

N O R T H C A R O L I N A ' S

# High Country

M A G A Z I N E FREE

**Eseeola Seafood  
Spectacular**

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**RETIRING PASTORS • ELK NOB PARK • ASU'S SOLAR CAR**



The visual charm and elegance of the Eseeola Lodge makes an immediate impact on all who experience it. The lodge, which opened for service in 1892, continues to be one of the High Country's shining jewels. Photo Submitted.

## Eseeola Lodge Has Been Crafting Its Heritage Since 1891

When Harvard professor William James discovered the splendor of Linville in 1891, little could he have dreamed what the Eseeola Lodge would develop into nearly 125 years later.

"At last, I have struck it rich here in North Carolina and am in the most peculiar and one of the most poetic places I have ever been in," James said on his first visit in 1891.

Within a year, James had constructed the Eseeola Lodge and it had begun to host dancing, picnics and other events. The main building quickly became a local landmark with its chimney-topped, shingled and gabled main building, surrounded by its beautiful veranda.

The years since then have featured many changes and the establishment of some treasured traditions.

"It has been always been a treat to come to the lodge," said Betsy Austin, the director of communication, who started as a worker while she was in college 20 years ago and eventually came back to work here full-time. "It's like stepping back in time."

One of the biggest changes was when the original nine-hole golf course, which had been expanded to 14 holes in 1900 was set aside for a new championship-caliber course that was designed by the legendary Donald

Ross in 1924 and has long been regarded as one of the top courses in the country.

There have been the challenges to overcome through the years, with the old inn catching fire and burning to the ground at the start of a new tourist season in 1936 and the old golf clubhouse burning down in 1952, but the Eseeola Lodge has always showed the resiliency to come back stronger.

One significant moment was the establishment of the Linville Golf Club in 1959, with the addition of a swimming pool, bathhouse and pavilion for other social functions.

Current general manager John Blackburn was appointed in 1983 and has embarked on acquiring additional property, renovating facilities and expanding others through the ensuing years.

The Linville Golf Club was significantly renovated in 2006, with a new exterior, golf shop and locker rooms. The dining room was expanded and a full-service bar and a patio were added.

A new tennis facility was added in 2008, with four clay courts, two hard courts and additional amenities.

Of more recent date, the lodge added a popular outdoor program in 2011 and expanded again with the new full-service spa

and fitness center at the Alan Dickson Center in 2014.

The outdoor program features walking and hiking trails, sporting clay shooting, canoeing, paddle boarding and fishing.

There is also a new and unique, Olympic-sized, salt-water pool and children's programs that include day camps and field trips to locations like Grandfather Mountain and Linville Falls.

But one of the central focuses of the Eseeola Lodge has always surrounded its food and its service.

"There is something about slowing down," said Austin. It is the concept of "dinner being the entertainment of the evening."

While the spectacular seafood buffet is the centerpiece of the weekly dining schedule at the lodge, patrons can expect a exceptional food experience at every meal.

"The service is phenomenal," said Austin. "It all makes for a unique experience. It is something that makes it a special occasion, even if its not a special day."

And all of these things continue to build the tradition of one of the High Country's most treasured destinations.

"The experience of staying in the lodge, the delicious meals is what brings people back," Austin said. ♦

# Matt & VPC Builders

## The Youngest Son Carries On The Vincent Family Traditions

By Jesse Wood

While the Vincent boys all dug perk holes for extra cash when they were younger, Matt Vincent is the only one who turned it into a business. With their father, Jay Vincent, as a prominent realtor in the High Country, they picked up on the fact that the health department no longer dug holes in house to see if a septic site perked or not.

A budding entrepreneur studying finance and banking at App State, Matt, now 33, would wake up early to dig three-foot holes before class, and by his senior year, he had several employees. "He had flyers out at real estate offices and the health department that said, 'Matt Vincent, PHD,'" said Jay, laughing at the post-hole digger acronym his son advertised.

