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In Sheridan Rd, Publisher's Picks

He Walks His Talk

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What makes Shane Inman a professional you will want to use and a person you will want to know is as much about his drive and work ethic as it is about his discerning eye and impeccable designs. His is a classic rags-to-riches story with its own twists that included working at a big-box store and cleaning motel rooms for \$7 per hour in order to save the thousands of dollars to establish a highly professional corporate identity that reflects his own standards of excellence and style.

Adopted into a family of eight living in Lake City, Michigan, Inman's life could have easily taken a different direction, but he's always been determined to be someone of the same caliber as Oprah or Donald Trump. After earning his bachelor's of arts in interior design from Michigan State University, Inman moved to San Francisco and began his career in custom kitchen and bathroom design.

Inman's career path eventually led him away from the West Coast to the East Coast to

eventually act as director of design for a Fortune 500 company that dealt exclusively with luxury private residences. Inman later served as a goodwill ambassador to Africa as a micro-economic business advisor with the United States Peace Corps.

Today, for Inman, it is all about satisfying his roster of clients. "My personal individual style is not important. You're not hiring me for my style, you're hiring me to work with or identify your style. A great interior designer understands all styles—contemporary, traditional, transitional, Asian, eclectic, and dozens more." Just as important as it is to create and deliver his fabulous interiors, the most important part is to make the experience fun and stress-free for his clients. "I will not only design or redesign the interior and exterior of your home, I will decorate it for you, too. I want to do absolutely anything and everything that my clients may want." Inman is referring to his unparalleled ability to provide premier, over-the-top, and almost unheard-of customer service.

It's Inman's lack of ego, wealth of knowledge, and his chutzpah that sets him way apart from other designers. When starting out of the gate, he'd do any kind of work that would offer exposure to potential clients. "I did high-end event planning for Traverse Symphony Orchestra and designed events for acclaimed film director Michael Moore," Inman says. "I talked to anyone and everyone to open every door and every window."

His work ethic and innate networking skills landed Inman his first job designing for Hagerty Insurance Agency's corporate headquarters in Traverse City, Michigan. Working day and night, living with friends, and riding a bicycle to work, he was adamant about creating a "wow" factor

that would put him on the interior design map.

Inman went on to design numerous commercial projects such as medical practices, attorneys' offices, restaurants, as well as a full list of luxury private residences, condos, and penthouses for those who demand excellence. His most recent was Michael Jackson's former attorney's home on Lake Michigan. "I love being a part of something bigger than myself, making a difference in the world by inspiring and motivating lives by the interiors that I design," he says.

In addition to his five-star customer service and work ethic, Inman's business acumen and constant quest for knowledge differentiate him from his competitors. "You have to be right brained and left brained in order to run a successful business that is respected as such and not looked at like a hobby, or like an interior decorator." He attributes this business savvy skill set to the fact that he grew up with six sisters, which allows him the ability to work well with women, and the fact that his father was a restaurateur, which now allows him the ability to relate to other business men.

Inman is certified as an interior designer by the National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ), is certified as a kitchen designer by the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA), and holds the highest-ranking professional memberships with the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) and the International Interior Design Association (IIDA).

"I understand and educate my clients on return on investment and resale value in order to encompass those considerations into my professional suggestions while designing a home. A qualified designer informs you what's most important," he explains. "I understand structure, mill working, building materials, and how everything comes together—not just fabrics and wall coverings. I start with the bones first and work from there." So, if there is water damage, he is going to make sure that is investigated before proceeding with the more aesthetically pleasing design work.

A short six years after his first project in Traverse City, Michigan, Inman has made a name for himself today. He blogs as "The Interior Design Savant" for the Chicago Tribune at chicagonow.com, and his design portfolio is featured on the world-renowned website hgvtv.com.

With an office in the Gold Coast and Chicago clients in Glenview, Park Ridge, and Uptown, Inman is poised to make his mark on the North Shore. I want to drive Sheridan Road every day," says Inman, "and see all the houses I've transformed."

The fact that Inman offers potential clients a complimentary consultation and will never let anyone hire him the first day they meet with him speaks volumes about his work ethic and commitment. "I take all the money off the table so no one feels like they owe me anything. And I make them sleep on it," he says.

For more information, visit the inmancompany.com, or contact Shane Inman directly at 231-392-5548.

—Elaine Doremus

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