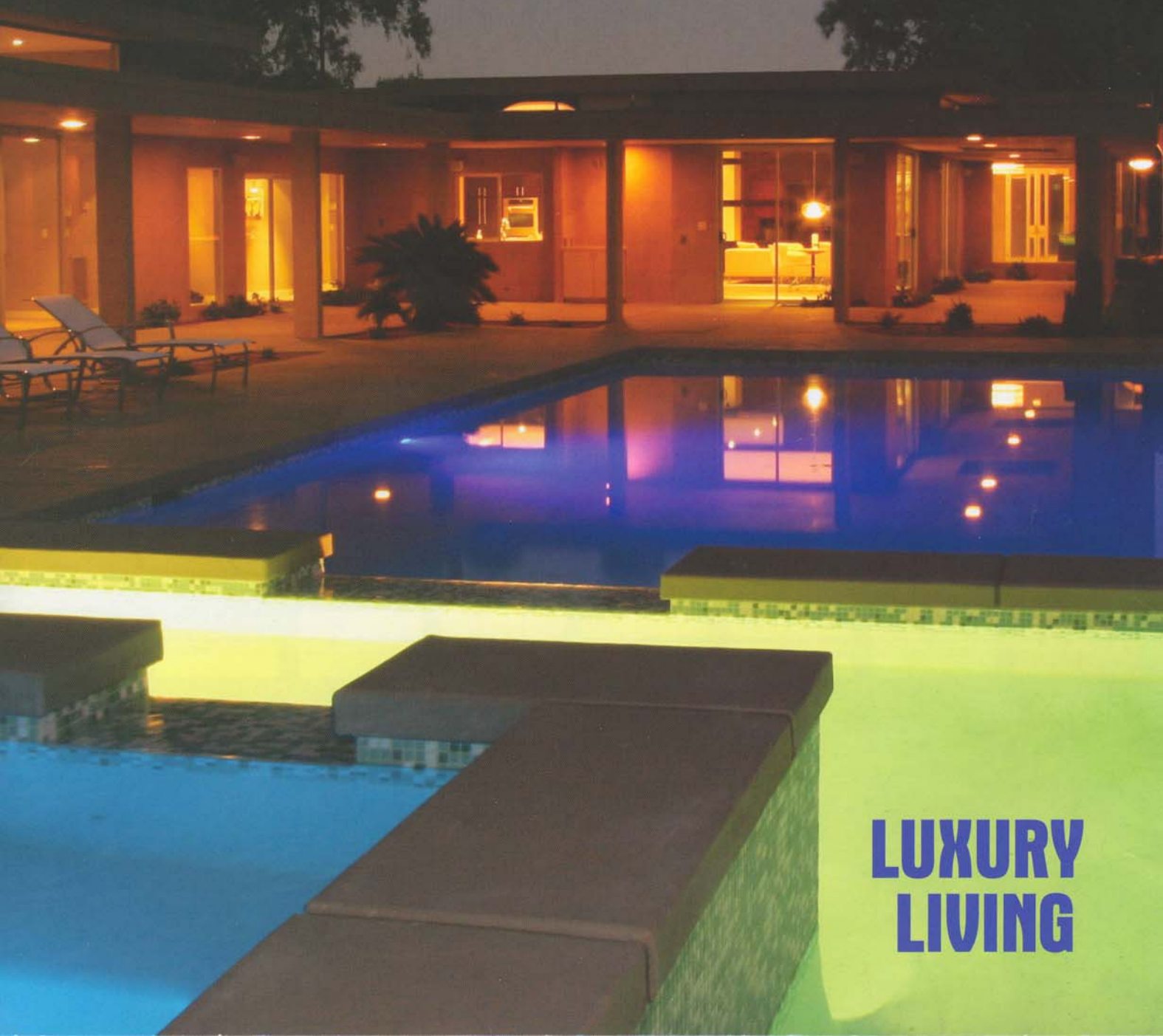
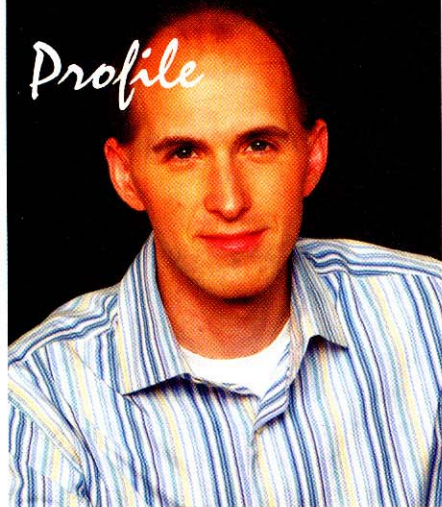