Thus was the beginning of VPC Builders, an innovative firm specializing in commercial and residential construction, custom

homes, green building and remodeling in the High Country. VPC Builders has offices in Blowing Rock and Banner Elk. The latter office opened in January 2016, and its renovation is a testimony to the company's quality and creative craftsmanship in the mountains.

The office features poplar-bark siding, birch-bark walls, a petrified log as a base for a glass conference table, reclaimed barn-wood and much more. A live-edge slab in the lobby is the VPC Builders take on the sliding

barn door, which has that modern-rustic flavor. A row of six-foot tall bamboo plants add a splash of color and flair to the office lobby. The bamboo, of course, is lime green – the color dominating the VPC Builders logo that adorns a 1959 black Ford F100 that Matt restored and parks around town in visible locations.

Matt is a craftsman at heart. It's probably why he isn't a realtor like his pops or one of his older brothers, Chad, who co-owns

**VPC** Builders  
RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL



VPC Builders truly are a team. Each member has an equal say in new hires and other company matters, such as the office move to Banner Elk. Pictured are Ignacio Madrigal, Wendell Proffitt, Scott Pitts, Charlie Day, Matt Vincent, Thor Vincent (the dog), Whitney Burns, Tony Anthony, Gary Smith, Jake Smith.

Vincent Properties with his father. Still a real estate-license carrier, Matt dabbled in realty when he was younger, but realized it wasn't his calling. See, he had always worked with his hands, whether it was mowing lawns or digging perk test holes. "Real estate was just never my cup of tea," Matt said, adding that he was always drawn to the construction side of things. "It's something I love. It's something I am passionate about, and truthfully, I couldn't be happier."

At the age of 22, Matt built his first house, a spec home in Boone. He built spec homes through the recession and was successful, selling the homes well before construction even finished. As the economy turned around, Matt and the VPC Builders team decided to focus on custom homes – in addition to their commercial projects and remodels. On the residential side of things, the majority of the VPC Builders-built homes are constructed in the mountain, Adirondack, rustic style. "We build everything from your very upper end, several million dollar [projects] down to more intimate homes for clients who are working on a tight budget," Vincent said. "We have our hands in a little bit of everything."

At any given time, VPC Builders has a couple dozen projects in the works – from preliminary meetings with clients at the project site to handing over the keys to the front door. They also hold keys to over 100 homeowners or property owners that keep them busy here and there. "People trust us, and say, 'Hey Matt, can you keep an eye on our house or check this,'" he said, adding that he's never been one to turn down work because any job might lead to something bigger. "We've always operated, in the fact, that if somebody comes to us then we need to help that person with whatever it is. No matter how small or big, we'll find a way to help them."

## The Vincent Breed

To understand the culture that Matt has instilled at VPC Builders over the past decade and his drive to turn a hole digging business into one of the premier builders in the High Country, it helps to look not only at his raising but a bit of his lineage.

Matt's great grandfather on his father's side, Sidney Archibald Vincent, is one of the "primary geniuses of the 21st



Posing in the Banner Elk office, VPC Builders founder/owner Matt Vincent stands with his longhaired German shepherd, Thor, at his side. Below VPC Builders staff sits around the conference table for a weekly meeting. As project manager Gary Smith said, "It's hard to sit down and try to do meetings once a week [because we are all so busy, but] the energy is good whenever everybody gets together."



century," according to Jay, who noted that his grandfather participated in the Manhattan Project. Sidney ran the Research Defense Committee in World War II with Julius Robert Oppenheimer, and helped build the timing device in the first atomic bomb. "They still use his formulas to calculate the optimum altitude to detonate a bomb depending on mega-tonnage – at least the last time I read they did," Jay said.

Jay, on the other hand, worked as the #2 guy for another brilliant man, William H. Maurer, an executive of the Diamondhead Corporation. "I was the buffer between Bill and the rest of the world. He couldn't deal with people well," Jay recalled. The Diamondhead Corporation was a large, international resort company in its infancy and owned by Malcolm Purcell McLean, whose containerized freight idea revolutionized international trade. After Jay, who grew up in a mill village outside of Shelby, finished his schooling and served four years in the service, he was fortunate to get a job offer with the Diamondhead Corporation from, as he always calls him, Mr. McLean.

