

Episode 82

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Longaberger baskets, Dresden Ohio, retail experience, S'mores Baskets, direct selling, collectibles market, small town destination, customer service, year-round Christmas store, signature events, Basket Festival, Dresden and Company, Airbnb lodging, seasonal merchandising, Beanie Babies nostalgia

SPEAKERS

Jason Duff, Robert Hamel, Ronnie Rhoades, Ethan DeLeon

R

Robert Hamel 00:00

Like it's all about the experience when you're at our store, down to cookies and water. And this is— I'm doing this just for you. Here's a gift with purchase and the basket.

J

Jason Duff 00:09

Give me a basket. Like it's all those little touches.

R

Ronnie Rhoades 00:11

So, right.

E

Ethan DeLeon 00:16

Welcome to the Small Nation podcast brought to you by Coverlink Insurance, where people are more important than policies. On this show, we unpack lessons from entrepreneurs to break down development strategies and do deep dives on small town success. Our goal is to provide value to our listeners by hosting conversations that teach, inform, and inspire. Hey everyone, my name is Ethan DeLeon and I'm here in the studio with the founder and CEO of Small Nation, Jason Duff. Today we are excited to be hosting entrepreneurs Robert Hamill and Ronnie Rhodes. Welcome to the show, guys.

R

Robert Hamel 00:49

Hi.

R

Ronnie Rhoades 00:49

Hello.

J

Jason Duff 00:49

Hey guys, welcome to the show.

R

Ronnie Rhoades 00:51

Thanks for having us.

J**Jason Duff** 00:52

I said coming in the studio today, this has been my most excited, like, thing that has been on the counter for this week.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 00:57

All right.

J**Jason Duff** 00:58

So Robert and Ronnie happen to own a business in Dresden, Ohio called S'mores Baskets, but that is not the only business they own. They also have S'mores Christmas and now S'mores Sweets. So 3 freaking businesses in a town of Dresden, Ohio. And meeting them, they are a couple that is off the charts just in terms of their energy, their ideas, and I fell in love with their business. So I'm excited to hear more about your story, guys, of how you, um, how you met each other and also how you started your business. And then, uh, for those that are listening, we have a pretty exciting announcement at the end of the show that, um, I've been trying to keep under wraps and it's been driving me crazy. So excited to talk more about that. But welcome to the podcast today.

R**Robert Hamel** 01:47

Thanks.

J**Jason Duff** 01:48

Thanks.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 01:49

So Yeah. So you guys aren't originally from Ohio, actually. I found out in our previous call. So tell us, tell us our listeners, where are you originally from? How did you guys meet each other and the rest of the story there?

R**Robert Hamel** 02:01

Well, I'm from the state of Delaware and then—

J**Jason Duff** 02:04

and not the city Delaware. Let's just emphasize that the state of Delaware.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 02:07

We always say that when we're out here.

R**Robert Hamel** 02:09

I've learned you have to clarify. So from the state of Delaware, from the East Coast originally. And then I met Robert in Maryland. And that's where he's from.

J**Jason Duff** 02:18

Nice.

R**Robert Hamel** 02:19

Okay.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 02:19

I was born in New York. My parents moved to Maryland and that's where I grew up.

J**Jason Duff** 02:23

And part of your story is— involves a company called Long and Berger. For those listeners that may not be familiar with it, what, what is Long and Berger and what do they do?

R**Robert Hamel** 02:34

So I got addicted back in 2000. I was approached at like a fair and I saw the things on the table and I was like, oh, this is up my decor for decorating. You know, it's country, so it's known for baskets, fabric items, pottery back then. So I got a little carried away decorating every room of the house. And having a retail background, as I was shopping, I was like, there's got to be benefits of why I'm doing this. So then I realized if I was a consultant, which is what we were called to do direct selling, that I could get half-price items and free things like that. So I started to shop and shop and shop, and then I created a little boutique in my house. And then we kind of grew from there.

J**Jason Duff** 03:13

And for people that are listening, so if you know much about my origin story, I grew up in a family, both my parents were entrepreneurs, but my mom had a Hallmark shop growing up. So those years, like in the late '80s, early '90s, even into the 2000s, were like the curio cabinet collectible years. So it was that time where people love to like find unique things and curate collections of them. But really at the top of that pyramid, even working in the Hallmark, we could never get access to Longaberger baskets because they had a unique model. They were sold through direct sellers. And so the Longaberger industry, what I feel was really unique about it, it was a handmade product right here in Ohio. And it was created— the company was visioned up and created by Dave Longaberger. Can you tell us a little bit about like what was Dave's vision and how did like for Dresden, Ohio, why was that vision significant?

R**Robert Hamel** 04:19

So I think when he originated, he started— it was a family-owned business, so they started small. And then as it grew, the direct selling part came in place and then they had to start producing more. It became a billion-dollar company over the years.

J**Jason Duff** 04:33

Billion-dollar company.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 04:34

Wow.

