



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT. STANDING: Michael Minogue, Evan J Williams, Sam Towndrow, Nikki Leach, John Knott, Jany Louden, Kevin Mendes
SEATED: Maria Con, Anne Knott, Carla Petitt, Heather Gurney

“OUR UNBELIEVABLE TEAM”

The pleasure has been all mine and hopefully to your benefit as well, I work with a group of highly dedicated and hard working individuals.

With diverse backgrounds and having enjoyed many of life's experiences, we are socially aware and consciously educated for the individual needs and desires of the most precious asset in our office, "YOU our Clients".

From our youngest and most enthusiastic team member at 23 to our most battle scarred and experienced at 62. We are rich in heritage with cultures from Persia, Greece, Portugal, England to our country folk of central NSW and rural Victoria and not forgetting our neighbour from across the ditch, New Zealand.

With the majority of the team having lived and breathed in the Eastern Suburbs all there lives. We have seen, lived and thankfully enjoyed the diversity these wonderful cultures have brought to our restaurants, wine, coffee and cosmopolitan way of life.

Sales

What a year! Record sales of \$38,000,000 for Laing + Simmons Woollahra, including a \$6.45m Bellevue Hill property: Certainly our best year, even on a combined earnings basis prior to us taking up with the Laing + Simmons franchise. So what does the future hold for the year ahead? Well Interest rates are on the move and the first homebuyers grant gets the flick after December. One could foresee a lull in activity on the horizon if activity subsides for too long but there are many strings to the economic violin. To make sweet music it requires proper tuning and skilful playing.

The danger with government policy will be if it is too intrusive and by the same measure too costly, interfering with the dynamic that makes this wonderful country tick. If the polities can restrain their intrepid desire to control all, we may have a chance. To date businesses have restrained from laying-off staff with many on shortened hours and part time work. If the employment situation remains constant we should be OK. The greater danger is that the combined effect of

With the tough work ethics we have inherited from our parents and mentors we must always be attentive to have "balance" within our lives. This is how we justify the wide and varied interests and hobbies our team have used to balance their lives:

Horse riding, motor bikes, long distance swimming, jazz singing, wine connoisseurs, renovating homes, weight lifting, dog breeding, travelling, motor sports, languages, poetry writing, yacht racing, Latin dancing, horticulture and finally cooking and enjoying great food.

Please take advantage of our diverse experience both work and hobby related.

Kevin Mendes

increasing unemployment, will lead to an upturn in mortgage defaults which will scare the banks, particularly if they lose the government guarantee backing they have at present. When the banks get scared they tighten up on credit, businesses fail and more people fall into the no income hole. It then becomes a cycle of recessionary cutbacks. From our standpoint I think things will remain strong in the eastern suburbs. There are many who live in the east who choose to invest when things drop back, a natural break that limits the recessionary spiral. Not that we are immune, just a little better upholstered than some. If the national violin is bowed with finesse and tenacity our own local orchestra will play a lilting accompaniment that is sure to draw a paying audience. By the way property investors are on their way back – big time!

John Knott

FIT BY THE SEA

Sculpture by the Sea has been on at Bondi in the last month and thousands have flocked to see it. The first sculpture I stumbled across is a revamp of the Bondi to Bronte track signpost. What usually reads 'Bronte 2km' now reads 'Secret to eternal youth 2km' – a fitting mantra I have always followed. Exercise is the key to youth, health and happiness. How often do you bound into work full of energy to tackle the day? I do most mornings and it is not in anticipation of my work day that fuels this energy. It is due to the endorphin high I am riding as a result of my morning run and swim.