One of the first major projects of the Diamondhead Corporation was to buy Pinehurst, which came with a Carolina Inn, Holly Inn, Chevrolet dealership and a utility company on 11,000 acres. "I believe there were only two golf courses at the time," Jay remembered. "It was a sleepy little golf village that was much nicer as a sleepy little golf village." Based in New York City, Jay flew all over the world on business, crunching the numbers for McLean's development business until 1975, when he opted to move to the High Country, study philosophy & religion at App State, raise a family and eventually open Vincent Properties. A small-town guy at heart, Jay hated New York City and the rat race that caused him to practically live in a private jet. "I just got burned out," Jay said.

Coming back to North Carolina, Jay found the love of his life, Lynn, back in Shelby, and they immediately moved to Boone. The couple raised their boys with high expectations in mind, and if you ask either parent, both will tell you the other was tougher on the kids. With Jay working all the time to support a growing family, Lynn primarily raised the children – four boys separated by eight years? "I never had enough hands to keep up with all the running around," Lynn laughed. "They might have gotten mad at each other, but nobody else picked on another brother. They took care of one another."

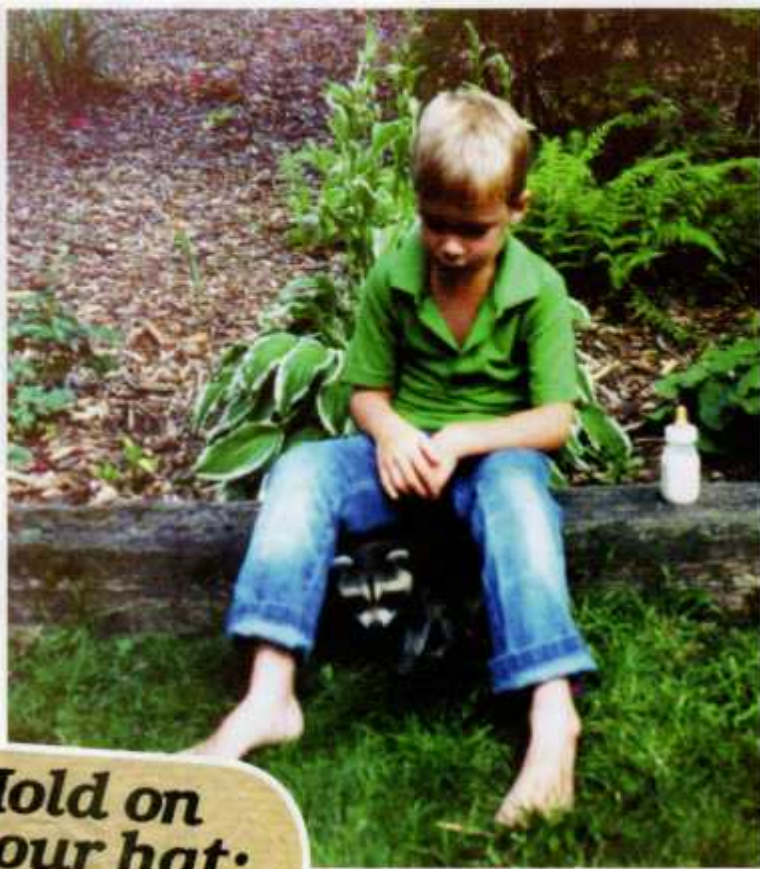
Lynn is the bedrock of the family, the heart and soul of the Vincents. Jay's grandmother described her as a "strong horse for a long pull." She is the one who taught the boys much of their work ethic, discipline, good habits and the



Lynn and Jay Vincent stand as their three children, Jon Paul, Matt and Chad sit in collared shirts.