R**Robert Hamel** 04:34

Like, I started in 2000.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 04:35

When he started, like, his sister was selling— you hear stories that his sister was walking around selling the baskets door-to-door in Dresden.

J**Jason Duff** 04:43

Wow. Well, in the whole family, um, this was a family business and a family operation. And in Dresden, Ohio, the baskets itself were made by craftsmen and, and, and crafts ladies, like people that were working to curate these materials and create handmade, really unique things. And I think people, out of hearing about Dave Longenberger and the story of Dresden, Ohio, and actually seeing the product— and there's not a better way to sell something than having a direct relationship with someone else. And so the parties— a lot of times as a consultant, you would have events and parties in people's homes, right? And so I imagine people would ask you like, why is this basket special? Like, how do you— like, what would you tell them?

R**Robert Hamel** 05:30

I think when I did home parties and I did a lot, the ladies kind of loved the entertainment. It was all around the features of the benefits of how they can use it and what that looks like. So whether it was a tabletop display or something they could put in their car, you had to give them the purpose and the reason why. Some people collected for the functionality. Some people collected because it was pretty, kind of like me and all my baskets.

J**Jason Duff** 05:50

I love that.

R**Robert Hamel** 05:50

I don't necessarily use them, but they are all on display. But I think it was kind of that. And then it would grow because every month through a different campaign, you'd have something that came out. There'd be Halloween, you have Christmas, Easter. So you kind of continue to help them decorate their home, but also help that collectibility behind it because it still is and was a huge collectible item.

J**Jason Duff** 06:10

And I think that was one of the differentiators is that compared to like Cherished Teddies or Precious Moments or other collectibles that were available at that time, there was a utility to these. Like the basket actually could serve to hold you know, napkins that would sit on your Thanksgiving table, or it could serve as a bag, a handbag or something to carry if you're going out to an event. And so the utility, but also having a collectible element was a step up in the marketplace. But the thing about Dresden, what from the outsider watching the, the growth and the success of Longaberger as a company, but as a town, is creative entrepreneurs that were living and working in that town realized that there were other ways to build businesses and markets around the core company and the core product. So for those that may not understand, um, you know, Robert, can you share what other kinds of things in addition to the baskets were some of the accessories that started to come out that Longaberger and other companies and other people in Dresden started to supply?

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 07:17

So there's plastic protectors, and then there was liners, lids. So a lot of the businesses back in the heyday went into other things where they were doing more fabric liners outside of the regular Longaberger types. They were having— making different lids, doing like— there's a wrought iron piece that's a snowman. They were doing faces that turn them into Uncle Sam or a wicked witch. So a lot of things to accessorize.

J**Jason Duff** 07:44

And so if you think about buying a car and I would tell you some of these baskets are expensive as a car. Okay. But like, and people would pay that because it had that collectible aspect to it. And so if you think about the growth of this company and in Dresden, people started asking the question, where are these made and what's the story behind them? In this whole idea of a pilgrimage of people from all around the country and all around the world coming to a tiny little town in Ohio and just to share. Like, Dresden's not a big city.

R**Robert Hamel** 08:18

No, not at all. No.

J**Jason Duff** 08:20

And it's not, you know, it, it really is a, a very, very small town. Kind of tell us, like, what are some of the aspects of that make Dresden unique in your eyes?

R**Robert Hamel** 08:32

I think especially back in the early 2000s, that's where the streets would fill up with vendors when the brand was still thriving. You would just, it would be everywhere. That's your destination. If you want the collectibility of Longaberger, you would come there.



Ronnie Rhoades 08:47

Well, and they would do conventions, which would attract thousands.



Jason Duff 08:52

And you were some of those people.



Ronnie Rhoades 08:54

Yep.



Jason Duff 08:54

Yes. And is that how you guys met, through one of the conventions or going to the shows?



Robert Hamel 08:59

No, we actually met prior to that. I think we would have met in— we actually met in like June, and our bees were always in August. So Robert actually— I was already basket crazy, so I'm like, I have to go to my convention. I was facilitating that year, um, on stage in front of thousands of people, which I'm obviously a little nervous even on this podcast. But he flew in, and that's when he got his first taste of Longerberger, and I think he was so overwhelmed because the convention was in Columbus at the Hyatt, and at some points they would have 3 bees So the attendance was that high.



Jason Duff 09:29

So when you say 3 Bs, what do you mean?



Robert Hamel 09:30

That was what the convention was called, the 3 Bs. It was called the Bs. The Bs.



Ronnie Rhoades 09:35

Yep. And then sometime there were so many of us they had to do multiple.



Jason Duff 09:37

Ah, I see.



Robert Hamel 09:38

Okay. Gotcha. So Robert had come that year and I think that's when he realized that I was basket crazy. So he's like, wow.



Ronnie Rhoades 09:44

So imagine flying in, going to the convention center, turning into a room where there's like stadium seating. So there's like 10,000. Ladies and some lady on the stage crying over a basket. And I'm like, why is this lady crying over a basket?