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AUGUST 2007



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Celebrating a decade in real estate

Each issue, MCRE runs Agent Profile, a look at a successful real estate agent. This time, we profile Ed Jelinek, an agent with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage's Halsted Street in Chicago.

By Dan Rafter, *Managing Editor*

MCRE: How long have you worked in the real estate industry?

Ed Jelinek: This is my 10th year. I had worked in a freelance industry before coming to real estate. I liked working with different clients and being able to control my hours and my business in my own way. Real estate was a great progression.

MCRE: What do you enjoy most about selling residential real estate?

Jelinek: The entire business has surprised me. I've enjoyed the business overall much, much more than I had anticipated. I have formed closer friendships with clients than I had ever anticipated I would. That's probably the best part of the business. I get to know my clients much more closely than I would have thought. I went into it thinking I was just going to be helping people purchase and sell their homes. But it's much more of an emotional connection. It's a personal part of their lives. It's much more of a connection than I ever thought it would be.

MCRE: What is the biggest challenge of working in the real estate business?

Jelinek: The hours, definitely the hours. The hours are much more intensive than I had anticipated they would be. You are truly on all the time. It is very difficult to disconnect and be with family and do other things. You are almost always on. Every hour of the day is actually filled. It's not that you're doing something here and then going shopping and then doing something else. Every hour of the day is filled.

MCRE: How do you manage to fit in a personal life with all this work?

Jelinek: I take Sundays off. Sundays are always my slowest day of the week.

I stay committed to taking Sundays off and spending that time with my family. Saturday evening through Sunday we often go out to our house in Michigan and get away. I stay focused on family on those days.

MCRE: You've worked this business for 10 years. What significant changes have you noticed?

Jelinek: There is a lot stronger focus on technology. I think the level of service and the expectations of service have risen quite a bit. I think it's because of what happened starting 10 years ago, when we had this huge surge of people coming into the industry with the boom that was going on. The amount of choices in agents out there is huge. To stay competitive, that level of services that you are offering has definitely had to rise over the years. The huge focus on technology that has come into play is also much stronger now.

MCRE: You mentioned the boom of 10 years ago. How are you handling the other side of that boom, the slowdown that the residential industry is currently struggling through?

Jelinek: I had set my business up at the start knowing that I was coming in at a good time, but knowing that the good times were not going to last forever. I stayed focused on the fact that I would always need to strive to be as much ahead of the game as possible with my clients. I started doing that at the start of the boom time. My goal was to be established before the boom stopped. I'm very focused now on providing a high level of customer service and customer focus. I was focused on that even at the beginning, at a time when you didn't necessarily have to be to be successful. It's paid off now, though.

MCRE: With the slowdown, have you seen many real estate agents drop out of the business?

Jelinek: A couple of years ago, especially, we saw the big ebb and flow of agents coming into the industry and going

out. A lot of people who had been laid off from the tech market thought they'd be able to come into the real estate business and make a quick, easy living. They fell out of the business pretty quickly. It's a common misperception that you can come into the business very easily and make a lot of money by doing almost nothing. The people who come into it from that perspective are the people who usually drop back out very shortly after.

MCRE: What are your goals for the next 10 years of your real estate career?

Jelinek: I hope to continue to have the same focus on the clients as the business grows. It does get harder to provide that same level of service as the business grows. My goal is to continue to grow with my group support staff working with me to make sure those services remain just as strong. I'm also hoping to completely refocus my marketing in new ways. I've been relying on similar marketing for several years. It's time to change that.