

# Episode 15

📅 Wed, Nov 09, 2022 10:00AM ● 56:09

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

entrepreneurship, door-to-door sales, VIP Waste Services, building a business from scratch, customer relationships, business exit and acquisition, business partnerships, accountability, Epicurean Properties, luxury Airbnb, rental arbitrage, hospitality and guest experience, interior design, Bellefontaine revitalization, Native Coffee Company

## SPEAKERS

Jason Duff, Jesse Lear, Ethan DeLeon

---

**J** **Jesse Lear** 00:00

My business card literally went from founder and CEO to sales representative overnight, um, which was an interesting experience because I didn't realize how tied to my identity my job was.

**E** **Ethan DeLeon** 00:15

Hey everyone, my name is Ethan DeLeon and I'm here with our founder and CEO of Small Nation, Jason Duff. Today we are excited to have the owner and CEO of Epicurean Properties, Jesse Jesse Lear on the show with us. We want to welcome you to the Small Nation Podcast where we share some of the valuable lessons with what we have learned about entrepreneurship, real estate, economic development, and more. The point of this podcast is to create value for you, the listener, and to create a space to learn, talk about what's trending, and inspire others. So, uh, Jason, why don't you give some context on who our guest is here today?

**J** **Jason Duff** 00:50

Thanks, Ethan. Hey, Jesse, welcome to the podcast.

**J** **Jesse Lear** 00:53

Thank you, Jason.

**J** **Jason Duff** 00:54

It is, uh, great to have a dear friend and, uh, collaborator and just someone that I admire, Jesse, on today. Jesse and I met, it's got to be at least 10 years ago.

**J** **Jesse Lear** 01:04

It has to be.

**J****Jason Duff** 01:05

Yeah. We were a part of an entrepreneurship group that was called Impact, and that group were entrepreneurs from all around the country that really were focused on educating, teaching, collaborating, and supporting other entrepreneurs. And, you know, I don't know about you, Jesse, and I'd like to hear this, but like, I didn't know and wake up when I was in kindergarten and say, I'm going to be an entrepreneur. And in fact, I didn't even know what the word was. But when you get around in circles and meet other people that are creators, doers, people that want to start businesses, you find that it is a very small group, but there is all this camaraderie and like shared experiences. And so when we found Impact, it just happened to be that when we would get together and travel to other cities and other towns to attend events, we could share stories, we could collaborate, share best practices. And we just became really, really good friends. What is your experience with Impact?

**J****Jesse Lear** 02:02

I loved being a part of Impact. I had joined, I forget what year it was, with my business partner Travis at the time, and just as a way of learning, you know. I think one of the benefits of diving into the entrepreneurial world at such a young age was we were very aware of how little we knew and we weren't ashamed of it. We didn't feel like we should know more than we did, you know, so we really just were you know, open to learning as much as we could and wanted to meet as many people as we could. And, you know, as you mentioned, the benefit of meeting other people who are on the same journey is huge. I mean, just knowing that there are people around you who can somewhat relate to what you're going through is pretty powerful. So that's really what Impact ended up becoming for us. And then you and I met at an Impact event at the United Nations, I think, in New York.

**J****Jason Duff** 02:50

Yeah, it was pretty crazy to be in New York City. You know, I grew up in a very small town and I think you did too.

**J****Jesse Lear** 02:55

Gallipolis, right? Was hometown.

**J****Jason Duff** 02:57

You know, being able to go and represent our country, to be surrounded with other entrepreneurs, being recognized for an award. Yeah. And it was award of being one of the top 100 entrepreneurs in the country at the United Nations. And then later, 2 years later, we got invited to do something similar at the White House. And I think that those kind of experiences— I think I equate Jesse and a lot of people who are part of Impact as very humble people. But it's important when you work really hard to celebrate those successes and awards. When you get recognized for an award, that's a great opportunity to clarify what you're passionate about and your message and your business. Yeah. How did you— maybe share a little bit with our listeners, what was your business at the time and why did you get recognized?

 J**Jesse Lear** 03:44

Yeah. So our business at the time was very different than the business that I operate now. I essentially, you know, the story goes back to right after college. I, by that point, you know, as a child I didn't know I wanted to be an entrepreneur, but as I, you know, started going through college, I figured out that that's really what I wanted to do. I thought it was just going to magically come together. It did not.

 J**Jason Duff** 04:05

So unlike—

 J**Jesse Lear** 04:06

Imagine that. Yeah. I'm at, you know, unlike my smart friends who were taking jobs at large companies, you know, great salaries, benefits, everything from day one. Um, I was just, you know, dabbling in projects and, you know, really trusting that everything was going to come together. I was going to be this, you know, successful entrepreneur and that is not what happened. I graduated college, moved back in with my parents for a while while I tried to figure things out. Ended up bouncing a check to a buddy of mine who had been trying to convince me to come basically take a job doing door-to-door sales with him. I hadn't wanted to do it at all, but as soon as I bounced a check to him, I felt like I owed not only him, but it was kind of a little bit of a rock bottom moment where I realized I'm going to have to choose a different path, at least for a while. So I moved to Columbus to sell cable internet services door-to-door.

 J**Jason Duff** 04:54

All right.

**J****Jesse Lear** 04:55

Did that for 2 straight years. And it's funny how things work out in ways you don't expect, because my business partner with that previous business, Travis, he was in a similar situation after school. He was back with his parents trying to figure out what to do. Heard that I was doing pretty well selling cable and internet in Columbus, said, hey, can you get me an interview? He moved to Columbus We said, hey, we can probably afford a nice apartment if we split it. So we became roommates, and it was there that we noticed that there was a trash compactor in this community. I think it was maybe 450 apartments, and it had a trash compactor on one end. We lived on the other end. So, you know, there were days where it was -10 degrees, there's snow and ice everywhere, and you got these two 40-pound bags of trash, and the only way to take your trash out at this community that literally says Luxury Living on the sign is to haul it yourself all the way across this property, probably a 15-minute walk each way in the freezing cold. People were putting it on top of their cars, forgetting about it, pulling off onto the road. It would spill everywhere. And it just really struck us as strange that, that, that, you know, having to handle your own trash in that way would be a part of luxury living in an apartment community. Well, we found out before long was that that was pretty normal for large apartment communities. Yeah. And we had this idea like, hey, you know, we're door-to-door guys, like why can't there be a door-to-door pickup service for apartment communities for trash and then recycling too? So we went and pitched it to our property manager and we were 22 or 23 years old at the time and we had no clue what we were doing. And you know, in preparation to meet with her and all of that, we created this little janky flyer which we were very proud of that had a picture of us on the inside with our shirts off on the beach And we— yeah, we didn't think that was weird at all, you know. So we bring it in.