J**Jason Duff** 09:58

And it kind of had to be special. You were the guys amongst a group of a lot of ladies. So a way to differentiate yourself as consultants.

R**Robert Hamel** 10:06

Yes. So we definitely stood out whether it was good or bad because we were so few. Yeah. And a lot, and a lot with that, the men, for some reason, we were, seemed to be in the top of whether it was sales or recruiting. So you kind of even had a little more exposure because I think most of the men that were part of the company, we always were on stage for recognition. So that was kind of fun too.

J**Jason Duff** 10:25

And the kind of skills that you learned being a part of an organization like that, what were some of those?

R**Robert Hamel** 10:32

I think with that, I mean, building relationships was a lot because when you went to those kind of things, you would see and meet people and then you stay connected. I think if with a direct selling, it's also you're managing and leading people. So I think it held a lot of traits to that you could take personally. The more people you had, the higher your title was within the organization and things like that.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 10:51

So talk us through, obviously you shared your kind of entry into the basket world and that you were basket crazy, but what makes you go from basket crazy and just being a hobbyist and maybe selling out of your home into opening a business around baskets? So Ronnie initially, some of the backstory, Ronnie initially opened in his garage. Then eventually outgrew the garage and went on to a main street in Delaware. It was called Middletown, Delaware. He had a shop. Some things changed with the main street, right? It was getting busy. There was a lot of traffic down it. He eventually was going to close, but then an opportunity opened for him in an outlet center. Okay. In Maryland. And then that's when we met. He was in a 1,000-square-foot store in an outlet center that was kind of halfway between my house in Maryland and his house in Delaware. So we used to meet at the store when we would meet up because it was halfway between us. And then eventually, after a couple years of being there, the center was changing and we expanded into a 3,000-square-foot store, probably 2 years after we were together. And then we kept coming out here for stuff, and somebody in Dresden said, with the inventory you have in Maryland, why don't you open a store here? Wow. Now, I don't know if they're happy that we came at that point or not, but we ended up moving and opening our first year we were here— there we rented a space, opened a store. Things were still not going well, like the center back in Maryland was promising things that weren't happening, more closures than openings. And we eventually, a couple years later, we were operating both at one point, and then a couple years later moved completely to Dresden. And then after a year of renting, we found a space that was perfekt because it had an apartment above it where we could stay when we were there. Probably about 3,000 square foot in the front store. There was a back space with a garage for storage. So it was the perfect place for us to put our whole business.

J**Jason Duff** 12:50

Yeah. And just for those listening, so this bringing back memories of when I was working in my mom's Hallmark store is that Beanie Babies like blew up. It went from like, she was one of the first people to get Ty, which was the parent company that made Beanie Babies. And I remember when they were not a thing, we would get them in, they were \$3.50 wholesale, we'd mark them up 50% to Keystone them, you know, double. And then it was like probably like 3 months later that people started collecting them. And it was like this craze that they would even follow our UPS guy around to see if we were gonna get a delivery of the newest Beanie Babies. And probably about the same time you were building your basket empire, like I was like the Beanie Baby drug dealer. Like if we were getting shipment in and I knew those Princess Di Bears were coming, I would go down to Cincinnati. If you guys know Trader's World, I had my old beat-up Ford Explorer and that back would pop open and the ladies would flock. I had the collectible guide out and I bought the nice protectors for the tags. Like, my Beanie Babies were polished. Premium. They were ready to go. But, you know, we joke about that, but the lessons, like getting that hunger like number one, people love them and they were collecting them. And I actually felt like, you know, I was like changing people's lives at that time. But it was like, it was teaching me a ton of these skills. And so a lot of what they're sharing, like it really resonates with me in the beginning of my career to like learn about, you know, display and learn about, you know, the product and how it was made and the story behind it. And also building something significant that people want to curate and collect. Yeah. So I love that. And then, you know, like any kind of company or market, There was a period where Longaberger changed. You know, it started going into decline. It was— there were, you know, I think Dave had very serious health issues and eventually passed away. And, you know, the family was doing everything to keep the company strong. And like anything else, private equity gets involved, more, more hands and more complexity. But the company ended up you know, really from that billion-dollar level, moving to very much a smaller company, to eventually— and I think that that's like any industry, it's very hard to always stay on top. But the difference is, is the core customers and the people that love that product and love the town, that didn't change. And what I think is awesome is that you guys chose to move back to the town and, you know, in terms of the reseller market of baskets, there's still a lot of collectors out there and a lot of people that cherish, um, the historical facts but also want new stuff too. So tell us, like, with S'mores Baskets, for people that have never been there, what is it like to walk in there and how can you describe it to others?

