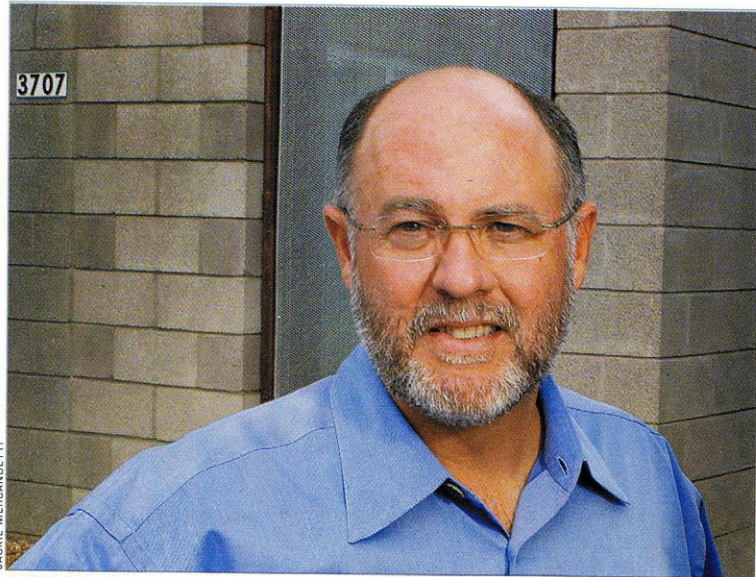


URBAN LOVING

Talking with Scott Jarson of Jarson & Jarson Real Estate



JACKIE MERGANDETTI

SCOTT JARSON

Scott Jarson and his wife Debbie have made a business “Defining Desert Living,” as promised in their agency’s tag line. In the early 90s, about five years into his career as a real-estate agent, Scott realized that he couldn’t sell another house that, in his words, “looks like a stucco box.” So the couple decided to focus on marketing homes that have some

architectural flair. Their success is proof of the power of the right idea at the right time in the right place, and they’re now the go-to agents for properties by renowned architects such as Will Bruder and Alfred Beadle.

Megapolitan Living: What kinds of trends are you seeing in the housing market?

Scott Jarson: Urban living. It’s a trend nationally, at least in what we’d consider non-traditional urban areas. In the Southwest it’s becoming a pretty hot little trend. We have these areas that are rich in land, but the farther out you go, the less stuff there is to do, so people are really looking at coming back into the core of the southwestern cities. We’re seeing real excitement

from a nice slice of the community that says, “We want something new and we don’t want to drive to get there.”

ML: Where is that occurring here?

SJ: There’s a variety of downtowns in the metro area, which is kind of fun: What would be considered Old Town Scotts- **continued on page 6**

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dale, loosely defined, from Camelback to McDowell, is a real hot and interesting area; the downtown corridor in Phoenix, which is bigger than just near [Bank One Ballpark] or the Roosevelt District. I think it really runs from south of Van Buren all the way up to Camelback. It's pretty much the same life experience, especially when the light rail comes in.

ML: So Old Town Scottsdale, downtown Phoenix, and . . .

SJ: . . . Tempe, by the [Tempe Town] lake, Mill Avenue, and within about a mile adjacent of ASU campus, in any direction.

ML: Do these three downtowns have different personalities?

SJ: They do. In Downtown Scottsdale you have the potential for a much richer traditional urban experience, because of the scale that exists here now, we've got a lot of mom-and-pop shops, restaurants, galleries — all within walking distance. Scottsdale is blessed with a very pedestrian infrastructure. You can walk here within three or four blocks and find major museums, great art galleries, terrific restaurants, movies. It's really terrific, because it's very condensed. Downtown Phoenix is the comer. It's starting to plug in the variety of

experiences that make it a very rich sort of pedestrian area. You're still going to need a car in downtown Phoenix, just not as much. And Tempe has a huge recreational side. It also has a location, which regardless of ASU — which is a plus — is very easy to get around Valleywide from. Literally, you're ten minutes from the airport.