**J****Jason Duff** 06:46

Anything that sells.

**J****Jesse Lear** 06:47

Oh yeah, yeah. So, and we weren't even thinking, we just thought it was the best picture we had of us, you know. It was like, so that was our photo. So we brought it in and, you know, she thought, you know, oh, this is cute, you know. And she basically explained to us, hey, you know, we're a very large company. We're not just an apartment— it's not just one little apartment community. This is a very large company. And if you want to work with us, that means getting a contract with us. You're going to have to start an actual business. You're going to have to have licenses, insurance, all this stuff. And so, you know, that was kind of an embarrassing experience, even though she was pretty nice about it. So we went back and we said, hey, we're— if that's what it takes, we're going to do it. We sold cable in the afternoon, so we basically started meeting at Panera Bread at 8 AM every morning. If one of us was late, we had to buy the other one breakfast.

**J****Jason Duff** 07:32

I like that accountability. That's a good piece.

J

**Jesse Lear** 07:34

Yeah. Yeah. So we knew, you know, we wanted— we knew we needed consistency. That much we did know. Know if we were going to make it work. So I had no clue what we were doing. We had no clue how to create a logo. We had no clue what licenses or insurances or any of that stuff we need, how to create a website, who to talk to to get clients. We didn't know any of this stuff. So every day we would meet from 8 to noon before we started our day jobs and just, you know, had a to-do list and wouldn't run through it.

J

**Jason Duff** 08:00

And, um, who was your first client?

J

**Jesse Lear** 08:02

Yeah, our first client was Oakwood Management Company in Columbus, Ohio. Uh, and we actually met the, uh, CEO at a trade show. And, uh, it's kind of a long story in itself, but the short version is he, uh, saw a little bit, I think, of himself in us because he had started as a maintenance worker at one of the properties and ended up going up through the ranks, becoming CEO of the entire management company. So he saw us, and, you know, by the time we met him for lunch, uh, we had tried for 6 months to no avail to get our first client. So we were a little discouraged by that point, and we were— we had stopped pretending that we had it all together and pretending that we were this, you know, really cool company that was established and all that. And we basically sat down and, uh, we were at Longhorn Steakhouse and we basically looked him in the eyes and said, look, we're just a couple of kids with a really good idea that we really believe will bring you a lot of value. We have no clients yet and we just need somebody to give us a shot. And he, I think, really appreciated that authenticity and looked at us and was like, okay, here's what I'm gonna do. And that's when he gave us the worst business deal offer we probably ever had.

J

**Jason Duff** 09:13

He said, the worst but best, probably.

J

**Jesse Lear** 09:15

Uh, yes. And long, long-term best one ever. Yeah. But hindsight. Oh yeah. In hindsight. So essentially what he said is, I'm going to give you \$1,000 and you can then basically what you're going to have to do is pick up trash and recycling 5 nights a week, starting at 8:00 PM at every single apartment within this 244-unit apartment community. 5 nights a week for 1 month. I'm gonna give you \$1,000 and that's it. What year was this? This was in 2009 or 10.

J

**Jason Duff** 09:44

All right.

**J****Jesse Lear** 09:45

And he's like, you know, you got to pick it up from every door every night, 5 nights a week for 1 month. You're gonna have to buy your own truck. You're gonna have to do your own supplies. You're gonna have to put out flyers to educate the guests. I don't want to do anything, and here's \$1,000, you know, good luck if you want it.

**J****Jason Duff** 09:58

Good luck.

**J****Jesse Lear** 09:59

Test. Yeah, yeah. And we were over the moon just to even have closed the door. Yeah, yeah, exactly. So you know, we bought a truck, used truck, got a good deal on it. I think we had maybe \$3,000 to our names each at that time. You know, printed off a bunch of flyers, bought some things to, you know, give to the residents to put out their trash and recycling. And the first night of pickup, a very large percentage of the community participated, and that's when we knew we were on to something. After the month, we went back to them and we said, hey, what we really think your residents are passionate about is recycling. So instead of giving us this big deal for trash and recycling 5 nights a week, why don't we just start with recycling 1 night a week and see how it goes? And instead of 1 property, let's do all your properties. And they said, okay.

**J****Jason Duff** 10:48

So when I think what you found is that by doing that, that, that job that was at the base of the pyramid, you were getting feedback and you were seeing about what's working and not working. And that takes a lot of courage to number 1, take that deal when you knew that it wasn't— the money wasn't great, but the learning that was going to come from it and the relationship that you'd established could lead to something else.

**J****Jesse Lear** 11:10

Yeah, 100%. And really, we just, we were hungry. We needed a chance to even prove on some level, I think, even to ourselves that this idea was in demand and that people would see value in it. So we were beyond excited about it, and it ended up leading to much greater things. Um, today I'm friends with, uh, John, the guy that gave us a shot, and my business partner still plays pickleball with him every week. Um, that was what, I don't know, 79 years ago. And, um, yeah, that ended— they ended up being a client of ours the entire life of the company.

**J****Jason Duff** 11:45

And wow, can you explain with VIP Waste Management how you grew that company and then you actually exited that company with a successful sale? Yeah, just kind of give us a little bit of that journey.

J

**Jesse Lear** 11:57

Yeah, so the fun version of it is, um, the in probably the first couple of weeks when we were still trying to come up with a company name for VIP Waste Services and all of that, uh, we were doing a little bit of research to see if we were— we thought we were the first ones ever to come up with the idea, and we weren't. There was a very large company based out of Tampa, Florida that was— that had sort of pioneered the industry back in the '90s, um, this idea of picking up, you know, trash and recycling doorstep at apartments. And, uh, we— I remember saying, uh, I don't remember which one of us said it, but one of us said to the other one, hey, wouldn't it be cool if someday this company grew to the point where that company would want to buy us? And so after that point, we never really talked about it anymore. We were just trying to make the business work and, you know, you know, make a decent income and all of that. We weren't really trying— we weren't building it with the intent to sell. Um, but there came a time where that company actually moved into our market, probably in year 5 or something like that, and they started trying to get business in Columbus. And, uh, by that time we had focused so much on relationships, uh, that they had a really decently hard time getting in. And they hired one of our friends as their salesperson, which was a little bit interesting.

J

**Jason Duff** 13:05

Yeah.

J

**Jesse Lear** 13:05

Ouch. Yeah.

J

**Jason Duff** 13:06

So, but real, that happens.

J

**Jesse Lear** 13:08

Yeah.

J

**Jason Duff** 13:08

Yeah.