R**Robert Hamel** 15:48

So when you walk into S'mores Baskets, kind of what we did to set us different in the market is the room — the store is actually set up seasonally. So when you walk in, we introduce you with Longaberger Pottery, brand new in the box, lots of obsolete inventory that people can replace or start new collections with their pottery. As you kind of progress through the store, we have an Americana room. So you go in there and it's all your Americana decor. So we kind of went a little over with baskets. So we have the liners and all of that, but then we have home decor so you can decorate around your seasonality. So you go through your Americana room, then we have a year-round Easter room, year-round Halloween, year-round fall, and then we have a vintage in the back. So that's your older stains. As Longaberger evolved, they came out with different colors. Everything has a name. So our back store is your, as Robert, the vintage items.

J**Jason Duff** 16:40

The vintage items.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 16:40

The traditional stuff.

J**Jason Duff** 16:42

Well, and for me, going back to Dresden, I was completely blown away by how cute the town is. You know, it's located— it's within driving distance of Columbus, maybe what, about 40 minutes if that. And you drive into this beautiful, like, 2 and 3 story buildings where just really friendly people. And there's Airbnbs, there's places to stay because in the height of the success of the company, this pilgrimage, people would come to town with tour buses. Wow. And I know, you know, we got kind of reintroduced from Diana Smith, who was running at the time the Downtown Dresden Association. She was one of those tour bus directors that were bringing people in. And she and you guys and others are still so invested in the long-term success of Dresden. And it's for very good reasons, because it's a very charming town. And the other thing of walking into the store, it is basket overload by themes and colors. I mean, your eyes just kind of go everywhere. But this is what, what goes down to why I was excited to have them in is about the level of customer service that they provide. They kind of took me on a tour through the store because it was like in one sense a museum. But for me, like it was also seeing like their love for the product and also how I could apply that, whether it was giving a gift to someone else or maybe incorporating some of those into my decor in my home. But the thing that stuck with me is like once I learned the story of Longaberger and learned the story of Dresden, it was, I want you to pick a basket like you— I want you to take one home. And that's the kind of things that they do to create a memory or experience. And I think to some of our retailers here that if there's a child that pops in with with mom or the grandmother, like how they have something small that they can create that magical experience. And I kind of felt like that. Like then, I mean, I don't— I didn't collect the baskets, but after that day of seeing it and in the way that they treated me, it's like I want to start to learn more about that. And I just want to compliment you on that because that's— that is kind of good old-fashioned customer service. Are there other things that you've done or incorporated into your business from what you've learned about sales and customer service?

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 19:00

One of the things since you've been with us too, we've trying to grow and expand what we do. We had two of the young ladies that worked for us have opened a boutique in the center of our store. So they bring a younger market of people that wouldn't necessarily sometimes in that Dresden area when you see baskets in a name, you think it's all baskets. So we don't weren't getting that decor clientele. But now with the girls being in there attracting a younger crowd, The kids come through, want to show their parents something, they bring their parents back in and end up buying a basket. And we are reaching a whole new customer base that we didn't have before.

J**Jason Duff** 19:40

So it's part of that day trip experience. And we hosted Brandy Gleason from Ohio Road Trips on the podcast a few episodes ago, but she was talking about people are looking to travel within an hour or two distance of where their home is, but they want some type of experience. And I think Dresden is one of those perfect places because of the history and the story of what we mentioned. But now you've got your store and we talked about S'more Baskets, but you also have S'more Christmas. So tell us about S'more Christmas.

R**Robert Hamel** 20:08

So I think we've had that for 4 years now. So when we moved into Dresden, we, like Robert had stated, we rented, then we bought. And there was one building that I wanted on Main Street. It was like the building, if it ever came available, I wanted it. So we got it. So Robert's like, let's do a year-round Christmas store. And Robert's dad had passed away and his vision was always to have a Christmas store. So I think Robert, that gave Robert the opportunity to do that. And then it's when you travel and when you tour, those, that's a store or memory that you can remember because a lot of people are looking for a Christmas ornament that stated that they were in Dresden or the year. So it gave us the opportunity to have Christmas year-round, which we all love. And then it's a memory that they leave with. So, I mean, it's totally everything you can think of Christmas down to Pez holders and anything and everything, home decor and obviously Longaberger. But what we've learned too is kind of what Robert spoke about with demographics. The locals don't necessarily want baskets, but who doesn't shop for Christmas? So we really get town support in Q4 where they just start coming in and they do the gift giving.

J**Jason Duff** 21:10

Yeah, you have to go see this store. Yeah, because it is— it's not small. It's an experience. And then a lot of people talk about when they think of all year round Christmas, what's the name of the city that comes up? Oh, the Michigan—

R**Robert Hamel** 21:25

Michigan.

J**Jason Duff** 21:25

Yeah. Quiz. Come on, guys. Something—

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 21:29

oh, Frankenmuth. I've been there.

J**Jason Duff** 21:31

Yes.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 21:31

Okay.

J**Jason Duff** 21:32

And I know everyone that was listening just kind of screamed it out and they're disappointed. You guys, come on, do better. But no, part of why people take that pilgrimage there is because they planted the flag and said, we are a destination for Christmas all year round. Yeah. And, and part of it, that, that season, we know— what do we know about retail? What are the two biggest months that are essential for a small business that's selling retail product success?