BRIDGE CLIMB - MY WIFE ELIZABETH AND I

Michael Minogue and his wife Elizabeth climbed the Harbour Bridge recently. The climb is a 3 hour exercise not for the faint hearted said Mike. "If you have any height issues, you will get found out". The climb takes you underneath the roadway on the Southern end, then up and around the south eastern pylon. All of a sudden you pop up between lanes 7 and 8 of the roadway on a slippery ladder. As you make your way to the top of the upper arch the guide chats about the history of the building of the bridge etc. I didn't hear much as I was gritting my teeth and willing myself to keep going. Once you make the arch the going gets a little easier.

At the top you are 134 metres above Sydney Harbour and the view is just incredible.

The guide then says that we have to go across the little catwalk under the blinking red light to start our way down. It's much easier now as it is all downhill, or so I thought. At the end of the arch we were faced with more swinging ladders and catwalks and just for good measure the railway lines were 2 feet above our heads.

Our group had 14 people (which is the max allowable) and we were led by a great fellow who kept us entertained the whole way.

When you reach the top you and make it back down again the sense of achievement is great. Maybe we will do it again, maybe not.

Michael Minogue

Nikki and Darce's Melbourne Cup Day

Melbourne Cup Day is Australia's most famous Tuesday at 3.00pm AEST on the first Tuesday in November Australians everywhere stop for one of the world's most famous races 'The Melbourne Cup'

My boyfriend and I were there with the other 130,000 people enjoying the sunshine and magnificent roses. It is a day when the Nation stops and has been a public holiday in Melbourne since 1877.

Alas Darce and I did not back the winner (the favourite never seems to win!) but we had the most wonderful day mixing with celebrities and friends. The party atmosphere of French champagne, canapés, huge hats and race track fashions almost overshadowed the business of horse racing.

We left the track late in the afternoon weary and sunburnt but it was a day I shall remember for a long time to come.

Nikki Leach

MELBOURNE CUP LUNCH

The Light Brigade Hotel was the restaurant of choice for the Laing & Simmons Melbourne Cup lunch for 2009. It was a fantastic day consisting of Verve champagne upon arrival along with a divine 3 course meal combined with some fine wines to match that made for a very joyous occasion.

The restaurant was completely booked out with over 100 People attending the fun filled afternoon. When the prizes came along our table cleaned up! Our Property Consultant Evan J Williams and our newest property manager Carla Pettit were both nominated for 'Best Dressed' a well as our Leasing Agent, Sam Towndrow who received the Light Brigade raffle prize. Heather Gurney, another one of our great property managers won the office sweep after grabbing 'Shocking' from the lucky dip.

It was a brilliant day and a great opportunity for our team to get together and have a few laughs as a team as we come nearer to the end of another busy and active year at Laing + Simmons Woollahra.

Sam Towndrow

We all know that exercise is good for the body, but it is just as beneficial to the mind. Morning exercise will energise your mind so your work day is more efficient, and at night it can help you relax and sleep better.

So tomorrow morning when the alarm goes off, rather than turning over for that extra sleep, try getting outdoors for some exercise. Doing just a little every single day will add up over time, and you will notice the positive difference in your mind, body and soul.

Jany Loudon



Michael Minogue and Wife Elizabeth conquering the Sydney Harbour Bridge



Nikki Leach & Brent Darcy @ The 2009 Melbourne Cup



Evan J Williams & Sam Towndrow @ The Light Brigade Hotel, Melbourne Cup Day

CHRISTMAS 2010

Christmas is a special time for all families and this year it is going to be an extra special time for my family. With both our children living permanently overseas coming together at Christmas is cause for real celebration. Our daughter Grace lives in Brussels and works at the European Union as a Parliament Liaison Officer. Our son Christian lives in a Burgundy, France and works in the wine industry. They are both passionate about their jobs and have really taken to the pleasures, traditions, beauty and culture of the European lifestyle. But now with Christmas approaching they are looking forward to returning home & seeing their family & friends & being able to share in all the delights of summer holidays in Sydney. Lots of time will be spent sharing food & drinks, BBQs & picnics and taking in what Sydney is best know for our wonderful harbour & beaches.