**J****Jesse Lear** 13:08

So all of a sudden we're competing against, you know, our friend and she's, she was honestly probably even better connected in the industry than us, but our relationships were so strong with our clients that they really, after a year or two years of trying, weren't able to get hardly anyone away from us. Which really goes to— I mean, that's— it just really speaks to the value of, uh, and the power of building relationships. And, you know, versus just focusing on being the cheapest or having the best features or whatever. But there was one trade show, uh, where we used to always do these stunts at trade shows. I love, you know, marketing, interesting marketing, uh, stunts. And, um, you know, we had partnered with the zoo a couple of times and had a clouded leopard cub at our booth one year, penguins at our booth one year. It's pretty cool. We hired a contestant from The Bachelorette one year to come in when everybody knew who he was. And, you know, we had this red carpet and the step-and-repeat banner with the logos, and we ordered a couple hundred red roses and basically let people get their picture taken on the red carpet with this guy handing them a rose. Um, brilliant. Yeah, so it was a really fun part of the business for me. And there was this one year where there was a Western-themed trade show, and, uh, we thought, okay, what we're gonna do is we're gonna get this fake cow, and we're gonna have a lasso, and we're gonna let people try to lasso a cow. And if they can lasso the cow in 3 tries, they're gonna get a free cowboy hat. Well, the cowboy hat had our logo in big letters on the front, and the thought was, in this big trade show floor, kind of be nice to have our logo, you know, towering above people's heads and in good view. So, uh, that's what ended up happening. People were obsessed with it. They loved it. They wanted these hats. They were really nice hats. I think we spent \$11 or \$12 on these things and bought hundreds of them. So it was an investment. It wasn't a cheap bet.

**J****Jason Duff** 14:58

Yeah.

**J****Jesse Lear** 14:58

Okay. But we really felt like it was going to work. And, you know, so halfway through the trade show, I get kind of bored and needed to, you know, take a break from all of the talking to people and things like that. So I'm just doing a pass around the trade show floor and I see this competitor of ours and our friend is sitting there and I go up to her and chatting or whatever. And she looks around, she's laughing. She's like, Your guys' logo is everywhere in here. Like, it's everywhere. And I just kind of laughed and I was like, well, you know how you can make that go away, right? And her regional manager was sitting there beside her. And, you know, I don't know if I even knew who he was at the time, but she's like, how? How would I make it go away? And I was like, you could just buy our company. And I was joking at the time. We really weren't trying to sell. We really hadn't even thought about selling in probably a year or more, but her manager who was sitting beside her knew something I didn't, and that was that this company was purchasing companies like ours, like, probably once a month or more. Like, they were just buying up smaller companies like crazy.

**J****Jason Duff** 16:00

Yeah.

J

**Jesse Lear** 16:01

And he said, really, you guys would sell? And then I kind of realized, wait a minute, this— they might be actually interested. And I was like, well, you know, we're not trying to. We're very happy with how our company's growing, but we're business people too. Like, if somebody made us an offer, we would at least listen. Yeah. And he said, okay, well, give me your card and, you know, if we have any interest, I'll let you know. So I was like, okay, whatever, here's my card. The next day I got an email from somebody on their executive team in Tampa saying, hey, here's what our regional manager said after talking to you. Um, we're really intrigued by what you guys are doing. Uh, let me know if you're serious and I'll fly up and talk to you. So we start flying back and forth, attorneys, accountants, everybody gets involved. Everybody's talking about what to do, whether it's a good idea. We bring on a you know, somebody to kind of help us think through the process. And a year later of, you know, anybody who's ever sold a business, you know, it's, it'll take a couple years off your life, even if you don't like it. Yeah, it's very stressful a lot of times and things like that. But it was, they made it very easy for us. It was, they were very trustworthy. They did everything they said they were going to do. So it was a really great experience. And about a year, year and a half later, we were acquired by them. And It was—

J

**Jason Duff** 17:13

you were without a job.

J

**Jesse Lear** 17:14

Yeah, my— it was a little bit of an acquihire situation because they, you know, they realized how important the relationships were and how tight we were with our clients. So we, um, sort of spent a small period, small amount of time, um, you know, in sales for them after they purchased us. So my business card literally went from founder and CEO to sales representative overnight, um, which was an interesting experience because I didn't realize how tied to my identity my job was.

J

**Jason Duff** 17:45

So when you got the news that they had signed on the dotted line, yeah, how did you feel?

J

**Jesse Lear** 17:52

So we got the LOI, which for anybody who hasn't sold a business before is basically, you know, a lot of sales start with that. It's a letter of intent that they give you just telling you, hey, we're assuming all the due diligence works out, we're going to buy you, you know, if you agree. Um, so I actually received the LOI from them as I was standing in our wedding venue, um, waiting for my wedding rehearsal to start the night before the wedding. And I'm standing in this, in this wedding venue, I've got a million things on my mind, and I get this LOI. And I'd known that they were pretty serious up until that point, but nothing had really put it in paper, on paper. And then all of a sudden we get that, and it was the number, it was very close to the number that we were hoping for and things like that. And it was We were very excited. Of course, there was a long process after that. But after we sold, I mean, it was one of the most exciting experiences of my life, especially once the process of doing it was over. It was life-changing for us. It really was. I mean, we had reinvested a lot in the business. We weren't really making— it's not like we were riding around on yachts or anything.

J

**Jason Duff** 18:55

You couldn't pay the big salary because you're doubling down on doing more.

J

**Jesse Lear** 18:59

Exactly. We weren't struggling, but it wasn't—

J

**Jason Duff** 19:02

we didn't—

J

**Jesse Lear** 19:03

the lifestyle, uh, wasn't extravagant to any extent, right? So to have that, um, that payoff after 7 or 8 years of really, really hard work, sometimes until the sun came up, you know, it was, was pretty awesome.

J

**Jason Duff** 19:17

Can you speak— because I, I think we're gonna move into what you're doing next, but yeah, partnerships. A lot of folks that are listening, you know, maybe are really contemplating, can I do this by myself, or if they know someone of going into a partnership, can you speak about what that process was for you?

J

**Jesse Lear** 19:37

Yeah.

J

**Jason Duff** 19:38

And then what the highlights were. And then again, what challenges that you've seen with partnerships?