R**Robert Hamel** 21:54

November and December.

J**Jason Duff** 21:55

We got to make our hay. So what's unique about Christmas is, is that such a significant holiday, if you can spread that magic all year round, I guarantee you the real estate developers that listen to our podcast, they're all reaching out. Your phone's probably blowing up right now because they're dream would be to get an all-year-round Christmas store in their town. So Dresden, Ohio has that. So we've got S'more Baskets, S'more Christmas, S'more Sweets. What's that?

R**Robert Hamel** 22:22

That's Robert's passion, so we're gonna give that to him.

J**Jason Duff** 22:25

Do you like sweets?

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 22:26

Well, we eventually— our apartment where we were living, now that we have the Christmas store, we have a space for us to move ourselves. So I've renovated that to be kind of top, top of the line for us to live in while we're in town. And then that left us available for our 2-bedroom apartment to turn it into an Airbnb. Great. Not officially like an Airbnb, we're not going on with Airbnb, but for our customer base that really loves Longaberger, it's fully decked out. Anybody that's looking for that experience can stay with us and like experience the baskets. This past week there was a basket festival in town, we toured it. Everybody was just falling in love. They literally said they probably wouldn't sleep, they would just sit there and stare at the baskets all night.

J**Jason Duff** 23:08

Well, and I think that's another great thing is you're creating places for people to stay. So, you know, sometimes the smaller towns, we lack having really good lodging. And I think back to the episode that we recorded with Jesse Lear that created Epicurean Properties that, you know, he operates and creates Airbnbs and all of these surprising places and You know, he shared with us that people have a choice of a hotel or an Airbnb. A lot of people are choosing that authentic experience of saying, saying, staying somewhere unique and staying somewhere that they can look at the reviews and see it's curated. So I love that you have that. But the festival— so another thing that we're trying to help and work with towns to do is to create signature events. So the Basket Festival, tell us what, what happens at the Basket Festival?

R**Robert Hamel** 23:51

Well, we just had our second annual one. Um, it was amazing. So they kind of It was an all-week event. So what they did this year was they took the Dresden Homecoming, which is another big event for Dresden specifically. Then we put in a basket convention, Dresden and Company, and then we had the Basket Festival on Saturday. I'm not sure the numbers. I'm thinking 300 or 400. So you have a small little bee, as I referenced back in the golden days. But people were just— you had the opportunity to make a basket. You did basket bingo. They did shopping. They did paint a basket. And then the other thing that everyone loves to do is shop. So we had a vendor's row across from an empty lot across from one of the other businesses. So that was set up. I think there was maybe 25 or plus of those. And then people just got to hop around town and shop in the basket stores.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 24:36

As businesses in that community that sell baskets, how does a festival like that impact your business?

R**Robert Hamel** 24:42

Oh my, it was great.

J**Jason Duff** 24:43

Yeah, that's right. Yeah.

R**Robert Hamel** 24:45

Celebrate that. It was like a Black Friday for retail.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 24:48

Yeah. I mean, that sounds so obvious, but the impact of that, I think a lot of people aren't just making that connection. Well, it takes a lot of time, energy, and money to plan an event.

J**Jason Duff** 24:57

Yeah. Um, and there's always, you know, creative differences amongst— because a lot of times there are volunteers that run, organize events. And then you have to do things like street closures, which, you know, probably half the businesses in town are like, yes, close my street, bring people in. The other half are like, why are you closing the streets? Um, and the— but the thing about it is, is these events, when you do the marketing and get the word out, it brings new people in that can experience your town or your business for the first time. And what your hope is, they fall in love with your town or your business, and they're going to tell other people about it. They're going to be going to share it in their social media, and they're probably going to come back when they think to shop and bring their friends to do that. So I know it takes courage to plan those signature events and to find donors and sponsors and volunteer. But we have seen over and over how that can be a really smart strategy to brand your town and bring in more dollars.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 25:51

Well, and Ronnie kind of led into it with— so the basket convention was actually Dresden and Company. At the end of the somewhat end of Longerberger, when they were on their downfall and kind of somewhat went out of business, it left the opportunity for someone to take over. So there's a man in town, Jim Lipai, that opened Dresden and Company and created a different— a new basket company. Now, in the midst of that, Longerberger came back too, and now you can find Longerberger online. But what's keeping Dresden alive now is that Dresden and Company's there. They're making baskets right on Main Street, and they're coming up with stuff that you've never seen in the basket world. So they just recently did a woven shell that looks like a conch shell, and the inside's even pink. And they did Uncle Sam. And for Halloween, they're coming out with a black cat, and it's actually woven.

