



ROLLING WITH THE STONES

It's a brand new chapter for husband-and-wife real estate team Steve and Lisa Stone who are heading Ray White's brand spanning new Parnell office. *Verve* caught up with the excited couple in their new premises with the scent of fresh paint and newly un-bubble-wrapped furniture still hanging in the air.

"The majority of Auckland real estate agents — the most successful ones anyway — tend to work in teams," says Steve. "Clients generally expect that there will be more than one person working to sell their house, and with us being married, that works particularly well. Our different approaches are grounded by the same values. One of the things that most appealed about Ray White was the family values."

Now into their sixth year, the Stones are relatively new to the industry, but have already established quite the reputation. One so strong, in fact, that they were invited to lead this Parnell hub. "Ray White is still a family owned company, and one that is always looking at ways to improve," adds Lisa. "That fits with what Steve and I try to do. It's a simple thing, but not not an easy one. There are so many different personalities and situations you must manage to ensure that everyone is satisfied."

Having worked for the likes of IBM and Telecom in their previous professional lives, the couple are used to dealing with major projects.

When it comes to real estate, integrity and tenacity, they both say, are both key.

"The real estate industry hasn't always had a great name, but those days of cowboy agents are long gone," Steve says.

"The process to get the license has become much more stringent," says Lisa. "You have to sit 11 papers, whereas before it was just something you did in an afternoon. It's rather complicated."

The couple use virtual tours to showcase properties internationally, and they embrace social media, too. Each week they hold an online Q&A offering free advice to would-be buyers and sellers. A

novel idea is their sign-written Mini which they take a photo of in a certain spot, post online, then ask people to guess the location before a listing comes up. "It's a great way of promoting our business and the property," says Steve. "We've reached upwards of 25,000 people by doing this."

The Stones have lived in Parnell for the past four years and are thrilled at the opportunity to now also set up shop there.

"We love the community here," Lisa says. "One of the best parts of the job is meeting a range of amazing people and helping them move to the next stage of their lives, which can be a very stressful time. Knowing that we ease that is extremely rewarding."

"We see our role in terms of helping people, not in terms of 'the sale'," says Steve. "If your heart's not in the right place, then you'll never do a job to its full potential. It's important to have good chemistry with the clients."

And have the pair found a way of not taking their work home with them?

"No!" they both chuckle in unison.

"Even if we're out to dinner we'll be making notes about how to improve the business," says Steve.

"But when you enjoy it as much as we do," says Lisa, "it's not like work anyway."

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