J

**Jesse Lear** 19:44

Yeah, I— this is one of my favorite topics because anybody who follows Dave Ramsey, you're like, he has this quote that he says, which is the only type of ship that sinks is a partnership. Yeah. And I don't go— I wouldn't go that far. But I think you have to be very careful with them. And I think a lot of people go into partnerships for, or look for a partner for the wrong reasons. Um, wrong reasons to go into a partnership are, I'm scared of doing this by myself. Great advice. Um, another wrong reason for going into a partnership is, uh, I don't want to be lonely. Um, or anything like that. Um, you know, it's easy to give somebody 50% of something that is currently worth zero. But if you're going to build it and it's going to become something real, there's going to come a day where that 50% is at a huge cost to you.

J

**Jason Duff** 20:33

Yeah.

J

**Jesse Lear** 20:33

And you got to be sure ahead of time that it's worth it. In our case, the partnership ended up being a wonderful thing. We had complementary personalities. He was the guy everybody wanted to invite to the party. I was—

J

**Jason Duff** 20:50

you're not that guy?

J

**Jesse Lear** 20:50

Not really. No, I'm way more comfortable in a closed room with a whiteboard than I am at a party. And he was the opposite. He'll sit in a room with a whiteboard as long as absolutely necessary before he goes to the party. And I, I'm kind of— yeah, so we had complementary personalities. He was a ton of fun, you know. I was more of like the structured one who really enjoyed like thinking through the analysis of plans and things like that. So it helped us a lot because whenever we would meet with clients or we were working on a project or whatever, we could maximize the use of each other's strengths. Um, and we could get along with almost anybody because we start talking to somebody, we notice that one of us connects a little bit more, and the other one knows to just stop talking. And so we could connect with almost any type of person that way. Um, our values aligned, which was— that was the most important part of it. I think you got to be careful that your values align, that you want the same things, that you're both willing to go to the same length to make the vision a reality. Um, but really, if you're going to— if you're going to seek out a partner, it— they need to be able to bring something that you can't bring.

J

**Jason Duff** 22:00

Or so it could be capital, it could be great, it could be a skill set.

J

**Jesse Lear** 22:04

Yeah.

**J****Jason Duff** 22:04

Um, it could be relationships. So I mean, I, I think that's real important, you know, that people understand that can come in a variety of different formats and ways.

**J****Jesse Lear** 22:14

Exactly. And I, you know, I think it's important to see too that You know, you're not only seeking to get something from them, you, you only want to bring them on if you can bring something yourself of value to them too. It needs to be, you know, not just a partnership on paper but a true partnership.

**J****Jason Duff** 22:29

And Jesse, earlier you mentioned, and I liked this a lot, is accountability. Yeah. So in the— from the beginning, whether it was those early Panera days that you agreed to show up, and if someone was late, that other person's buying breakfast, like And it seems like that worked really well between the two of you.

**J****Jesse Lear** 22:45

It did work well. I mean, it's a, it's a small stick, you know, as the highest possible cost was going to be maybe \$10 or something like that, but it was still enough to get you out of bed, make sure that you were there on time, especially as young as we were and as little as we made at the time. \$10 was important. And I think you got to know how each other works and sometimes just a little bit of a, a little bit of a structure like that can be really helpful.

**J****Jason Duff** 23:11

Yeah, well, obviously you're not doing trash pickup anymore. Yeah. I mean, I am familiar with your work from the Loft Above here that is in Bellefontaine, which is an Airbnb, you know, luxury curated experience that I know we've had even other guests here on the podcast who have gone through and, you know, stayed for a weekend and enjoyed their stay there.

**J****Jesse Lear** 23:36

And awesome.

**J****Jason Duff** 23:37

They say that you have the nicest bathrobes that they've ever experienced. Oh, those robes are special. Yeah, you know, and it's not just the robes. Like, as we've had guests and we, you know, hear the feedback of people that come to Downtown Bellefontaine and maybe they're doing a day trip or they're coming in for a business meeting or looking for a place to host their family or friends, but when you get there, that you walk in, the way the property is staged with the bottles of wine, with the handwritten thank you note, the chocolates on the bed, the cleanliness, the the way the property looks, like the lights are on, the smell, the smell. That is a signature scent, like the kind of things that you would go to a large city. And I happen to think that that is very intentional. But before you tell us that's intentional, I would like to share what's your connection in Bellefontaine?

J

**Jesse Lear** 24:35

Yeah, so we have a very special connection to Bellefontaine. As you know, we— my wife and I, Well, I, I had come and toured with you, um, after we met in New York and was really inspired by what you were doing, by the revitalization, by all of the energy that was building in Bellefontaine. We were seeing people move back here after moving away, after, you know, maybe high school graduation or something. People were visiting their parents and thinking, my goodness, this place is really kind of cool, I, I think I might want to move back. And then you're seeing that happen and all of the new businesses that are launching. And I just thought it was a very inspiring place. Um, and then, uh, my, my wife Chelsea was very into interior design when she— when we met, she was an interior designer in Indianapolis. And, uh, after we got married, she moved to Columbus and, um, you know, and now, you know, has her own freelance practice. But when, uh, we were just dating, um, you know, and I started— things started to get a little bit more serious and I started to, uh, plan a proposal. I started thinking, you know, what would be the most, uh, I don't know, enjoyable or exciting sort of setting for her? And we had been talking multiple times about what you were doing up here, and, um, I told her multiple times, hey, you know, I got to take you up and show you what Jason's doing with these, uh, downtown Bellefontaine properties, because I knew she'd be inspired by the design and things like that. And, um, so I knew it would not ring any, uh, I knew she wouldn't see anything coming because I'd been telling her I wanted to bring her up here for a tour for a long time. So for the proposal, I essentially brought her up here. Jason gave us a tour together of his downtown projects. We— I forget where all you took us now, but there were some sort of like under the, under the radar, underground places you took us to that were off the beaten path.

J

**Jason Duff** 26:21

Yeah.

J

**Jesse Lear** 26:22

Projects that hadn't been really publicly announced yet. Yeah, exactly. And she was having a blast just getting to see all of this happening. And afterwards we did a private coffee tasting at Native Coffee Company.

J

**Jason Duff** 26:34

Nice.

J

**Jesse Lear** 26:34

And that was where I proposed.

J

**Jason Duff** 26:39

Yeah, so the delay text message of like, oh my gosh, happening. I'm like on pins and needles.

J

**Jesse Lear** 26:45

Yeah, so Jason's waiting for me to propose so he can come back and celebrate with us. But yeah, so I text him, uh, not to interrupt you, but I texted him when, you know, he was like, hey, text me when, uh, you know, after you guys are done and, and, uh, I'll come celebrate with you guys or whatever. And so, um I forget what exactly I texted you, something like, you can come back now, or something like that. But I meant to put a smiley face and I put a frown face.

