



Matt & Lorraine Parker

Always Going For It

By Jenna Caputo | Photos by Mia Ertas from ME Photography and Contributed by the Parker Family

“What’s the worst that can happen?”

That’s the question that Matt & Lorraine Parker often ask themselves when making life decisions.

“We are not afraid to step out of our comfort zone when it comes to life,” says Matt. “Individually and together, we each have always had a strong desire to control our own destiny and not settle for complacency. We make things happen.”

“Making things happen” is something they’ve been doing for quite a while.

Lorraine is originally from Queens, NY, and spent weekends and summers in the Poconos at her family’s vacation home. She logged countless hours outside with her siblings, catching frogs and snakes, pretending to “survive” in the woods, riding bikes—all the fun of the “old-school” days. Even though she grew up so close to the city, Lorraine considered herself a country girl at heart and was always happiest being outside skiing, hiking, and enjoying nature.

Matt grew up in Waterford, NY. Skiing, hiking, and traveling were a big part of his upbringing as well. Besides visiting the family camp in Lake George every year, Matt also hiked the Grand Canyon, climbed Mt. Rainier in Washington State, and backpacked solo for two months throughout eastern Europe and Turkey, living in tents, treehouses, and boats.

Matt graduated SUNY Buffalo with Economics and Financial Accounting degrees. Serving eight years in the Army Reserves, he moved up through the ranks to Sergeant before starting work in the wholesale apparel business in New York City at Calvin Klein. He worked at several other top name-brand companies like Ralph Lauren and Filaf, serving as Vice President of Sales to retail stores and chains across the US and overseas. On an impromptu business trip, he discovered Bar Harbor, Maine and fell in love with the town and the beauty of Acadia National Park. He soon traded the island of Manhattan for this small island in Maine, where he lived for seven years, embarking on a new venture and purchasing the iconic Route 66 restaurant.



duties. While he enjoyed his time in Maine and his restaurants were successful, he knew he would eventually head back to New York for the energy and excitement that the city offers. Seven years later he sold the businesses and returned to the hustle of the apparel industry.

Meanwhile, Lorraine was living in Manhattan and had an established real estate career. She met Matt on Match.com shortly after Matt moved back to the city. On one of their first dates, he cooked Lorraine an exquisite four-course meal from his former restaurant menu with an entrée of halibut topped with a citrus beurre blanc and mango over jasmine rice. Lorraine was hooked! “He was living in NJ and I was living in NYC when we met, so I crossed state lines for him, and on our dinner date, when I asked him what the appetizer was, he said, ‘Sea scallops and pancetta with a balsamic reduction over wilted greens.’ I had never dated anyone so passionate about food, and I was instantly in love!” remembers Lorraine. Matt still loves to cook, and together, they enjoy cooking for and hosting friends and family.

Fast forward to late 2019, Matt and Lorraine were living in New Jersey with their two children and two demanding and

One restaurant soon became five. Remembering how he transitioned to this new industry, Matt says, “While I didn’t have restaurant experience, I am a bit of a foodie, and the business model is not much different than that of the apparel industry. I also understood that the keys to success, as in any business, are to offer quality product and great customer service, and I was already experienced in that.” He dove headfirst into an industry he had no experience in, and eagerly performed every role of the business including dishwashing, cooking, and general restaurant management



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stressful careers. They realized that they needed to re-evaluate their priorities and make a change. “We were tired of the two-plus hour round trip commute, stress, and being a ‘slave to the city,’” says Lorraine. “We wanted a higher quality of life for us and our kids—a quieter lifestyle without the congestion of the tri-state area. We were ready for something new.” It was at this point that Monster Tree Service found Matt through his LinkedIn profile via a business ownership consulting company. Seeing Matt’s extensive experience in sales, management, and entrepreneurial business acumen, they knew he would be a great fit as a franchise owner. After considering multiple franchise opportunities and a mutually intense vetting process, Matt ultimately decided that Monster Tree Service would be the best fit. It would allow him to be out in the field meeting people, getting involved in the community, providing an essential service, and even better, never having to wear a suit and tie for work again! The opportunities available were in both North Carolina and the Capital Region. Since Matt grew up in this area and had family and friends nearby, it made sense, and with top-rated schools, it was a no-brainer!

They settled in Clifton Park, and once again, Matt jumped into research and immersed himself in the industry, educating himself and attending conferences and seminars to become an expert in the field before launching this business that offers much-needed tree and plant care services to both residential and commercial customers. Monster Tree Service prides itself on the distinctive professionalism of their experienced crew and top-of-the-line equipment to provide high-quality services that benefit both customers and the environment while



prioritizing the safety of property and employees.

