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Matt Dunigan – from legendary quarterback to barbecue jock

One of the celebrities I had the pleasure of golfing with at the Dan Cooper Celebrity Invitational Golf Tournament at Glen Abbey in June was Matt Dunigan. What a fascinating and very down-to-earth person. Sports fans recognize his name as one of Canadian Football League's great quarterbacks and currently a panellist on TSN football. But did you know he's quite the expert around the barbecue and host of Road Grill on the Food Network?



As Matt tells it, barbecuing comes natural to someone who grew up in Texas and attended college in Louisiana. Being interviewed by a national newspaper not too long ago, Matt explained: "My dad always barbecued back in Ohio where I was born. He always had a beer in his hand and I was always happy to take a sip. In Grade 7 we moved to Texas, the land of low-and-slow barbecue, which is an all-day affair. In Louisiana, where I went to college, they were into a whole different thing. There they weren't barbecuing steaks, they were barbecuing alligator."

How he got the gig as host of Road Grill is a whole other story. Apparently, when TV producer Chris Knight began a nation-wide search for a host to this guy-centric cooking show, he burned through more than 1,000 back yard barbecue jocks before Matt walked into auditions. "My wife heard an ad on the radio inviting people to try out for this barbecue TV show, and she thought I'd be good at it. After she brought it up for the third day in a row, and after quite a few cocktails, I said, 'OK, get the video camera.' We made a tape of me barbecuing right there in the back yard, sent it to Knight Enterprises, and I got the gig. It was just meant to happen, I guess. It's crazy, but it also really melts my butter, so to speak."

After 13 seasons in the CFL, maintaining peak performance in such a punishing sport, one would think a cooking show would be a piece of cake. But it is quite intimidating, Matt says, explaining that his show is in the middle of a string of cooking

shows with all-star chefs, such as Mark McEwen, Jean Christophe Novelli and Jeff Corwin to name a few. "It's a bit intimidating. There's show after show with all these great chefs, and then there's me. But I never pretend to be a chef, and Road Grill isn't about that. We're all about fun. Our message is, 'Hey, if I can do this, you can do this too.' It's really not more complicated than that." You can catch Matt's show Friday's at 10:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. and Saturday's at 4 a.m. and 9 a.m.

With such a busy schedule, I was thrilled that Matt made the time to participate in the June golf tournament which had a target of \$60,000 for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Halton. But then Matt is that kind of person – charitable and ready to give back to the community. He's my kind of person and I'm proud to now call him a friend.

Dan Cooper is an award winning Broker with Royal LePage Real Estate Services Ltd., Brokerage – the Number 1 Royal LePage Team for Canada in 2009. He can be reached at 905.338.3737, direct line at 905.849.3303 or through his innovative and interactive website at DanCooper.com. Be sure to catch the Dan Cooper Real Estate Series on DailyWebTV.com. For his free booklet *How To Sell Your House For Top Dollar – Fast!* or his Guide to Oakville Real Estate, please call the Dan Cooper Team.

Blame the decline in home sales on the harmonized sales tax

As predicted, the pace of home sales slowed in July as consumers adjusted to the new harmonized sales tax. Coupled with the fact that interest rates were rising, the rush to buy homes prior to the HST coming into effect on July 1 resulted in an overheated market in May and June. But this current slowdown in the market is expected to be short lived.

Earlier this month Jeff Mahannah, President of the Oakville, Milton and District Real Estate Board, said, "Sales transactions are down for July, but overall for the year-to-date we are on par or are observing a slight increase in transactions when compared to 2009. What I anticipate, once the public has time to adjust to the HST and realize that interest rates are still affordable, is an increase in activity in sales transactions in September." This is what he is talking about. Last month residential sales for Oakville were down by 48 percent compared to July 2009 and the average sale price - \$505,999 - decreased by 0.2 percent. However, year-to-date sales were still up by 5 percent and the average sale price was up by 13 percent.

In Burlington, the story is quite similar. "July was certainly a quiet month for sales," said Joe Ferrante, President of the Realtors Association of Hamilton-Burlington, "but it was not at all unexpected. Despite the slower sales in July, our year-to-date sales are still up 10.7 per cent over this time last year." The average price of freehold residential properties sold in Hamilton-Burlington in July was \$329,317, an increase of 5.5 per cent over July last year. In the condominium market the average price of condominiums in July was \$237,304, an increase of 1.6 per cent over July 2009. "We have a good inventory of listings," Ferrante explains, "which makes Hamilton, Burlington and our outlying areas such a great place to buy real estate right now."

Whether it is a slow market or an overheated market, each brings particular challenges of their own and the key to making the best deal possible is to work with a broker who has a proven track record and is a consistent top performer – someone who you are confident will be able to sell your home quickly and for top dollar. Innovative marketing and investment, knowledge about the marketplace, commitment and exemplary service differentiate the Dan Cooper Real Estate Team. The result is that we are achieving accomplishments that illustrate the Dan Cooper difference. We are the Number 1 team in Canada for Royal LePage, which is a testament to our ability to sell homes fast in the Oakville and Burlington areas. In fact, we have been the Number 1 team for seven of the past ten years. We were also named Best Real Estate Agent and Best Real Estate Team in North Oakville Today's annual Readers' Choice Awards. The Readers' Choice Awards are as grassroots as you can get, and being named Number 1 for both agent and team are proof that we are having a significant impact right here in our own community.

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