J

**Jason Duff** 27:09

Oh no. So I'm panicking thinking like, oh my gosh, like it's gonna be okay. Like we'll just put this on pause.

J

**Jesse Lear** 27:18

But he's like, yeah, yeah.

J

**Jason Duff** 27:19

But I came back and there were big smiles. So I knew he knew something got translated. But you know that the neat thing about that story is today with you know, Jesse's new business Epicurean Properties, they curated the Loft Above space, which is directly above Native Coffee. And so, you know, every, every business has these neat origin stories, and, and just, you know, to see it be living out and how they're using their gifts to enhance the experience in town, like, it's been just a great, a great example of success.

J

**Jesse Lear** 27:52

Yeah, it's been a lot of fun for sure.

J

**Jason Duff** 27:54

Yeah. So tell us about, you know, how you got started into that and how your model is different from maybe traditional, you know, real estate kind of setup.

J

**Jesse Lear** 28:03

Yeah. So after selling VIP Waste, one of the things that was the biggest surprise was, you know, I thought that as an entrepreneur, making a decent amount of money was probably one of my top priorities. I was — that's what I always thought was true. And what I quickly realized after selling the company was that it's really more about the adventure and the game and the significance that comes with it, with creating something new, envisioning something exciting and making it happen in reality. And the night that I really realized that was, I don't know, maybe a week or two after selling the company. And I got this— I don't remember what it was now, but I got this business idea and I was up until 3 a.m. sketching it out.

J

**Jason Duff** 28:43

Oh yeah.

**J****Jesse Lear** 28:43

And I had just sold the company. I was, you know, free of the stress and You're allowed to be creative again. Had more money than I'd ever had and things like that, and yet I was still staying up until 3:00 a.m. sketching out a business idea. And that's when I realized, wait a minute, this wasn't about the money. This was about the game. And I knew I wanted to do something else in the near future. And, you know, being as young as, as, you know, I was, it's like, okay, I need— I would have had to make like \$100 million to be able to just retire right then, right? And we— then our number was nice, but it wasn't that big. So I knew I needed to find something else. And, uh, it wasn't until I heard on a podcast, um, I heard about this thing called rental arbitrage, um, that I knew what I wanted to do next. We were coming back from, uh, my wife's parents' place, and she was asleep in the passenger seat, and I'm listening to this podcast, and I hear this guy talking from South Carolina about this idea that he'd come up with to partner with landlords or property owners to essentially lease— either lease their property or partner with them and basically furnish their property and turn it into an Airbnb. And this sort of goes against the traditional idea, if you can call any Airbnb idea traditional, of, yeah, you know, using a home that you own or something like that and turning it into an Airbnb. So this guy was partnering with landlords, either splitting profits or doing a traditional lease and just keeping the profit himself, furnishing it putting it on Airbnb. And he had made something like \$300,000 his first year in profit from doing that. And I thought, wow, this is really interesting. Not a bad gig, right? No, really interesting from a financial perspective. But also, um, after selling the company, my wife and I traveled quite a bit because, you know, we had been excited about it. And one of the things that we loved was experiencing these high-end boutique hotels. So everywhere we went, we sought out these unique high-end hotel experiences where you know, there was something special or award-winning or whatever about this hotel that we could experience. And we were fascinated by hospitality. How do you hire, you know, dozens of people, owners not even present, yet still make sure every single guest has a special experience? Because, yeah, you know, not everybody stays in a hotel, you know, once, twice a month. Some people, this is like their, you know, 25th anniversary, and you want them to have a special experience. Um, how are they able to create this for people? What kind of linens are they using? Where do they go to get them? Like, all of these things were very fascinating to us. And we started talking to hotel staff and managers to learn. And so I knew that we were passionate about hospitality. I knew that I was passionate about marketing. I knew that my wife was passionate about interior design. And as soon as I heard this Airbnb thing described, I was like, wow, this was— this is made for us. So I called a couple friends of mine, including Jason, and just said, hey, do you have any properties that might work for a model like this where I could just try it out? Yeah, I did two. One was the loft above and one was a loft in German Village in Columbus. And that's really what led to the business today, Epicurean Properties. We originally wanted to be a luxury Airbnb company and we were pursuing that rental arbitrage model.

**J****Jason Duff** 31:56

And, uh, and just to give some quick metrics, so let's just say like an apartment that you would rent for X and then how you would— what you would charge daily for that. Kind of give just a little preface about what that means and how you'd make money with that model.

J

**Jesse Lear** 32:13

Yeah, great question. So essentially what you're doing with Airbnb is you're pursuing— you're adding a hospitality element to a normal, you know, real estate rental situation, but you're also able to charge far more than you would be able to charge, say, if you were just looking for a 1-year lease. Tenant. So a good example would be, you know, the loft above rents for, I think it's \$199 right now for weekdays and \$297 on weekends. That goes up a little bit more on holidays sometimes. And, you know, I guess I shouldn't give specific numbers for that particular example, but let's say that there's a property that's \$1,500 a month is what you could lease it to a long-term tenant for. Very realistic to make for, you know, \$3,000 to \$6,000 a month on Airbnb because, you know, you may be able to charge \$100 to \$200, possibly \$300 a night or way more depending on the property and where it is. So the margins can be much larger. But the thing you have to remember is with Airbnb, you know, you have people constantly coming and going. It needs to be turned over between each guest.

J

**Jason Duff** 33:18

You got to get people in there, right?

J

**Jesse Lear** 33:19

Yeah. There's a lot of, you know, consistent marketing that needs to be done and there's a lot of consistent operations to it. So it can be a really cool way to provide hospitality and, you know, lodging options, especially in a small town where maybe a large hotel isn't feasible. But there's definitely some additional work to it that you won't have with a long-term.

J

**Jason Duff** 33:40

And just to highlight those numbers, I mean, just think of a normal loft apartment. You may get that \$1,500 a month, but like in the model that he shares by renting it daily and providing those great amenities, experiences, decor, all of those pieces, you can make an additional \$3,000 to \$6,000 a month. So actually, if you run it well, you're going to make more money than the property owner or the landlord. Absolutely. Doesn't mean that that's easy, but that's part of his business model. And can you share how many units are you up and managing today with Epicurean Properties?

J

**Jesse Lear** 34:16

Yeah. So we're managing 42 right now, I believe.

J

**Jason Duff** 34:19

42 units. Yeah. And just using that first analogy, anyone can kind of run the math how you can scale and build a business without owning a single piece of real estate. And I think I asked you earlier before, to this point, you do not own any of these properties, correct? And you really don't have any interest of doing so at this point?