The move has proved to be a fantastic fit. Lorraine still keeps up with her 20-year real estate career and has a support team based in NYC who acts as her “feet on the ground” while she continues to handle the negotiations, marketing, and communications from a distance, occasionally traveling to the city when needed. Matt has thrived meeting and getting to know his customers, enjoying the personal aspect of building relationships. He is fascinated by the science behind the tree care industry and enjoys working alongside the team, mentoring and being able to build a strong and positive team culture. Work/life balance is an important component of their company’s philosophy, and he models that every step of the way. “Both of our careers require us to meet and work with many different types of people. It is rewarding and fulfilling to do a great job for our customers and for them to be really happy with the results. We both always strive to be the best we can, and the result of that is priceless,” says Lorraine.

The Parkers urge us to remember that although trees are beautiful, they can also be dangerous. It’s important to inspect our trees annually and take note of any dead or dying limbs. Not all trees need to be removed. If in doubt, give Monster Tree Service a call for a free consultation on whether the tree can be saved or requires removal.



Lorraine and Matt have two kids—Chase (11) and Cassidy (7) as well as their rescue cats, Tiga and Chip. Cassidy is the family athlete, loving soccer, swimming, skiing, and martial arts. She is driven and competitive, even at board games. Chase (whose first word coincidentally was “tree”) enjoys individual sports like Jiu Jitsu and especially skiing. He is also very creative and has talent for art. Both kids are animal lovers who are sensitive, empathetic, imaginative, and spirited, with relentless persistence that their parents hope will serve them well someday!

The Parker family has also spent the last couple of years learning about and advocating for their son’s diagnosis of Tourette Syndrome, which is a nervous system disorder involving repetitive movements or unwanted sounds/tics. People diagnosed with this disorder are not able to control their tics and there is no cure. The only treatment is to manage the symptoms through medication and/or behavior therapy. “It was a hard time for us—trying to understand him and cope with his idiosyncrasies. He has done VERY well since we moved to Clifton Park,” says Lorraine. “It is a very misunderstood neurological condition, and we are very open about talking about it and educating those around us. He is a really smart, sensitive, creative, and loving kid and we are so proud of how well he has adjusted to our life here in Clifton Park, which is the biggest testament to the quality of this town—a great community, neighborhood, and school system!”

Lorraine advises those that have a classmate with Tourette’s to remember that even though the tics may seem intentional,

they are not something the person can control. She says the best way to help a friend with these tics is to just ignore them. “When you give attention to the tics, it makes them much worse. Having a friend with Tourette’s does require some patience and understanding, but Chase is a true, loyal friend with the biggest heart. And that is a great reward! I think that children with disadvantages or disabilities have an exceptional gift of tolerance and acceptance of others because they understand what it is like on the other side.”

Besides helping to keep our trees healthy, the Parkers like to be involved in the community and give back whenever they can. Matt coached Cassidy’s soccer team last year and is looking forward to getting back to coaching again. They’ve also been involved in charity events and contributions for the Arthritis Foundation, children’s cancer, and the Tourette Association of America. In addition, they’ve volunteered as a family for the Capital City Rescue Mission, making sandwiches and putting together lunch bags. The kids really enjoyed their time decorating the bags and writing uplifting messages on them. “We were given a tour of the facility when we dropped the lunches off, and it was a great experience and reality check for the kids, helping members of the community who might not be as fortunate as them,” says Lorraine. “Giving back and being a good neighbor and part of the community is very important to us and something we look forward to in the future as we become more and more settled here. We both grew up being involved and participating in philanthropic causes. We want our kids to have the same compassion and desire to help others.”

When they’re not working, Lorraine and Matt still enjoy skiing, hiking, traveling, and hitting the beach whenever possible. Just like in Matt’s childhood, they go up to Lake George every year in addition to taking other trips, like this year’s vacation to Old Orchard Beach in Maine. In addition to Matt’s lifechanging experience backpacking through Europe, Lorraine managed to check off some bucket list trips of her own, traveling with her father to Macchu Picchu, the Ecuadorian jungle, and the Galapagos Islands. “Swimming and playing with wild sea lions in the most crystal-clear water was one of the most incredible experiences of my life!” she remembers. They’re looking forward to traveling again in the future, but for now, they are enjoying the upstate life and everything the Capital District has to offer, including rollerskating at Guptil’s and taking advantage of all the bike trails and hiking opportunities.

As for the future, the Parkers look forward to growing their business and relationships within the community. When reflecting back, their only regret was not making this change sooner. As the Parkers continue to pursue their dreams and the things in life that make them happy, they encourage us all to remember to never be afraid to pursue our heart’s desires. “It is never too late to make a change in your life, whatever it may be,” they say. “If you want it, go for it, and make it happen!”

For more information about Monster Tree Service, visit their website at www.monstertreeservice.com/albany.