I hope you too will have a safe & happy holiday season & be reunited with family & friends.

Anne Knott



Returning home for Christmas, Grace & Christian Knott

PET FRIENDLY

After recently becoming 'mum' to Norman, a beautiful Beagle pup, my eyes have been opened to a lot of the challenges pet owners face. Waking up in the morning to find the laundry covered in shredded newspaper and a few other little surprises is one, but with a tiny wagging tail, outstretched legs stiff with excitement and a face that is so happy to see you, it doesn't seem so bad.

Finding a pet friendly property within budget is a not easy, and making sure that the property is in fact animal friendly (i.e. adequate fencing, sufficient shade, play space) is another task altogether.

However, thanks to technology and the love people have for their pets, more products are readily available to help make a property pet proof. There is 'Pet Potty' (a manufactured system with grass to help toilet train your pet), an array of little houses and kennels to shelter your furry friend when he's not allowed indoors, awnings for shade and extra shelter, watering/drink systems, toys to keep them entertained, not to mention the social side of being a pet owner. There are puppy clubs, puppy parks, cafes serving 'puppuccinos', puppy pre schools for training, and of course puppy portraits (ours was recently with Santa).

Gone are the days when the way to spoil your pooch was with a meat pie. With the ever increasing number of pet boutiques and grooming salons, our four legged friends can be groomed, clipped, dressed up, fed gourmet treats, and enjoy being pampered almost as much as their owners.

Carla Pettit



Beagles Norman & Wilson – How could you leave them behind

FOOD & WINE

Following the sell out event "WOMEN OF THE WINE INDUSTRY" at the Woollahra Hotel o Wednesday 11th November I thought it fitting to add a note or two on some other wonderful things happening in wine and food through the involvement of women. Wednesday's event had many eminent wine makers speaking on their methods and styles of wine making including Emma Bowen from Bowen Estate in the Coonawarra and Prue Henschke from Henschke Estate in the Barossa Valley to name but two.

In the food world women like Cristina Manfield and Stephanie Alexander are also leading the pack. Cristina's "Universal", East Sydney based restaurant provides a culinary experience not to be missed. More a degustation selection according to taste and appetite, everything offered in small entre-sized tasting serves. Stephanie Alexander has published her much acclaimed cooking tome: an A-Z of cooking, guaranteed to be found in every Australian chefs kitchen, as well as in the kitchens of all those who take food seriously on the domestic front.

Personally I can relate a niece, Michelle Francis, who is an incredible chef, has had three six month trips through India gathering interesting recipes on exotic dishes which she has now turned into a fascinating manuscript for a book and is currently looking for a publisher. Cristine Otel is another ground breaker located in the town of Beaune, the epicentre of Burgundian wine in France. Cristine has a Masters of

Wine and can match any judge in a tasting of quality French wine. Along with my wine maker son Christian she runs a wine discovery and tasting tour business across the Burgundy wine areas and works on contract to the French Government on appellation assessments. Their web site is www.tasteburgundy.com

Everyone knows of the Maggie Beer brand and locals such as Simone Logue, Ms Patchet and her pies and food writer/ merchandiser Donna Hay, but there are always new brands arriving from the kitchens of devoted women. "Brilliant food" is a fine example, an absolutely mouth watering array of trout based products that started out at the Pymont Produce Market with the owner of the company making, packaging and selling the product herself. For something to wash it down with we might suggest the 2010 Winner of the Sydney Morning Herald Foodies Guide Award for Best Wine Shop "Vaucluse Cellars" and owner, nephew Tim Carr. We are so very lucky

John Knott

THE UPSIDE OF BEING A NSW LANDLORD

Having moved from WA to Sydney in July of this year, I have been somewhat surprised in the differences between the two States' Residential Tenancy Agreements. So much so, that I have taken myself off on a Saturday morning to the REINSW Head Quarters to re- register as a property manager with a NSW registration. This is proving to be a very worthwhile exercise. For example, management fees in WA are generally 9.35%. Inspection Reports (held every 3 months) are \$66.00, Property Condition Reports \$165.00, Bond Inspections \$88.00. A 6 month Lease will cost the landlord two weeks rent, plus gst and a 12 month Lease will cost the landlord 3 weeks rent, plus gst.