J

**Jesse Lear** 34:40

No. I mean, if you look at the numbers, um, from a long-term wealth building perspective or from an equity perspective, it would make a lot of sense absolutely to purchase properties and grow that way. But from a scaling perspective as a business, um, you know, purchasing a property, you're looking at down payments, you're looking at having to handle, uh, you know, all kinds of other real estate taxes. Yeah, utilities, um, uh, you know, HVAC systems going out, like all of these different things that owners are responsible for, we don't have to worry about. So really, the, you know, the upfront investment for us is \$7,000 to \$10,000 on furniture and decor and supplies and things like that, and then we can almost immediately, you know, you can sign a lease and furnish a place. And, you know, for us, we typically try to do it in 2 weeks just to, you know, preserve sanity. But you, we've done it a lot faster, and you can be up and moving just like that. Um, and then, uh, you know, have a, your first guest within a matter of weeks.

J

**Jason Duff** 35:37

Wow, super scalable.

J

**Jesse Lear** 35:39

Very, yeah.

J

**Jason Duff** 35:41

What was, what was your thoughts, Jason, when, when you got the call from him? Like, because you had not done that before with anybody yet, right? No. And really, at this point, we— this is why I work really well with, with Jesse and, and Epicurean Properties, we, we want to be the landlord and we want to take care— because I have the team and the systems and processes to take care of those larger property issues. The, the detail that Epicurean provides and why they're such a great fit is that in a lot of towns, and particularly that's true here in Bellefontaine, is some of the corporate hotels and lodging that we have that surround our town are not great. The properties are older, deferred, customer service isn't ideal. And there's a lot of towns and communities that are finding that consumers, when they do visit or experience those towns, they maybe want access to a kitchen because they want to prepare their own food. Yeah, they maybe want a property that they could stay in instead of just a day or two, a short-term rental. And so I think that's where the Epicurean model works so well with us. Is that, and I think it could work with a lot of other towns, landlords, investors, because that, that's kind of the future. That's what's in demand. But can you speak to, I highlight a little bit of what we're hearing in terms of reviews and feedback, but what do you think makes your properties different and also the way that you manage them?

J

**Jesse Lear** 37:08

I love that question. There are multiple times per week that I think to myself, we really need to film what happens behind the scenes at Epicurean because the level of obsession and intensity and attention to detail that goes into preparing every single apartment for the next guest at our company is just wild. Um, and it's very intentional. Um, we never said— it's intentional now, but we didn't set out to, to operate that way. I wanted to keep costs low. I never dreamed we would have a full-time on-salary manager whose only job is to oversee the turnover.

J

**Jason Duff** 37:43

But you married an interior designer, man.

J

**Jesse Lear** 37:44

Yeah, yeah. So we, you know, the Obviously the design, um, it starts with that, right? Choosing the right properties and areas where people really want to be is key because on Airbnb, reviews and ratings are everything. And high prices is one of the most important factors when it comes to making sure that you have low headaches. You're going to have a lot more anyway than you would with standard long-term tenants, just in terms of questions constantly about parking and things like that. You know, which you can mitigate with good education up front. But, you know, if you have low rates, now you attract guests who maybe have lower budgets, things like that. It's a huge, huge generality— generalization, so I, you know, hesitate to say it, but in a general sense, you know, people who are more responsible tend to have a little bit larger budget. Not always, but sometimes. They tend to plan ahead more. So the better the area, the better the property, the better the design, the better your— ultimately your reviews become, the higher rates you can charge, the more people plan ahead or have to because you're always booked out. So the higher rates you're able to charge, the less headaches you have. And that's really what we focused on, providing a higher level of value and experience to the guest. That goes from the property area, the interior design. We don't have any like, you know, stock, just boring art. There are no futons for couches, anything like that. Everything's comfortable. Everything's well-designed, lovingly curated. But then a lot of it comes down to the cleanliness processes too. The turnover process that we go through is pretty, pretty intense from the— I guess the time a guest moves out at 11 a.m. checkout time We have a team that comes in, um, has a 100+ item checklist on a software app we use, goes through everything, basically the most intense spring cleaning you've ever imagined, top to bottom in the entire place. We go through, um, every piece of silverware is rewashed whether it was touched or not, every robe, every blanket, everything is washed whether it was touched or not. Um, and then, uh, that usually takes about 8 hours, sometimes more. And then the next morning we have our manager come in, do a detailed inspection, which usually takes an hour to an hour and a half, just to make sure that everything's perfect, put out the little welcome gifts, things like that. Our housekeepers go as far as doing things like having a drill with them and taking the toilet seat apart to clean the individual pieces and then put it back on the toilet.

J

**Jason Duff** 40:20

So you come to my house because we need that level of detail.

J

**Jesse Lear** 40:25

Yeah, you will not find it. I know because I've stayed in a lot of rentals. You will not find a rental anywhere that's as clean as ours. And I think people value that. Word gets around. Yeah, because there's a little bit of, you know, hotels have oftentimes built-in systems, processes that have been, you know, established in the industry and things like that.

J

**Jason Duff** 40:43

Um, how do you find people that actually care about that level of detail to work for you?

J

**Jesse Lear** 40:48

That is a great question, and it's not easy. I think, um, people have to really care about the experience to the guest. For, for the guests. And that's what we look for. But it only starts there. Training is a big part of it. Yeah. And that training process that we put people through, they help our manager do the turnover the first time, and then they essentially do, uh, you know, they go do a second turnover where they just get intensive support, but they're doing it on themselves or by themselves. And then the third time is the first time they ever get to do it by themselves. And then we use a software program called GoAudit, that I believe Rosewood Hotels and use and several other high-end brands that allows us to, in the inspection process, go through, take photos, make notes of every single section, and then it generates a score which we then can—

J

**Jason Duff** 41:35

Accountability.

J

**Jesse Lear** 41:36

Yeah, we send the report to the housekeepers, and so they know if they got a 98.7%, this is what that means. Yeah, here's what you could improve on next time. They can, you know, we're putting together a process where they can win awards and things like that by maintaining certain scores.

J

**Jason Duff** 41:49

That's really cool. Another unique thing about your model, at least from what I've heard of it, is the, uh, the loft above has a 2-night minimum. Yeah. And that's a, a shorter one of your properties, right? So explain to us why you did that. What's, you know, and, and how that works in a small town too. I'm also just like personally curious, like, yeah, yeah.

