ESTERRE

Creating Cherished Memories in your Homes Away from Home

BY JENNY HART DANOWSKI

Michael Burns has always enjoyed a special connection to the Pacific Northwest, having grown up in Bellingham, Washington. It was there that he was introduced to skiing at Mt. Baker, learning on the often-precarious rope tows common at that time. In his early teens, Michael found another love in sailing, which he continued to enjoy both competitively and recreationally for most of his life. Sailing exposed him to the San Juan Islands and Puget Sound, another PNW gem. He also spent his summers throughout college working on a commercial salmon fishing boat with a Yugoslavian family that attended his family's Catholic church. Little did he know that all these experiences would eventually culminate in one unique idea for a company that would give others the chance to enjoy the PNW in the same ways he has.

That company is Esterre, and the story behind it is a combination of Michael's family legacy, his four decades in the shared ownership industry, and his love of the Pacific Northwest. The seed was planted back in the 1960s, when Michael's father had the idea to take over the lease of the old Mountaineers' cabin at the Mt. Baker ski area. "It was a humble cabin with classic NW alpine architecture and only reachable by snowshoe in the winter, and hiking in the summer," shares Michael. "We couldn't afford to own and care for it alone, so my father found four other families from Bellingham to share it with. It was rustic, remote, and unforgettable." It was that shared experience that sparked in Michael a deep appreciation for this place and what it means to return regularly.

Michael went on to get his degree in Political Science with a minor in business from the University of Washington, intending to go to law school, but fate had another plan. His father had co-founded Vacation Internationale in 1974, one of the early pioneering timeshare companies that built a product around a network of properties. He suggested that Michael come to work for him to get some exposure to the business world. "That's where I was introduced to the whole concept of shared ownership," says Michael. "I was in my mid-twenties, and the timeshare industry was growing to the point where it was attracting interest from the major hotel companies." Michael had been working for his dad for five years when Marriott Hotels & Resorts decided they were going to do a prototype for a timeshare property in Orlando, FL, and recruited Michael to join their executive team. It was an enormous success, and suddenly, law school was out, and Michael's career was launched.

The cozy lodge-like interior of the Snoqualmie Summit home in Esterre's collection.

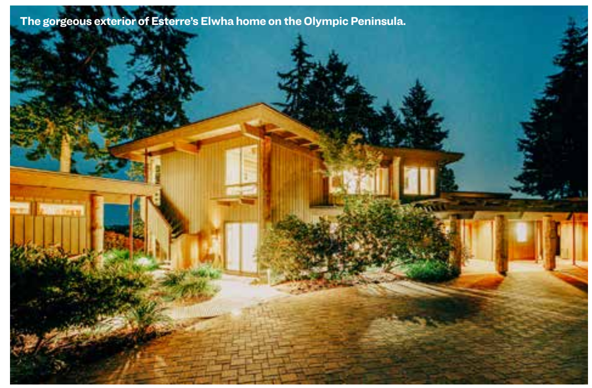
"We set out to perfect the co-ownership model — to make it fair, equitable, and flexible."

He went on to lead The Walt Disney Company into the timeshare business with the highly successful Disney Vacation Club, and left there to develop one of the first high-end fractional properties in the country, Les Saisons in Sun Valley, Idaho, among others. Each step deepened his belief in what co-ownership could offer and how it might evolve for the way people live now, culminating in the founding of Esterre in early 2025, in partnership with the owners of Windermere Real Estate. Esterre offers an innovative second home-ownership model where one can enjoy a variety of carefully curated homes in a variety of iconic Washington locations, all within a one-to three-plus hours' drive from the Seattle area. Every stay feels like coming home, minus the burden of upkeep. What could be better?

How it Works

"We have purchased five homes in five locations, all within a drive-to distance from Seattle," says Michael. "These locations include San Juan Island, Whidbey Island, Fidalgo Island, Snoqualmie Summit, and the Olympic Peninsula near Port Angeles," he continues. "We offer two tiers of ownership—Premier ($365,000) and Signature ($195,000)—with clients purchasing an equity interest in the LLC that holds title to these properties.

The beautifully serene interior of the San Juan Island home in Esterre's collection.



The gorgeous exterior of Esterre's Elwha home on the Olympic Peninsula.

The stunning view from Esterre's Fidalgo Passage home.

Benefits include:

- Real equity ownership with your share of the resale proceeds
- Access to a growing collection of homes at no additional cost
- Guaranteed nights and space-available travel flexibility
- A 12-year term with a defined exit
- Fully furnished, beautifully maintained homes
- No upkeep or management to worry about
- No pressure to choose just one location
- No rigid week-based allocations
- No unpredictability of short-term rentals

"We set out to perfect the co-ownership model — to make it fair, equitable, and flexible," says Michael. "When the ownership term ends, the homes are sold, and each owner receives their pro-rata share of the proceeds. Until then, you move at your own pace — season after season — with homes that move with you, allowing you to experience the best of the Pacific Northwest." Once they have proven the concept in this market over the next year or two, Michael and his team will start analyzing opportunities for other regions, such as the San Francisco Bay Area.

As the father of four grown children and grandfather to six young grandchildren, Michael knows firsthand the importance of spending family time together and creating cherished memories along the way. Through Esterre, he hopes to offer other families the opportunity to gather and create their own memories in the same gorgeous and unique places he was able to visit as a child, and to return to them year after year. When Michael isn't busy building his new company, you will find him hiking, sailing, skiing, traveling, and staying active with his kids and grandkids, creating those same memories for them. Some things never change.

To view the homes in Esterre's collection and learn more about ownership, go to www.esterre-wa.com.