J**Jason Duff** 26:42

So I can give a testament. I have had the opportunity to go and experience Dresden and Company and how it has transformed. I've met with designers like Michael, met with Jim and kind of seen his vision of growing the company. And then I got a chance to take a tour through the Dresden and Company operation. And you're seeing the craftsmen take bales of— what do they call the strips?

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 27:10

Splints.

J**Jason Duff** 27:11

Splints. Like weld them together and make them into really creative things. And when I talk about the way that they're repackaging, the best way I can describe it is they came out, I think for the summer, I saw in their catalog fruit, like everything from apples. And I think there was all these colorful fruits that were made of basket materials.

R**Robert Hamel** 27:33

There's a strawberry, carrots, corn, the apples, a lemon.

J**Jason Duff** 27:38

Wow. So let's just think if you're Troy, Ohio, and what we know about Troy, Ohio, is their home for the Strawberry Festival. Those are those connections with a product that's made in Dresden, Ohio by Dresden and Company. And I want to share, these products are hand-signed, like many of them, right?

R**Robert Hamel** 27:55

Or all—

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 27:55

every one of them is.

J**Jason Duff** 27:57

So it is a hand-signed piece by the artist. Think of how a partnership maybe with the Troy Strawberry Festival. And I think it's now— now you've got new creatives and people behind legacy brand that's still built in Dresden, Ohio, but doing really creative things. So that's why I'm really excited and I'm kind of on fire for what's next for Dresden. It was just great meeting these guys, and there's so many other entrepreneurs I want to mention. Highlight some of the other really cool collaborators that are doing awesome things in town, because I— there's probably more that we can— we're gonna forget some today, but who are some of the heroes that are really reshaping Dresden right now?

R**Robert Hamel** 28:34

You have Dresden and Company. If I go down the shops, then you have Kathy, who owns the best— the protector store. So we send everyone there.

J**Jason Duff** 28:42

They still are making the protectors like a store that's just nothing but basket protectors. And she knows her stuff.

R**Robert Hamel** 28:48

Yeah, that's Dresden Baskets and More. She's next to our Christmas shop. So I'm taking a little stroll down Main Street. Then you have Stacy's Baskets. Yeah, she's on a side street behind that. Humble Heart.

J**Jason Duff** 28:58

Then they are great entrepreneurs.

R**Robert Hamel** 29:00

Husband and wife team, Tammy and Darren Delancey.

J**Jason Duff** 29:03

Tammy and Darren are— and they, they, they are doing things in other towns as well.

R**Robert Hamel** 29:07

Yes, I think they have, they have a shop in, um, Columbus, Sunbury. Wow. Then you have the Patio Shops, which Jim Lee Pie owns, and you have a coffee shop in town that opened. So we're, we're kind of growing. And a restaurant. And there's— yes, Main Street Pizzeria is new.

J**Jason Duff** 29:21

Yeah, nice. And then it's the warehouse.

R**Robert Hamel** 29:23

The warehouse is still there.

J**Jason Duff** 29:24

I remember eating there, uh, I think it was a Tenderloin sandwich that I had, it was really, really stellar.

R**Robert Hamel** 29:29

Legendary onion rings.

J**Jason Duff** 29:31

Onion rings. So again, just hearing those things, if you've not visited— local, you kind of see how connecting all of those things, even, you know, 10 years ago when, when things are really tough, how these entrepreneurs are pulling together and planting their flag and innovating to do really cool things in Dresden, Ohio.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 29:51

All right. At this time, we're going to take a quick break to hear a word from our sponsors. Tired of gyms not being open when you want to work out? Then check out the region's best 24-hour fitness center, Anytime Fitness, in downtown Bellefontaine. They have all the equipment you need and the best trainers and coaches to help you get in the best shape of your life. It's truly your one-stop shop for fitness. Anytime Fitness is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Brew Fountain's voted best beer bar in Ohio. Come visit their award-winning team in downtown Bellefontaine for fresh local craft beer soups, salads, sandwiches, wine on tap, and handcrafted cocktails. And they're always available to cater your next event with their box lunches and platters. Cheers to Small Nation. I think, you know, one of the things we try to do on the show is give a realistic look on entrepreneurship. And last time when I had a call with you guys, you shared with me a little bit of your journey moving to Dresden. And it wasn't— it wasn't like— it's easy to walk in and see all your stores and, and celebrate the success. And we certainly want to do that. But I know there's a bit of a journey for you guys to eventually make that move out to Ohio. And I kind of was hoping you would share a little bit of that journey and, I don't know, leaving your full-time job to eventually, you know, make the move out here. So would you mind sharing that story with our listeners?

R**Robert Hamel** 31:05

No, absolutely. I'm sure it was easy. So as we were in Dresden, we've operated now 8 years in Dresden. So the first 7 years of that, we actually had full-time jobs back on the East Coast. So we had to balance having 50-hour work weeks in the state of Delaware and then traveling out to Dresden to—

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 31:23

Well, when you say full-time jobs, you were a district manager and overseeing 17 locations, and I was a store manager at a grocery store. Wow.