 J**Jesse Lear** 42:09

So the, the 2-night minimum I have mixed feelings about. Um, it's really, in my mind, it's something that bothers me a little bit, to be honest with you, about properties like the Loft Above, because sometimes people have an anniversary or something like that, they can't get away for 2 days. Yeah, it's pretty pricey once you factor in on Airbnb the service fees, cleaning fee, all of these types of things, plus 2 nights at \$297 or whatever. I mean, you're going to be dropping \$700 or \$800 on a 2-night stay. So I would love to be able to offer 1-night stays. And that's something that, you know, for the Loft Above specifically, we're constantly looking into. But the reason why we do 2-night stays, and I highly recommend that anybody who's operating an Airbnb as a 2-night minimum is because you almost, you almost instantly eliminate a lot of the issues with parties.

 J**Jason Duff** 42:54

It tends to price a big partier.

 J**Jesse Lear** 42:56

Oh yeah, yeah, you just seem like a party type.

 J**Jason Duff** 42:59

Yeah, rager.

 J**Jesse Lear** 43:00

Yeah, it eliminates a lot of that because, uh, people, you know, will go on Airbnb if they have, if that's what they have in mind, and they're going to search for a 1-night stay. They'll put in like August 11th to August 12th. And as a result, because they search for one night and you have a two-night minimum, your property isn't even going to show up. Yeah. So that's benefit number one. But also, you know, if they did happen to search for two nights, now you're kind of pricing them out too, because they might have been willing to pay \$400, but \$800 is pretty steep for just along those lines.

 J**Jason Duff** 43:25

You know, Airbnb takes a pretty big cut and the term of renting, they have a lot of traffic. So the plus of it, that's where a lot of people search. But Can you speak about like how you overcome that and how with your portfolio you, you make, you make money, you know? Yeah.

**J****Jesse Lear** 43:43

So on the host perspective, which is the term for the, you know, the folks who are actually listing the property on Airbnb, from the host perspective, the fee is actually very reasonable right now. I believe it's maybe 3% on Airbnb that they charge or keep out of the total accommodation amount. So it's on the guest side actually that the cost is focused more. Yeah, exactly. So when a guest books your property, in general, it's going to add, I believe the number somewhere around 15% to the total. But on our end, they only keep about 3%. So we personally, we actually don't really care whether people book through Airbnb or directly or whatever, because if they book directly with us, they're using our credit card processing, which keeps about 3% anyway. So financially, it's the same for us.

**J****Jason Duff** 44:27

That's good to know. Yeah. And then reviews. Have you been in a situation where you're getting a bad review? And how do you overcome that?

**J****Jesse Lear** 44:33

Yeah, so thankfully we've gotten very few, um, bad reviews. And, um, that's not to say that our guests have never had any issues. Um, one of the things that we learned very early on is that if people know you care, a lot can go wrong and they'll oftentimes still leave you a very, very good review, 5-star review, whatever. Um, it's when people think you don't care that you get annihilated with those 1-star reviews just because one little thing went wrong. Um, people oftentimes are more impressed by how you handle a mistake than they were— would have been had you never made a mistake at all. Uh, so we've actually gotten some rave reviews over guests that have had unanticipated issues that even we couldn't have prevented, um, like their car getting broken into or something like that, which you get any sort of volume, you get in the dozens of these things, that's going to eventually happen. Um, but the way you handle it determines how they ultimately feel about you. And then it goes from there. But I think with bad reviews in any kind of hospitality, whether it's dining, hotels, whatever, you're going to get them from time to time, whether you deserve them or not. And, um, you know, there's two ways of looking at that. The first one is, uh, you know, sometimes you get the best feedback. Sometimes the best feedback comes from people who aren't worried about offending you. And we've had, we had a guest recently who was pretty difficult, um, and complained about pretty much everything, um, uh, including things that were just completely ridiculous. But we were able to take some really good feedback from a couple of the things that they said, and those two things or whatever, we were like, wow, they're right. Everyone else has liked us enough to not want to bother us and not want to share it. These people didn't care how we felt. They shared it and now we know to use it to improve. Um, but yeah, I think it's just something you need to expect to some extent. We had people, our first 4-star review, our first non-5-star review we ever got. I remember. And this guest knocked us one star down to 4, and in the review basically blasted us because they said that they felt unsafe in this apartment. And the reason they felt unsafe was because there was a gap, in their words, under the, under one of the exterior doors large enough to fit a football through. Which had it been large enough to fit a football through, would have been a legitimate reason to feel unsafe. But this gap was at the most an inch and a half.

J

**Jason Duff** 46:55

So they exaggerated, but that to them, that's what it—

J

**Jesse Lear** 46:58

to them, felt like— that's what it felt like. They were probably going through something really difficult in their lives that had nothing to do with us, and we happened to be the lucky people they took it out on. And, um, you know, you have to on one side know that that's event— that's occasionally going to happen. Yeah. But on the other side, it's very important to work very hard to make your guests feel taken care of. Um, there was a study done— I wish I could remember the details— but there was a study done some time ago on why customers leave companies. And, you know, they explored all the different possibilities. Is it, you know, price is too high, not the features I wanted, wanted to go to a competitor that sold us better, whatever. And what they ended up finding was beyond any of the possible reasons a customer could want to leave a company, the one that came in much higher than any of the other others as far as reasons why customers leave companies was perceived indifference. Wow. They feel like you don't care.

J

**Jason Duff** 47:57

Yeah.

J

**Jesse Lear** 47:58

And that is something that whether you're in an old historic building in German Village and have an inch and a half gap under a door, whether, you know, something goes wrong and they have trouble checking in, you, you may not have control over every single detail in your business, but you always have control over whether or not you care. And it turns out that's the thing people care about most.

J

**Jason Duff** 48:16

Indifference is perceived indifference. Yeah, exactly.

J

**Jesse Lear** 48:20

Geez.

J

**Jason Duff** 48:21

Wow, well, thank you for sharing that. What's next when you think about Epicurean and your business and things like that? It's on the horizon.

J

**Jesse Lear** 48:30

Yeah, so we're very passionate about Epicurean Properties, and, um, one of the interesting things that happened, um, which you can probably guess, you know, sort of the progression of things— we started Epicurean in, in, uh, late 2019, and we had big hopes. We launched the loft above, we launched this loft in German Village And then immediately I signed 12 other leases in Columbus. So we had 14 leases almost overnight. We were really ramping this thing up. We were excited about it. We knew it was working. People were starting to book all throughout the summer the following year. I mean, it was, it was getting stacked and we were super excited. And then of course, we all know what happened in early 2020. People stopped traveling for obvious reasons, and almost overnight, all of our reservations for the entire calendar canceled. So we just signed 14 leases. We just— in our model, we, um, we wanted to take the full brunt of the, uh, the responsibility for filling these apartments. So we didn't pursue any of these, you know, profit split models or anything like that. I wanted control and freedom. So we had signed legitimate leases, 14-month leases in most cases, um, you know.