DID YOU KNOW? – CHRISTMAS IN WOOLLAHRA

On **Tuesday the 8th December**, Christmas carol night and late night shopping will be held from **5pm**. All shopfronts will be lit up with fairy lighting and decorations which should provide for a very joyous evening filled with Christmas spirit. Last year was a great success and a lovely introduction to the festive season.

Sea Change

"Seachange" is the new millennium's buzzword. It's become the subject of government reports, academic studies and even a highly successful ABC television series, yet within the midst of our busy Australian lives and the recent economic doom and gloom still also lies the dreams and opportunities for this so called Sea-Change.

Sea-Change is when people move from the city to start a new life by the sea, generally a coastal village or sometimes going as far as buying in remote spots right on the ocean front. According to The National Sea Change Taskforce project in the next 15 years, 15% or nearly 1 million people could be making the change from the stress and demands of city life to a more peaceful existence near the sea or in the country.

Recently I spoke to my Grandmother Wendy Playfair who used to commute regularly from Terrigal to Sydney while working in Radio during the early 1960's each summer while on extended vacation. Almost 50 years ago some of the major negative factors for making a Sea Change work from the Central Coast included; the uncomfortable and lengthy (2 hrs plus) road trip with hairpin bends every 20 metres; no retail or educational facilities; non-existent and poor public transport options. "Terrigal would virtually close down altogether in winter and not a soul was to be seen on the beach" said Wendy. In 2009, Terrigal now has all of the facilities of a thriving local community including dozens of sophisticated retail shops and cafes yet is within moments of beautiful untouched quieter beachside locations which beckon the sea changer.

Today with the infrastructure and telecommunication so far advanced, this allows thousands of people to make the increasingly popular Sea Change transformation with more ease. Together with emails on the train, hands free phone calls in the car, major new expressways and tunnels all help us to get there quicker, the gap is certainly closing and more and more people making their desired Sea Change.

The WEIGHT of Property Management

For 8 years I was an Olympic Weightlifter. I achieved being Australian and Oceanic Champion with the privilege of representing Australia. Due to injury I retired from the sport in December 2003. Since then I have been asked to attend School Girl's Breakfast with the Stars. The first time I was able to attend was in 2006 where I also was on the panel where another 5 Elite athletes were asked questions by and amongst at least 500 students. This year I was able to attend this function again being seated with 10 students to which I gave talks to aspire to strive for goals and if you put your mind to something you can achieve anything. In my experience, the most powerful key to success is Passion.

It is known that property management isn't the easiest of careers. I find that I've been able to incorporate the discipline I've learnt through hard training to work. My training schedule went as much as 10 times a week, this consists of promptness and dedication which has also flowed onto my work.

Maria Con

On top of all this, I am working with the most conscientious property management team ever!! So next time you feel the world is crumbling around you, remember how lucky you are to be a land lord in New South Wales with the Laing & Simmons team looking after your investment property.

Heather Gurney



A few months ago my wife Kashaya and I sold up our small 2 bedroom apartment in the Bondi Beach area and have recently just bought a 4 bedroom house on a 500 square meter block up north in the sleepy beachside suburb of MacMasters Beach on the central coast. We are currently renovating our new home now and my son "James" will soon have his own back yard and could not be happier. My wife and I still both work in Woollahra and make the small sacrifices such as getting up earlier to get to work to make this divine Sea Change work within our own family life.

We look to sell the house in the near future and buy a block of land at MacMasters Beach and build our own dream house from scratch.

Evan J Williams



Macmasters Beach



Maria Con at age 15 winning her first Australian Championship