

Campana Waltz Commercial Real Estate, LLC: Bird dogs of business and industry

BY JESSE HINES

Vincent Campana (a.k.a. Skip, a.k.a. Johnny Limelight, a.k.a. Cottage Cheese and Peaches) and Tom Waltz (a.k.a. Big Dog, a.k.a. Meat and Potatoes) head up Campana Waltz Commercial Real Estate, LLC, located at 11832 Fishing Point Drive in Oyster Point Business Park. They view themselves as the “facilitator” and this unorthodox, outside-the-box duo has been facilitating deals together for more than 21 years now. Waltz says they are the “businessperson’s Cupid,” as they “play mix and match” with property owners and prospective renters and buyers.

In August 2006, Campana and Waltz opened their own business so they could “have fun and make some money.” They arrange sales and leasing deals with clients ranging from the Fortune 500 to startups, and “treat everybody the same.” No deal is too big or too small.

“We hate to lose,” says Campana, and “we love the thrill of the deal.” For them, commercial real estate is “like playing Monopoly” with real money, in real time, and with real results. Both men would like to see there be separate licenses for commercial real estate and residential real estate because commercial is a “whole different world from residential.” Commercial is about numbers and residential is about emotion—ironic, since this team hardly lacks emotion. Campana swivels around in his chair as he makes his points, while Waltz prefers to violently slam his fists down on the table—repeatedly. Both men frequently raise their voices and burst out in sustained laughter.

Johnny Limelight and Big Dog, as they love to call each other, note that they “have fun at what [they] do” and like to keep things “light and upbeat.”

“It’s not a career. It’s an adventure!” proclaims Waltz, just before the huge beach-side painting on the wall behind him comes crashing down. It sounds like a shotgun going off, causing everyone to flinch. Darlene Daniels, the office manager, pokes her head in the room to see what all the chaos is about. The two wonder whether this is an omen—perhaps it’s symbolic: the peaceful (boring?) paint-

ing came crashing down while the painting on the opposite wall, depicting the Charge of the Light Brigade (warfare and excitement), remains upright. Campana declares, though, that unlike the Light Brigade, “We’re coming home alive.”

What separates Campana Waltz is that it is a family-driven firm, with two men who believe in each other as opposed to a lot of other firms where “one dog leads the pack.” Limelight and Big Dog speculate about this several times, employing war analogies, movie quotes and Biblical imagery.

“Iron sharpens iron,” explains Waltz, referring to Proverbs. Then he says something about “time, talents and treasure,” another Biblical idea. Campana responds with “What?!”

Campana describes Waltz this way: “Tom Waltz is a meat and potato, determined, resourceful [man], and a pleasure to the boys.” The “boys” would be the five young men, mostly relatives, who are learning the ropes at the firm. He adds that “Waltz is a crowd-pleaser.”

Counters Waltz: “Skip Campana will think outside the box with no concern for people’s perception,” and then adds that if he’s meat and potatoes, then Campana is cottage cheese and peaches. Meat and Potatoes says that Campana also “loves the limelight.”



Skip Campana and Tom Waltz and their dogs Buddy and Sonny.

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When asked what sets them apart from their competitors, Campana starts scribbling on a Post-it note as Waltz grabs my notepad and begins writing. Campana writes “the best” and Waltz pens “best at what we do.”

Waltz is extremely proud of his son, Travis, who at age 18, just passed his real estate exam and is the firm’s “newest sales and leasing associate.” Acknowledging that real estate is “no 9 to 5 job,” both tycoons thank their spouses, Colleen and Janis, for being

“very outstanding” and “gracious throughout all the years.”

Both men enjoy riding jet skis with their younger relatives, skeet-shooting, and working with the Boy Scouts (they employ two Eagle Scouts). Waltz enjoys hunting and Campana loves watching war movies and reading war books.

Johnny Limelight and Big Dog also work for fun. Explains Campana, “When you get into a deal, it’s like riding a Sea-Doo.” ◀