

A

Unifying *Passion*



Greg & Carla Lord have made their love of horses into more than a vocation. For this dynamic couple, it's a way of life.

Looking around Greg Lord's office, his passion for horses is easy to see. Framed art and memorabilia of a lifetime in the industry line the walls: original watercolors by local equine artists, as well as autographed prints by Hall of Fame jockeys Pat Day and Bill Shoemaker. A photo of his wife — on horseback, of course — is positioned in a prominent spot on the corner of his desk.

It's a telling detail, because, for Greg, family is never far away. Literally.

His other half, Carla Lord, shares more than a name. She also shares his love of all things equestrian. Together, they've owned racehorses and show horses. They attend most of the horse shows in the area — HITS, Live Oak CDE, the horse sales at the Ocala Breeder Sales— combining their natural love of the discipline with some savvy marketing.

"In this business, it has to be a full-time job," Greg shares. "We eat, sleep, and drink our business. If we're driving to a horse show, we're also strategizing. But that's the good thing about our life — our pleasure and our work are combined — and we feel that's a big part of our success."

Greg and Carla should know. After spending almost a decade as two of the top producers at Glen Miller Realty, they decided to start their own business. The result is Homes to Ranches Realty, Inc., a firm that specializes in equestrian real estate.

"Ocala is the prettiest place in Florida," Greg offers. "Very rarely are we worried when someone comes in trying to decide between Ocala and someplace else. We very rarely lose a buyer."

Greg is confident that the company's success is mostly due to the fact that one of the Lords — either he or Carla — can speak the customer's language at any given time.

"We're together all the time," he says. "We have the same goals in life, the same

philosophies, but we're really different in our personalities. She's one in a million."

Carla quickly returns the compliment.

"He's very involved with horses," she says. "That's what I admired about him from the very beginning."

Although married for a decade, the Lords prefer to look ahead, always combining their business and personal pursuits with zealous fervor. It's not uncommon to find the pair cruising down the highway, headed to the next show in their fully outfitted truck, towing a horse trailer behind. They routinely travel to Texas, Oklahoma, and parts east of the Mississippi. For Carla, who still shows Quarterhorses, it's a necessity. For Greg, who showed horses as a youth and now competes in roping events, strictly for pleasure.

"We eat, sleep, and
drink our business."

— Greg Lord



"If I could," he says, "I'd stay on the road all the time."

But their business ventures keep the couple tethered to Ocala, an area that's been quite busy lately. The Village at Hidden Lakes, a new equestrian subdivision in the northwest that features generously sized individual lots, has been a tremendous success. With 95 percent of the 138 lots sold in the first two months, Phase II is already in the works.

"The demand was there," says Greg. "It's a very diverse group of buyers — from investors to people looking for their retirement farm."

Their other high-profile project is Avalon, a much-needed condominium development on north 441, near Ford of Ocala. Developed by Ashcroft Properties (who have worked with the Lords on other developments), Avalon should be ready by the middle of this year, another part of the current building boom in Marion County, something that

Greg and Carla don't see slowing anytime soon. In fact, with Homes to Ranches, they expect to stay ahead of this trend.

"The economists are saying that Florida real estate is going to increase for the next 10 years," Greg shares. "Barring any major catastrophes, they can't see any change in the patterns."

In addition to their company's growth, the Lords also actively pursue personal fulfillment. They routinely attend some of the area's biggest charity functions.

"We loved Symphony of Horses this year, especially because it benefited the Marion Therapeutic Riding Association and what they do," says Carla. "and we always go to the Diamond Gala. We like to give back to the community however we can."

That also includes taking a more active role from time to time. The Lords will head the 2006 Cattle Baron's Ball with Marge Felix, co-owner of Felix's Restaurant. The proceeds benefit the local chapter of the American Cancer Society.

"We did our first Cattle Baron's Ball in January," Marge recounts. "That's how I got to know Carla and Greg. They're both very strong in wanting to give back to the community."

"Ocala's been very good to us," Greg states emphatically. "Lord willing, if we're able to do the same things at 70, we'll be in the office and on the road with horses. That's our life." ❖



Greg & Carla Lord's
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