoning in a cast iron skillet in a 375-degree oven for 30 minutes. I mix this with cooked basmati rice and add some frozen peas. A scoop of this is added to their scoop of high end kibble. I would probably go for a less expensive brand of kibble except most brands list some chicken as an ingredient if you read the label closely.

So far, both my dogs seem thrilled with this arrangement. The young one who is prone to gaining weight hasn't gained any, and the very old one who needs to gain weight has gained some, incredibly.

Only time will tell if this is the right diet to feed my dogs.

Meanwhile I will say Peaches and Stasha lived pretty well on pizza crust. Pizza, sad to say for me, triggers my acid reflux.