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Niskayuna NEIGHBORS



Heidi Ratter

STAYING TRUE TO HERSELF

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STAYING TRUE TO HERSELF

BY JENNA CAPUTO

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Heidi Rotter is an inspirational woman, proving again and again what passion, determination, and a will to succeed can do.

A Capital Region girl, Heidi grew up in Rotterdam as part of a close-knit family. A “daddy’s girl” from the beginning, Heidi always played outside, tinkering with tools, mowing the lawn, stacking wood, and finding ways to help her father. She came of age in a neighborhood where friends were around every corner. A pile of bikes usually adorned the front lawn as the group of neighborhood kids enjoyed idyllic summer days playing wiffle ball, night hide-and-seek, movie nights, and of course, swimming all summer long. At home, Heidi couldn’t wait for her mom’s yummy dinners and visits from family, including time with her grandparents hearing their stories about “back in the day.”

In school, Heidi played softball and soccer, earning the nickname of the Berlin Wall when on the field. She struggled a bit with her grades and her self-esteem. When she became pregnant her senior year, she decided to do it all on her own, despite her loving and supportive family that wanted to help. She moved into her own apartment with her boyfriend and took a full-time job at Golub while still finishing school. She delivered her son, Niklaus, just one month after graduation. The proudest moment of her life quickly turned dark as her relationship with her boyfriend turned to one of abuse. After three months of brutal beatings, she finally was able to go back home to her family and started a new life with a foundation of strength and determination. First, she fought for sole custody of her son. She knew she needed to protect him, and it didn’t matter how much it cost or how much time it took, she wouldn’t stop fighting. Finally, she won her case and all visitations had been terminated. Secure that her son was now safe, Heidi could focus on working and moving their lives forward.

Two years later, she met a man who helped her with the resulting self-esteem issues and welcomed her and Nik with open arms. They married, and baby Gabriella joined their family. Laughter came back into Heidi’s life, and she made it to college to study criminal justice in hopes of becoming a state trooper. But she soon realized that wasn’t the right job for her, so she took other jobs as a floral designer and working in a doctor’s office before discovering what she was meant to do all along—real estate.



After 15 years together, Heidi realized her marriage was over and they went their separate ways. She found herself in another insecure time of her life, but her friends saw an opportunity. “I had a ball of fire in my belly, always wanting to be further ahead than I was,” she says. “But I never knew how to get there. I had a couple of different friends suggest becoming a realtor. Eventually, I decided to give it a go.” It was a daunting task—not only with the cost and class schedule on top of a full-time job and two kids—it also meant going back to a school environment, including the need to pass two mega tests. School had always been difficult for her, but Heidi was determined. She buckled down and didn’t give up, finally earning her real estate license in 2009, then receiving her broker license in 2018. She began by working for a company that focused on flipping houses. She enjoyed the work, and quickly mastered

the process, soon becoming their acquisitions manager, averaging 70 deals a year and training the new agents, all while continuing to develop her own craft and her goals for herself. “I learned a lot about myself and work ethic over those six years,” she says. “I learned that I wanted my own voice. I wanted more in my real estate career. I wanted my own brand. I wanted my neighbors to know I sold real estate. I was hidden for so many years behind the brand I worked for.”

Her boss at the time told her she would never make it, but Heidi’s internal fire came back full force, ready to prove everyone wrong. Despite not having a single client on her list to start, she opened Brass Tacs Real Estate Company, growing from zero clients to selling nearly \$15 million only four years later.

The Brass Tacs name holds a special meaning for her. “It’s a strong name,” she

explains. “It’s not about my personal name. It’s about a group who has strong values and tactical negotiation skills with a side of sweetness. You’ll understand the sweetness portion when you meet us!” Brass Tacs puts the focus on the people—both their clients and those who work there. “I lead with my head and follow my heart,” says Heidi. “Enthusiasm, poise, honesty, and determination—these are my core values that represent my work ethics. And this is what’s important to me when finding like-minded realtors to come work for Brass Tacs. Do you have the same mindset and goals? Is your heart similar to mine? That’s how I know our clients will be taken care of.”