The boys later on in life: Chad, John Paul and Matt Vincent. The boys were rough-and-tumble with each other but always had each other's back. "I never had enough hands to keep up with all the running around," Lynn laughed. "They might have gotten mad at each other, but nobody else picked on another brother. They took care of one another."



**"Hold on  
to your hat;  
Realty World  
is growing."**



**Again.**

idea that you finish whatever you start. Successful traits her boys embody today.

She had them off to school every day with a perfect lunch, and when they got off the bus in the afternoon, a snack was ready for them. After a 10-minute break, the boys sat at the dining room and finished all written homework. She would then drive them out to a horse farm near the New River, and her sons would cut the grass, clean the stalls and perform other tasks. Unless there was another activity or sport to be run off to, it was back to the house, where Lynn would soon have a gourmet dinner prepared. The kids then finished up any other reading or studying. It was clock work. Come Sunday morning, she would have them dressed up in coats and ties, and the family was off to church. "We'd divide them up best we could to keep them from picking on each other," Jay said.

He attributed much of his sons' success and their quality character to their own "diligence, perseverance and hard/smart work" and to Lynn. "Our sons make us proud for not only what they have accomplished but more importantly for who or what they are," Jay said. "She had much to do with that. Lynn Vincent is the heart and soul of our family ... She was always there for them in every way. We are all fortunate to have her around."

They had four requirements of the boys: excel in school; play

Matt was always an independent fellow and did his own thing. He also seemed to have a special connection to animals. One summer when his older brothers were at summer camp, a lonely Matt befriended a raccoon that was found hurt on the road. Matt cared for the animal before giving it to the animal authorities. "He loved that raccoon," mother Lynn said. "It would crawl up his legs and shoulder and pat his face with its little hands." Also pictured here is Matt in an old newspaper ad for his father's realty business.

at least two sports; and participate in both a community and church activity. "As long as they did those things, then the deal was the old man would pay their bills in terms of school and providing a car and a place to live," Jay said. "But I didn't have to do too much of that. They were all pretty much independent and entrepreneurial ... They just all learned discipline early on."

One day when Jay came home after work, he tried to engage his sons into conversation. But the "idiot box" was on, and his children were too absorbed in what they were watching. So, he decided to fix that and cut the cord – back before Netflix made it trendy. Instead, the family had movie night once a week for about four years. "That was a really neat time," Jay said. "We didn't



Matt Vincent stands in the first house he ever built at the age of 22. This spec home is located in Boone. Matt said there are two particular reasons he loves his job and stays at it everyday. He noted the "wow factor" and "happiness" on clients' face whenever the project is complete and talked about working hard everyday to make sure his employees have a job.

have to argue to get anybody to the table. My wife was putting all these wonderful, gourmet meals on the table, and we sat and talked about what we did, what we read. We read a lot more and nobody rushed away from the table. It made for much better family time."

For Matt as a youngster and probably most any other kid, no TV is not cool. His parents were strict, and Matt recalled friends not wanting to come over and hang out because they realized they wouldn't be eating junk food and watching TV. But looking back, it was certainly a blessing in disguise. "We were raised that you have to go out there and work and make the opportunities for yourself. They are not just going to knock on your door and give you everything you want. You have to go get it," Matt said. "As a kid, we weren't allowed to watch TV growing up. As a kid, that sucked. But now, I am really thankful for it. It forced us to go outside, play sports and go into the woods."

It seems to have worked. Jon Paul, 39, one of Matt's older brothers who is based in San Antonio, Texas, is a financial executive with USAA Bank. Another older brother, Chad, who co-owns Vincent Properties, is one of the top-producing realtors in the High Country, according to his father, Jay. And then there's Matt – as disciplined and driven as they come.



The majority of custom homes VPC Builders construct are in the Adirondack, rustic style. Commercial projects and remodels represent a good chunk of business, too. A few years back, VPC Builders turned an old gas station in downtown Blowing Rock into a Mellow Mushroom restaurant (bottom left). In the picture above, Matt's restored 1959 F100 truck sits in front of the newly renovated Banner Elk office.



