

Realtor steers to success by selling lakefront property

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STAFF PHOTO BY TED FITZGERALD

CLEAR SAILING: Realtor Scott Freerksen, known as 'The Lake Guy,' is the owner of Lakefront Living Realty in Mansfield, where he specializes in selling lakefront properties.

When the location scouts for the movie “Shutter Island” needed to find an isolated lake setting, they didn’t have to look far. They just called “The Lake Guy,” aka Realtor Scott Freerksen.

They told him they wanted a place with shallow water and no modern houses in the background. Armed with an intimate knowledge of the region’s lakes, Freerksen quickly steered them toward Borderland State Park.

The call was a validation that Freerksen had accomplished at least some of what he set out to do.

Early on in his real estate career, Freerksen decided to specialize in selling direct lakefront property. In order to do that well, he also decided to become one of the region’s foremost experts on those properties.

When he started in 2003, he thought the lakes would be just a part of his business, but he soon realized that it could be his entire focus.

“When you first start a niche, you have to get comfortable with the fact that you are cutting out 99 percent of the market,” he said. “But if that 1 percent of

the market is profitable, and you can establish dominance, it can certainly be rewarding.”

There are 15,000 properties coded as lakefront in the Multiple Listing Service, but of those, just 2,000 can be considered direct lakefront. It’s a tiny market about which Freerksen is passionate.

“There really is nothing like lake living,” said Freerksen, who both lives and works near the water. “You wake up every morning to a new scene. The wildlife changes and the seasons change differently than anywhere else.”

This is the sort of career Freerksen was hoping for when he somewhat abruptly walked away from 17 years in the corporate world. He left a management job to rehab houses. After working on a few, he decided to get a real estate license and then came up with the lakefront concept.

He knew he would have to take an unusual approach given the limitations of the market. He spent hours of intensive research on the state’s 700 lakes so that he could create a comprehensive, searchable public database at masslakes.com.

Within two years, he was so busy that he had to take on another agent. He’s now up to four and works with a handful of lakefront specialists from other companies.

Freerksen continues to update the database with constantly changing information about lakes. He and his team also provide workshops to help buyers avoid classic mistakes like finding out after the sale that someone else has control over draining the lake.

The challenge with a niche business is figuring out how to stay focused and still grow. Freerksen is doing this by expanding his geographical reach. He has already moved into New Hampshire and Rhode Island and now has plans for Connecticut. After that, he’ll head into Maine and then Vermont.

All of this, of course, means a lot more research, which is fine with Freerksen.

“They key is whatever your niche is, you have to be passionate about it because there is a lot of information to learn,” he said. “And if you’re passionate, you won’t mind.”

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