This year has been extra exciting as Brass Tacs moved into a new office space on Duanesburg Road in Schenectady. Heidi is excited to expand in more ways than one. “On top of my day-to-day business of working with my amazing clients that I have established, I’m working now on building an exceptional workspace and mentorship for women who are looking to start something new and have someone near and dear that can help them break into a new career. One that will enable them to have a flexible schedule, earn income, but on top of that, a feeling of accomplishing ‘something else.’”

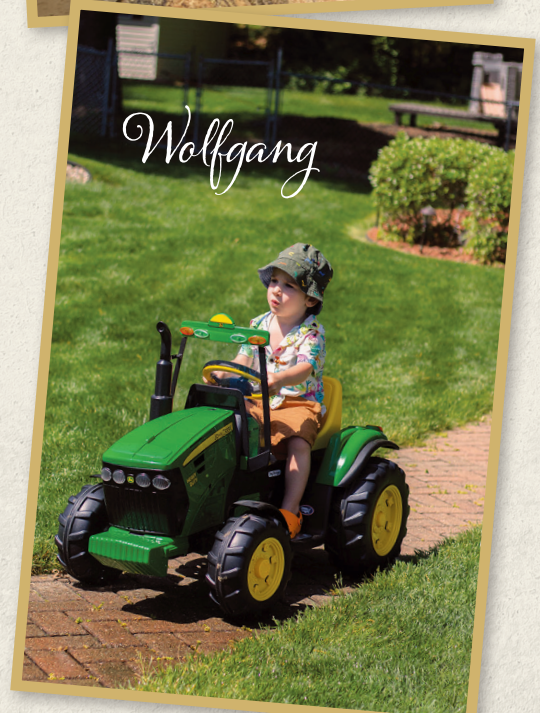
Heidi earned her instructor training through the New York State Association of Realtors, is a member of the National Association of Realtors, and has served as a secretary on the Women’s Council of Realtors for two years. She won the Real Estate Brokerage Best of the Best from the Daily Gazette in 2021 and achieved second place in 2022 as well as the 2022 Top 100 Real Producers, the cover story for Albany Top Producer magazine in 2018, and has been a Capital Region Top Producer ten years in a row. Her favorite clients are senior citizens. “The bond I share with them is amazing. I take all the time in the world getting to know them, playing cards, drinking tea, bringing them food. I didn’t get enough time with my grandparents, and this is one way for me to fill that void. I wholeheartedly love them!” She’s also very grateful for all our service people and

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offers discounts for selling/buying their homes as a thank you. In addition to her real estate work, Heidi collects gently used prom dresses for high school girls in need. “It can be super expensive to attend prom and some homes can’t afford to go,” she says. “I collected dresses that would help take some of the stress away.”

In 2018, Heidi pulled up to a renovation project—like she had many times before—but this time, things were different. “It always makes me think of a music video in the ‘80s in slow motion—something like Def Leppard’s ‘Pour Some Sugar on Me,’” she says. “Picture a hot, summer day in June. I’m cruising in my black Jeep, top’s off, hair blowing, music’s playing. I pull up to a house I was helping an investor manage. Just imagine me skipping along again to some tune in my head I was just singing to, and as I walk through the door, I see Jay running a floor machine, looking all buff, wearing a bandana. He catches a glimpse of me out of the corner of his eye, turns off his floor machine and comes strolling over to greet me. It was honestly love at first sight. Two weeks later, we decided to go on a date where, of course, we went in for a little smooch, and the sky decided to let loose and pour down on us. We have been inseparable since.” Two years later, they welcomed their son, Wolfgang, to the family and married on the beach in August 2022.