The outside and inside of the Banner Elk office, located on Tynecastle Highway. Whitney Burns, marketing director of VPC Builders, stands at the reception desk in the lobby. She led the recent rebranding effort that has helped increase the visibility of the VPC Builders' brand.

For better or worse, Matt – who will be marrying Cassandra Hayes this September in Antigua – is a workhorse, a borderline workaholic, says at least one colleague, Charlie Day, a Blowing Rock native, manages the commercial projects, (while Gary Smith, a Virginia Beach native, manages the residential custom home side of things). In talking about Matt, Day said his buddies in the service during Desert Storm couldn't hold a candle to Matt's work ethic.

"At one point, I was in the Army and my whole chain of command was West Point and the Rangers. Everybody was driven and motivated, but not one of them has anything on Matt," Day said. "From daylight to dark, he doesn't stop."

## The Culture at VPC

Matt has always kind of marched to his own beat, driving straight at the fork in the road. He became a builder – not a realtor. The youngest Vincent, he didn't follow in his older brother's footsteps and attend UNC at Chapel Hill. Instead, he opted to attend App State. But before licenses and degrees, he opted to go down a different avenue than the other Vincents.

"Somewhere around the sixth grade, he came to me and said, 'You know dad? I've been doing all the stuff I am supposed to do and I'm enjoying it OK and you've been hauling me to my brother's [activities] all my life, but I just want to do my own thing,'"

### 801 CREST LANE | LINVILLE RIDGE

Located on the 13th hole of the Linville Ridge golf course, this pristine Crestview townhome enjoys fantastic views of Grandfather Mountain. The completely remodeled property offers four bedrooms and four bathrooms complete with granite countertops. The master bathroom offers an air Jacuzzi tub, steam shower with aromatherapy, dual vanities and heated floors. Additional features include hardwood flooring, outdoor entertaining space with masonry fireplace and built-in Tec grill, two additional fireplaces in the living and dining areas, vaulted ceilings and Wolf and Sub-Zero kitchen appliances. The home offers custom plantation shutters throughout and a generator for added peace of mind. The location is superb, offering golf cart access, and is within minutes to the course, scenic trails, dining, day spa and the fitness center. **\$925,000** (OFFERED UNFURNISHED)



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Jay recalled. Turns out, he wanted to take martial arts, and that became one of his two required sports. Grandmaster Rick Ward, who operates a Kung Fu academy in Boone, took him under his wing and ended up being a big influence in Matt's life – not only physically but mentally, too. "Literally, every day I think of something that reminds me of what he taught me," Matt said.

In a way, Matt is still forging a unique path in how VPC Builders operates and markets itself. Who else is using wine barrels to advertise project sites? Actually, they have about a dozen ways of using reclaimed wine and whiskey barrels. Who else has a sweet old-timey truck that advertises the company logo all over town? He actually has a goal for all the project managers to one day drive similarly restored trucks advertising the company's logo. "What we try to do at VPC is we try to look at doing things differently," Matt said.

This is certainly apparent, for example, on the marketing side of things as the company shows a prowess in promoting its brand. For example, the sandblasted wine barrel lawn signs won the inaugural Signage Smackdown contest sponsored by REMODELING in 2015, the same year that VPC Builders revamped its innovative and progressive brand and introduced its new eye-popping logo.

"We wanted to create our own identity and branch out a little bit," Whitney Burns, marketing director at VPC Builders, said of the recent brand revamping. "It's been a lot of fun to be able to take something like the logo and just figure out new and unique ways we can get it out there. In a lot of what we do, we want to stand out. We want to be different. Whatever we can think of to do that – the old truck, the wine barrels, the coasters, metal business cards, anything we can do to differentiate our business, and I think people are starting to notice."

A positive corporate culture at VPC is also evident. The VPC motto is values, professionalism and communication. Continuing education and volunteering in the community are requirements of the company's employees. When hiring, Matt said he looks for three things in an employee: ambition, loyalty and honesty. "Most [other] things you can teach," Matt said.