R**Robert Hamel** 31:31

During crazy COVID too. So needless to say, I mean, obviously to take that risk to make your business your livelihood, it did take some transition. We had very well-paying corporate jobs, as I call them, So I think as we kind of continue to grow out here and operating a business 7 hours away with a staff could be challenging, especially during COVID and different things like that. So you work the hardest when it's your business, but you have to teach your employees to work as hard as you want them to. So I think that became some of the opportunity. And as we've kind of progressed and our long-term goal was to be in Dresden and kind of retire at an older age. You are too young to retire.

J**Jason Duff** 32:07

I was going to say, hey, I'm not going to let you retire.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 32:10

No.

R**Robert Hamel** 32:10

We moved. We decided to take that leap. I think last June, Robert decided to end his career of 30 years with his brand.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 32:18

Wow. Congratulations.

R**Robert Hamel** 32:19

I was 4 years, so I actually had to trial run it first before I could decide he could. So I became self-employed in 2020.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 32:26

When COVID hit, Ronnie decided— we decided at that point that Ronnie would focus on our business and I would continue to work. So I had a goal of 50, but then cut it a little short because things in the retail world are really crazy.

R**Robert Hamel** 32:37

Yeah, so we decided to do that, and then it's, it's been the best thing. But I think even moving from one state where you've been for 48 years— for myself, Robert had to— I'm like, I need like 5 months of you helping us to pack this house up. So we had a lot to move, um, for someone that collects things like myself. So it took Robert 4 months to pack the house up, and then we kind of sold it in October of last year. So we'll be here full-time a year in October.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 33:02

Wow. Yeah, I was going to say, I mean, and we brushed over it kind of quickly, but you first moved it from the business from Delaware to Maryland. Yes. And then from Maryland to Ohio. Like, that's some pretty big moves. And I thought we should probably unpack that a little bit more. It's been a bit of a journey to get there.

J**Jason Duff** 33:20

But how do you have the courage to just jump in? Like, for you, like, what, what is it that fills up your tank to say, we're just going to do this?

R**Robert Hamel** 33:28

I think when you own and operate a business as an entrepreneur, what I've realized is you get out of what you put in it. So the more you put in it, the more you get out of it. I think we were, we were kind of having this conversation with someone this week, and I'm like, when I look back at our annual sales, we're almost doubled with the year of us being here. And that's just us being part of our company and really having our hands in it. Yeah. I think when you have a corporate job or you're, you're a bigger corporation and you can't get your sole result by yourself, that's where it's okay. But when you are that entrepreneur, that business owner, what you put into, you truly get out of it.

J**Jason Duff** 34:03

Wow. And, you know, sometimes people hit a rut. And, and what I mean by that, like, they've owned a business for a number of years, they kind of, uh, they do the same things and they're expecting a different result. Do you have any kind of coaching? Like, how do you get out of that rut?

R**Robert Hamel** 34:17

Like, I think it's the evolution of even your brand and your company. Like Robert alluded, like, we now have the girls that are in their store. We're getting a different customer different foot traffic, we're able to buy different things. I think also it's just the comfortability of how you stretch yourself. I mean, it is long hours. I mean, Robert's the marketing department. We kind of divide and conquer. We each take roles and responsibility of the business. And what you— literally, the more you put in, I think the more you get.

J**Jason Duff** 34:43

So it's also rare to talk to people that have a business partnership, but they're also in a domestic partnership or a marriage. So can we speak a little bit, like, how do you guys balance that? Do you Do you have any boundaries with that? Are you kind of talk about business all the time?

R**Robert Hamel** 35:01

Like, no, I think we've done a really good job because that was my biggest fear. Like, Robert and I have been together since last June, every day since we're self-employed.

J**Jason Duff** 35:09

Wait a minute. I think you said that every day.

R**Robert Hamel** 35:12

So we're so excited about that.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 35:14

Absolutely.

R**Robert Hamel** 35:15

So literally, I mean, we do. What we've had to realize is where we end our day, like we stop at 5:00, then it's dinner, and then it's kind of our personal time. But I think this year we balanced a couple little like weekend getaways. You just have to do that because I think sometimes if you don't, that can jeopardize the partnership and probably the more personal partnership versus the business side. Because with having the 3 brands in town, we can divide and conquer on the day. So sometimes I'll be at one store, he'll be renovating the apartment. So we do get our little space then, but it's just kind of leaving that.

J**Jason Duff** 35:46

Mm-hmm. A lot of people that I've ran into, my friends group, kind of changed from the point when I was — didn't own businesses to when I owned businesses. And I'm curious if you've experienced this. Like a lot of people, they maybe don't understand the sacrifices or like, hey, you know, I see you at the happy hour, you — are you available to do this or that? And you had to say a lot of nos over the years. And it kind of changed a lot of my face — my friends group to being more people that were also business owners like me. Have you found that at all?