Jason is a master floor refinisher. He started his company, Rotter’s Floor Sanding, in 2005. “He’s super talented, patient, and detail-oriented,” says Heidi. “He takes so much pride in what he does and desires to bring out the best in any floor he works on. A master of his craft!” Jason is also a first degree blackbelt in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and teaches other students his knowledge. Nik (21) is also



now a member of the Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Team Jucao in Scotia Glenville. He enjoys photography, reading, and drawing, and works alongside his stepdad refinishing floors. He can also wiggle his ears like Alfalfa. Gabriella (12) is in seventh grade, likes to be a bit dramatic, is an amazing artist, enjoys chatting with her friends, and loves to read. "My daughter is such a sweet, spunky old soul. Our nightly catch-up is one of my favorite times of the night," says Heidi. Wolfgang (3) attends daycare and loves to get into everything. His major passion is Play-Doh, but he's often found riding his tractor and pretending to work on it with his tools and workbench. Their family also includes their puppy, Ruthie, their cat, Gracie, and their bearded dragon, Bruce.

Heidi loves to watch *The Golden Girls* and *The Sopranos* and has a passion for decorating, giving to others, attending Reiki sessions, and meditating. She used to collect mini tractor trailers and airplanes and had a huge crush on Elvis and Sylvester Stallone. When not working, Heidi's favorite activities involve spending time with her family, playing with the kids, baking cookies or homemade pizza, game nights playing Uno and Trouble, enjoying their wooded backyard, swimming, and hosting family Sunday dinners. Family is everything to her. "My parents are my greatest teachers of my life," she says. "I wouldn't be where I am today without their love and support." Her older brother, Hans, is married with three boys and works as a supervisor at the Niskayuna Post Office. Jay has two sisters and a brother who also come over with their dad for weekend barbeques or Sunday dinners with Jay's famous meatballs. And Jay is her rock and hero in life. "I feel completely and utterly blessed to have my husband. He's my best friend. The one I can always talk to to share my thoughts, laugh about the dumb ideas and good ones. He knows my mind is all over the place and keeps me centered. Every day feels like a Saturday morning. We wake up, put on a pot of coffee, and spend at least one hour talking about whatever we want—the news, our plans for the day. We play with our son, read books, and then we get ready. It's my favorite part of the day for sure."



Heidi's passions in life revolve around others. "Teaching my kids to stay humble and kind. Looking into their hearts and asking them what they'd like to do in their life. Showing them that no matter what others may say, when you stay true to you and go for the things you want in life, you will be a lot further ahead. Building people up. Helping them to realize all the good. Empowering women. Helping them find their voice when struggling. Showing my husband what he means to me."

When not hanging out at home, the Rotters like to take the kids throughout the Capital Region, attending the dairy circus in the summer; driving around to take in the views; visiting local animal farms and the Tulip Fest; taking trail walks; and enjoying Lake George, Great Escape, Thatcher Park, and Sacandaga Lake. Heidi likes to travel as well. She loves the ocean and salty fresh air that cleanses her soul and has enjoyed her trips to Siesta Key, FL and Washington, DC. "I love history," she says. "I stand there with my eyes shut thinking what it was like back in the day." They're planning to take the kids on some small weekend trips this summer.

Heidi is looking forward to growing her business, not only with clients, but with other like-minded realtors who want to excel in a place of equals. She's also anticipating more dates with her husband and taking up yoga. She urges everyone to always strive to improve and go after your goals. "In this life, all you can do is dream your biggest dreams. Promise yourself that you'll work toward it every day. Sometimes the things we want in life are not easily obtained. They may be financially risky, or you may not have the emotional support, but if you want something bad enough and you work toward it, you'll get there. Sometimes we have unanswered prayers, which are usually brought to light later. I believe everything happens for a reason," she says. "Stay true to yourself, stay positive, and trust in God." ☺

To learn more about Brass Tacs Real Estate Company, visit

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