The majority of homes VPC Builders constructs is in the rustic Adirondack that features many natural accents. Charlie Day, a project manager, VPC Builders projects range from a "\$100 repair on a house to building a home that costs \$2 million."





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## VPC's Community Outreach



Community outreach is embedded in the corporate culture of VPC Builders. As Matt said, "I am a big believer in giving back to the community." Each employee is required to volunteer with one community organization, nonprofit or charity doing good work in the High Country. That probably rings a bell because the Vincent brothers were all required to participate in a community activity growing up.

Some of the organizations that are represented by VPC Builders employees include Wine to Water, Trout Unlimited, Blood Sweat and Gears and Purple Heart Homes. The latter is an organization that features a local chapter in the High Country started by Whitney Burns, the marketing director for VPC Builders.

Founded by Veterans for Veterans, Purple Heart Homes and its partners helped disabled veterans by outfitting their homes with wheelchair ramps. With veterans owning homes that no longer meets their physical needs, the Purple Heart Homes program has the "intent of restoring dignity and 'quality of life' by creating a safe, barrier free living environment for Service Connected Disabled Veterans."

Whitney, who is president of the local chapter, and Matt, who is on the local chapter's board, participate in the Purple Heart Homes program by raising money and overseeing these local projects making homes more accessible for veterans. "You are helping people that have sacrificed so much for this country," said Matt. "It's been a cool way to try to give back."





VPC Builders commercial superintendent Charlie Day reviews plans of the renovation of the old Appalachian Theatre. VPC Builders started the first construction phase of the project in March. One of VPC Builders subcontractors uses a sledgehammer to knock down walls near the theatre lobby (bottom left).



A Virginia Beach native, Gary Smith is a residential project manager and also a creative talent who attended a year at the Bath School of Art and Design in England before settling in Western North Carolina.



A Blowing Rock native who grew up in the local construction industry, Charlie Day is the commercial project manager. His career began as a 5-year-old pulling nails out of an old dilapidated barn.

chemistry, and I don't think anybody wants someone to come in and screw that up," Matt said. "We actually voted on coming here to Banner Elk. It just happened that everybody voted yes. We try to get everybody's input, and we try to make everybody a part of the company. We just have a really good team."

The employees have responded accordingly, and they wear the company's uniform shirts with pride. As Gary Smith, the residential project manager and longtime employee, said of Matt and the company's vibe: "Matt's great. Lots of positive energy. It's fun working with everybody. It's hard to sit down and try to do meetings once a

week [because we are all so busy, but] the energy is good whenever everybody gets together."

## Restoring The App Theatre & Other Projects

On a sunny weekday in June, VPC Builders commercial project manager Charlie Day stood in the lobby of the old App Theatre. Over the sounds of a subcontractor knocking down a brick wall with a sledgehammer, Charlie talked about the company, the theatre renovation process, his family history and old Boone. "It's funny," Charlie said over the subcontrac-

tors banging away, "half of the guys working here all remember eating at Tom Redmond's hotdog and hamburger stand that was right here."

Charlie's family in the Boone and Blowing Rock area goes back to at least the Civil War. His grandfather's great great grandfather, Sam Day, joined the Union Army in Knoxville and "led Stoneman right down Thunder Hill near the gap," Charlie said. Aside from stints in the service, Charlie's worked in the local construction industry his entire life with his relatives. In fact, Charlie recalled pulling nails out of lumber from a barn that the wind blew over when he was 5 years old.

# High Performance. Sustainable. Green.

**M**att Vincent, owner/founder of VPC Builders, takes green building seriously, and he has the credentials to prove it. He was one of the first LEED certified builders in the state. LEED, which stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is a popular green building certification program. Matt participates in the N.C. Healthy Built Home Program and is certified by the Building Performance Institute as a Building Analyst. Matt also has a Renewable Energies and Green Building Diploma from the N.C. Solar Center.