ML: You've been involved in a number of live-work properties. Can you talk about the live-work concept?

SJ: Live-work is an old idea that's new again. Historically it goes way back, but most recently you'll see that it was pretty common in the 1920s and 30s, when people were forced to be more entrepreneurial. The Valley Art Theater [in downtown Tempe, once home to the Harkins family, which still runs the theater chain] is a great example. The only way you could afford to run a small business was to live there, too. This is a trend that's been realized in Chicago and New York but is coming of age here. Tempe has a zoning overlay that facilitates [live-work]. And there's a class of commercial zoning in downtown Scottsdale that allows for residences above businesses. The demand far exceeds the supply.

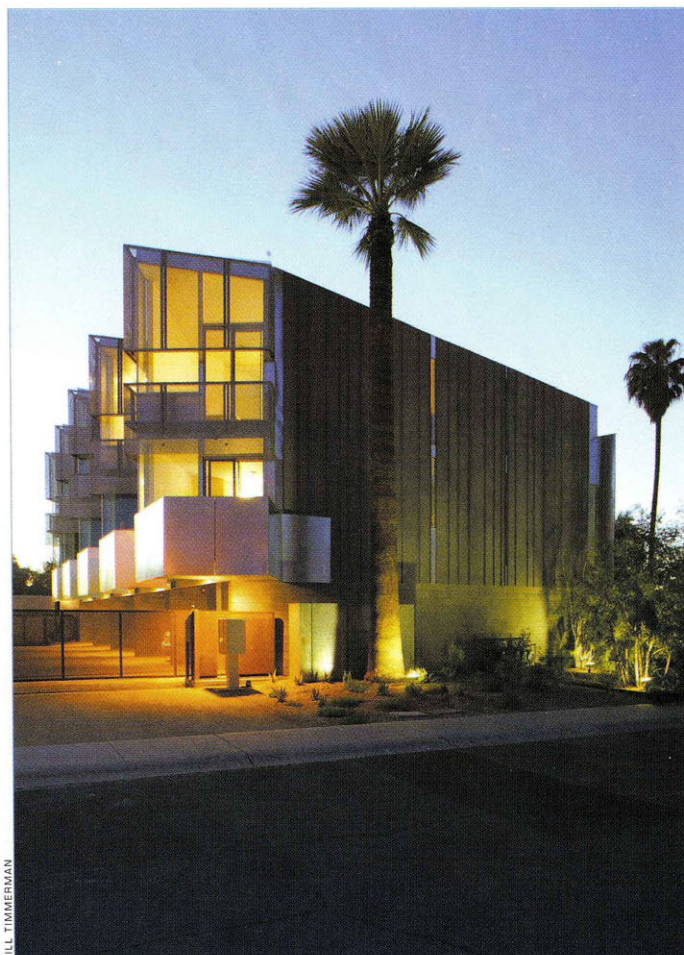
ML: Other trends you're seeing?

SJ: Infill in neglected areas — revitalization in existing suburbia. Geographically, we're seeing that in north central and east central Phoenix, and in the historic neighborhoods, of course. South Scottsdale is really picking up — talk about a neglected area! The city is doing a lot to promote revitalization down there. Another important trend is that square footage, or size, is on the table for discussion as never before. It used to be "bigger is better." But buyers today are more interested in sensitive architecture, green living, details — and then size. People are becoming more aware of

sustainability. The older areas become redefined because the houses are smaller. It's the same for infill — higher density is necessary. The basis of this kind of growth — the mix of this kind of projects — is that it helps build community in an area that continues to sprawl.

ML: Any final thoughts?

SJ: Interest rates have been great, and home ownership generally is a good thing. Find a professional realtor in this town. The best way to do that is through word of mouth. Don't be afraid to interview! Sellers interview, but buyers seldom do. ♦



Loloma 5, Scott and Debbie Jarson's work/live space in downtown Scottsdale.