J

**Jason Duff** 49:36

So expenses are going out, no income coming in.

J

**Jesse Lear** 49:39

No income coming in. We went from feeling like, okay, we're gonna great profit, you know, this is going to be awesome, to having an empty calendar and an insane amount of bills that did not stop. And one thing we noticed was that one of our guests had booked for, you know, multi-month stay, which was a huge win for us at the time because most people booked for a couple days, right? And he was a consultant for Victoria's Secret. He was from the Netherlands. And we started noticing like we really enjoyed having him as a guest. We get to know him over time. We surprised him with his favorite bourbon one day when one of our housekeepers noticed that he, you know, had one of the— he had an empty bottle in the trash. Like, we could do some really cool things.

J

**Jason Duff** 50:17

Awesome. Yeah, it's really cool.

J

**Jesse Lear** 50:18

Yeah, we could do some really cool things for him like that, that, you know, we didn't have time or opportunity to do for other guests. And, um, so our idea to, uh, really get through COVID was to pivot into hosting more people like him who wanted multi-month stays and needed an actual temporary home. While between, you know, homes or, you know, in town for temporary work contract or whatever. So that was the transition that we made as a way of surviving COVID. We upped our minimum everywhere except the loft above to 30 nights and really started pursuing those longer stays. And, you know, not obviously as long as a traditional tenant would stay in many cases, but with a 30-night minimum. And, you know, based on the fact that so many people were in transition in 2020, we were able to fill the calendar back up and survive. So that's really the focus of our business model now.

J

**Jason Duff** 51:05

And you've maintained that, that those longer stays?

J

**Jesse Lear** 51:08

Yeah, yeah, that's what we do exclusively now.

J

**Jason Duff** 51:11

Wow. And a lot of the relationships, I imagine, are HR directors for area companies. What other leads and kind of relationships to fill those properties?

J

**Jesse Lear** 51:20

Yeah, we do a lot of our own advertising and marketing online.

J

**Jason Duff** 51:23

Okay.

J

**Jesse Lear** 51:24

In order to find guests who are in a pinch and need that temporary um, high, high-end.

J

**Jason Duff** 51:29

So someone may have sold their home.

J

**Jesse Lear** 51:30

Yeah.

J

**Jason Duff** 51:31

And they're looking for a new home, but just because how tight the real estate market is, that may not exist right now.

J

**Jesse Lear** 51:36

Right.

J

**Jason Duff** 51:36

So you fill that gap.

J

**Jesse Lear** 51:38

Exactly. So we figured out how to market to those people. So in, in many ways we market to them directly, but yeah, absolutely. We've got relationships with, um, you know, everything from universities to local companies who are constantly hiring and bringing people in. And because of our standards, they've come to trust us and send people to us whenever they hire somebody, um, new. So that's, you know, it's come from a variety of sources. But yeah, I like to say, you know, networking is overrated but relationships are everything. Um, and that is something that we've really pursued as a way of making this work. And it's amazing what can happen when your back's against the wall too.

J

**Jason Duff** 52:14

Yeah, get real creative real quick. Absolutely. Well, thank you so much for sharing with us. Um, where can people follow you and keep up with what's happening with Epicurean?

J

**Jesse Lear** 52:24

Yeah, so our website is [epicureanproperties.com](http://epicureanproperties.com). Um, we're just— we haven't really been super active on social media, but you can find us on LinkedIn. We're getting ready to produce a lot more content there. And then of course, if you're looking for any sort of, uh, you know, support or consulting or anything like that to do this type of thing on your own, I don't do a lot of it, but I do have a Clarity profile where people can find me. It's [clarity.fm/jesslear](http://clarity.fm/jesslear), J-E-S-S-E-L-E-A-R. Um, and I accept calls through that occasionally when I have time.

J

**Jason Duff** 52:57

The, the other great thing— I just met with Jesse earlier— is that we're pleased to announce that he is joining the Small Nation Leadership Trust. And he will be— um, we'll get his profile on the, the Small Nation website soon, soon. But you— I think you just hear from the day his— you know, and this goes to the golden nugget— is like, you hear his attention to detail, and the roots of that run really deep. And I think life experience presents you these opportunities that you can either ignore it and, you know, that feedback from guests or the, the, his origin story when, you know, understanding that picking up people's trash, there were lots of details that had to be figured out to do that well. He used that as his springboard to say, that's what I want to focus on because the 99% of other people out there don't do this well. I'm going to be the 1% that does it well. Yeah. And I think that level of hospitality, what does it mean to be hospitable? Well, it's, it's finding and actually caring. And I think that's the other thing that I took away today, is that being that ear to listen and then to say, I care about— I validate how you feel, and I'm going to work to solve how you feel and make it better, even if it's not in your control. And I think that's the thing, that a lot of things in real estate, um, there are so many variables that we cannot control when the thermostat battery decides to die, right? But how we can respond and say, I am so sorry that that's going on, we will work to address that. And, and even if you can't address it with that guest at that stay, that feedback we will validate and make it better in our process going forward.

J

**Jesse Lear** 54:38

Absolutely.

J**Jason Duff** 54:38

That is what Jesse Lear does, and that is one of the secret reasons that Epicurean Properties is so successful. Thank you. There you go. That's great, great tie-up there. Jesse, also, I just want to let you know that you are the first guest here in the updated studio. Awesome. If you haven't been watching on YouTube, to any of the listeners, I encourage you to go check that out. Leave a comment, let us know what you think. Also, if you have any questions or any further things you'd like to see featured or even guests featured on the podcast, I personally am the one checking those comments. So, uh, the only way we get better, just like, we need feedback.

J**Jesse Lear** 55:19

Absolutely.

J**Jason Duff** 55:19

Yeah. So listening and implying those changes. But, uh, Jesse, thank you so much. This was great for having me. Great episode. And I'm excited for anyone, uh, just entrepreneurs or anyone pursuing real estate on their own, you know, it's a great perspective. So, well,

E**Ethan DeLeon** 55:32

thank you everyone for tuning in and checking out the Small Nation podcast. You can find us anywhere that you listen to your podcast, including Spotify, Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and even the Small Nation YouTube channel. I hope you were able to pull some value from that conversation. We hope to see you in the next one. If you enjoyed it, be sure to leave a like, comment, or a 5-star review to help more people to discover this podcast. Stay tuned to Small Nation on social media to keep up with all the cool projects that are happening here. And until next time, this is Ethan with the Small Nation Podcast signing off. Thanks guys.

J**Jesse Lear** 56:02

Thank you.