A holder of master builder and accredited builder designations by the N.C. Builder's Institute, Matt holds the following distinctions: Certified Aging-In-Place Specialist (CAPS), Certified Graduate Associate (CGA), and Certified Green Professional (CGP) designations with the National Association of Home Builders. He's licensed in North Carolina and South Carolina.

Just as values, professionalism and communication are key words that VPC Builders live by, so are high performance, sustainable

and green. "For VPC Builders, each of these concepts goes hand-in-hand with being a better builder. We constantly strive to meet and exceed community and national standards in high performance building by creating innovative structures that blend form with function, in harmony with the environment."

Understanding that "one size does not fit all," VPC Builders, which won the Boone Area Chamber's Evergreen Award for Leadership in Sustainability, sponsored by Mast General Store in 2015, offers different tiers of "green," including the aforementioned LEED and Energy Star certifications. They've worked on geothermal heated and cooled homes, and, of course, active and passive solar projects.

"We take on projects that other builders say are not possible. One client that we got to work with, they took it to other builders. They wanted a LEED certified house and were told it wasn't possible because of the home they wanted," Matt said. "They brought it to us, and we sat down and said, 'We absolutely can do this,' and made it happen, and they were happy. They are clients to this day."

Consider the Stober residence in Blowing Rock. This was among the first LEED certified homes in the High Country. While a number of people cautioned the homeowners that building a LEED home three hours away would be a nightmare, Matt and the VPC Builders crew rose to the occasion.

"To the contrary, we couldn't imagine a project proceeding more smoothly," the Stobers wrote in a testimonial. "We know that there were many issues but instead of troubling us you simply took care of them. Lastly, your commitment to staying within our budget and delivering the house on time has been well beyond our expectations."



*"I feel like I could do a lot of things if I wanted to, but getting to see somebody's face and their happiness [at the finished product]. That's what makes me come to work everyday."*

Matt Vincent - VPC Builders founder

Today, though, he oversees commercial projects. Some of those in the works include the renovation of the historic Appalachian Theatre in downtown Boone, the expansion and remodel of Macado's restaurant on King Street and renovating a laundry facility into a telephone/internet company's office.

The renovation of the historic Appalachian Theatre is obviously a once-in-a-lifetime project. The intent is to renovate and restore the old theatre to its original 1938 art deco design, and for the theatre to host music concerts, dramas, cinema, dance and other community events. The versatile venue will have an orchestra pit, community space upstairs and about 675 seats. Phase one of the renovation began in March and will include exterior work such as the black-and-teal façade and a marquee and – at the request of the Town of Boone – pavers along the sidewalk in front of the building. "The town asked if we could work that in and we said, 'sure,'" Charlie said.

The historic theatre is already gutted. In fact, Charlie had a hand in the interior demolition long before VPC Builders secured phase one construction with the lowest bid. Charlie worked for Frank Mongelluzzi, former owner of Able Body Laborers, the construction staffing company and the closed-down Pssghetti's restaurant in Blowing Rock. After Mongelluzzi bought the building, Charlie was a part of the crew that stripped the inside of the theatre. When the housing crisis occurred, Mongelluzzi stopped renovations and eventually the building went into foreclosure during the businessman's bankruptcy filing.

The Town of Boone fronted the Downtown Boone Development Association (DBDA) a three-year loan worth \$624,000 to purchase the gutted theatre in foreclosure in the fall of 2011.

# VPC's Marketing Prowess

As VPC Builders' subcontractors busted out walls in the old Appalachian Theatre on a weekday in June, a television crew was at the Banner Elk office, interviewing VPC Builders founder Matt Vincent and commercial project manager Charlie Day. Today's Builders Television Show is airing a feature on the company this fall on CBS and the two-person film crew was in town conducting interviews and visiting project sites.

Like the new logo, this is part of the ongoing marketing effort to increase awareness of the company. While VPC Builders has a long way to get before it's a Twitter or a Nike, the brand is certainly noticeable in the High Country, and the creative advertisement is effective. Take the 1959 Ford F100 truck. Aside from the handful of walk-ins it generates, I imagine everyone who drives on Tynecastle Highway, U.S. 321 or Main Street in Blowing Rock recognizes the restored, classic Chevrolet from 1950.

The wine barrels, too. They probably have a dozen different ways they utilize an old wine or whiskey barrel on a project, and they've won awards for that creativity and sustainability, as well. This past year, VPC Builders introduced a new logo, and Whitney Burns, the



Greg Darrow, in the orange shirt, and Matt Evans, interview and film VPC Builders founder Matt Vincent for an episode of Today's Builder Television Show that will air this summer.

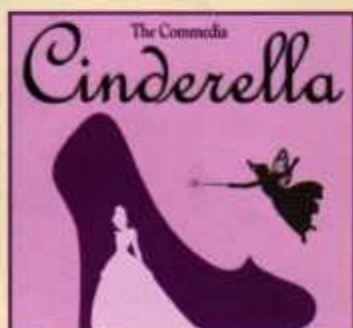
company's marketing director, tackled the re-branding effort.

Born and raised in Nashville, Burns ended up in the Boone area like most everyone else; she attended Appalachian State, graduating with a degree in finance and banking in 2012. She found a local boy and a decided to make the High Country her home. In between that, she worked as a director of marketing and research for a full-service, commercial real estate firm in Nashville. She also dabbles in interior design. She came on board in March of 2014,

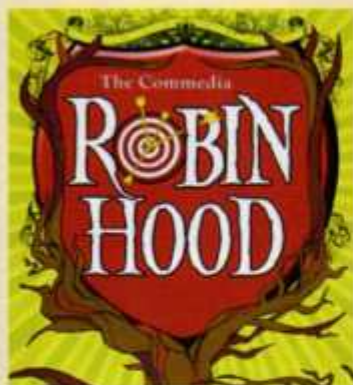
and the results of the past two years are evident

In addition to the wine barrels, the truck that bears the company's lime green logo, and the television show that will reach a new and wider audience, Burns also noted the wooden-circle drink coasters with company logo and metal business cards that differentiate VPC Builders from other general contractors in the area.

"We wanted to create our own identity and branch out a little bit," Burns said. "It's been a lot of fun to be able to take something like the logo and just figure out new and unique ways we can get it out there ... [We are] trying anything we can do to differentiate our business, and I think people are starting to notice."



July 2 & July 23



July 9 & July 30



The Commedia De Arte version of these two classic tales.

Lots of fun, lots of audience interaction, and gift bags for all the kids in the audience, courtesy of Kilwin's.

Show starts at 11am at the Blowing Rock Auditorium, 160 Sunset Drive.

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Whitney Burns, marketing  
director of VPC Builders

The DBDA and Appalachian Theatre of the High Country (ATHC) nonprofit eventually paid the town back for purchasing the theatre in 2013. The DBDA turned the theatre over to the ATHC. In June 2015, the ATHC's capital campaign to fund the restoration project entered the public phase when the group announced that it had raised \$6.1 million – or nearly 80 percent – of the \$8 million campaign goal.

For Matt – and everyone else – this is a project they feel will have a lasting impact on downtown Boone and the surrounding community. He talked about hanging out at the dollar theatre in his younger days. He remembers the movies and the sticky floors. "I remember going there as a kid a lot. It was a really cool place. Charlie was the one doing the demo all along, so we all have kind of a special attachment to the theatre," Matt said. "It's just an awesome project. We bid on it against all of the contractors in the area. We were the low bidder and part of that was honestly because we wanted to do it for cheaper because it's such a good aspect of the community and a way for us to give back."

VPC Builders has two locations in the High Country: 2059 Tynecastle Highway in Banner Elk and 989 Main Street in Blowing Rock. For more information, click to [www.vpcbuilders.com](http://www.vpcbuilders.com) or call 828-295-0707. ♦

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