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 36:18

I'll be honest, because of what I did, I felt like I'm more open now than I was in that world. I always had to say no to things, especially managing a grocery store, because my necessarily relatives or family friends didn't understand like why you had to work on a holiday weekend. Yeah, because now we're a little bit more — I feel like because of the jobs we had in the, in the world, we're a little bit more free. I mean, being a district manager, he had to work Black Friday. He was up the night before and in a store.

J**Jason Duff** 36:46

It's kind of now in your blood.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 36:47

Now it's — yeah. So I don't — like I said, I feel more free now than I did before. Yeah, that's good.

R**Robert Hamel** 36:54

That's why Robert's enjoying this first year of self-employment. It's been different for him. Yeah.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 37:02

Awesome. Well, I know you guys also started eventually renting a booth here and starting to sell some, some items in Bellefontaine, Ohio. So I guess Why, uh, why?

J**Jason Duff** 37:12

What was that like?

R**Robert Hamel** 37:14

Well, we met this guy Jason.

J**Jason Duff** 37:15

He's kind of weird, very strange.

R**Robert Hamel** 37:17

Um, he came to Dresden and kind of with him is I felt the same, his energy. And when we heard the story of Bellefontaine, we're like, we need to check this out. So we kind of stayed in touch with Jason. Jason invited us to come back for kind of like a private tour, Robert and I, with, um, I think Anne was there. We met Nick, so we kind of met everyone. We toured and we saw the Nest and I was like, oh my gosh, I'm like, I love this building. I love the concept. It's something different for us. But being an hour and 40 minutes away from Dresden, having that balance of doing what we already do and having another store here. So it was a good— and I think the environment was right and the situation was right where it's managed and led by a team and we could kind of bring our goods here. Yeah. So we brought baskets, specifically Dresden and Company. We kind of focus on that because it's a newer brand. Kind of really help with the evolution of it because I felt if we brought Longaberger— Longaberger is kind of vintage now and like in certain antique environments. So we brought that and then what we do well is seasonality. So at the Nest, our primary store is more— we flip it with the seasons. Right now it's Americana. We did a Pride theme and different things like that. So we go around the seasonality. Cool. We did really well our first year there. So I think in January of this year, we got a second spot in there. Now we have some more Christmas in the room next to it.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 38:34

Great.

J**Jason Duff** 38:35

Just bring it in. Just to share, so the history of Nest, you know, it is, it's a very special business in our community. It was one of the first projects to open up, you know, Kathleen and Darren Robynall were kind of the founders of that. And then after a few years, they sold the business to Susan and Will Lehman, who've done amazing things there.. But when you walk inside, um, it's got these big, uh, soaring ceilings and the storefront itself, it was an old Boston store. So it's got lots of character and it's located right next to a busy coffee shop and it's on West Columbus Avenue in downtown Beaufort. But you go in and you're hit with all of these variety of booths and, and products that have been curated. And, and every time I come in, the product is always changing. And that's what people, I think, compliment about it. It's always fresh and new and interesting. But there are 3 floors to explore. So there's this large staircase that you can go upstairs and there's skylights and windows that— it's kind of like an adventure to go through and you find things that surprise you. And so it's not like, you know, a lot of places you go to at the mall or other place, it's the same old stuff. I don't— I never feel that way when I'm at Nest and I think, you know, even my Christmas shopping this year, seeing the Dresden and Company products from your booth, I bought one of the little mini stockings. So my mother-in-law is from Zanesville, and she has very fond memories— Zanesville's nearby Dresden— she has very fond memories of Longaberger, and that gift meant so much to her. And so I just appreciate you being there and being a big part of that business. But I think on the podcast we have some, some news if you're comfortable with sharing.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 40:23

Absolutely.

J**Jason Duff** 40:23

Yeah, let's do it.

R**Robert Hamel** 40:24

What are we sharing?

J**Jason Duff** 40:26

Something about Nest 1896.

R**Robert Hamel** 40:29

Yes. So we are taking over the Nest.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 40:31

All right.

R**Robert Hamel** 40:32

Effective October 1st. Awesome. And we're so excited.

J

Jason Duff 40:36

Well, I think it, you know, I spoke to Susan and Will and I know they're equally excited about you guys and that transition. But, you know, as you look at it, what are some of the things that you're excited you're heading into Christmas season? To really blow up and make significant there?

R

Robert Hamel 40:51

Robert has a couple of things up his sleeve. Ooh, okay.

R

Ronnie Rhoades 40:54

We can't reveal everything.

R

Robert Hamel 40:55

Don't just share it all.

J

Jason Duff 40:57

But I would say, is Christmas going to be a big deal this year?

R

Robert Hamel 40:59

Absolutely.

R

Ronnie Rhoades 41:00

Yes.

J

Jason Duff 41:00

Yes.

R

Ronnie Rhoades 41:01

Awesome.

J

Jason Duff 41:01

Well, congratulations on that. I know there's more news and announcements coming from your Facebook page, but you've made a big— in your short time here in Bellefontaine, you've made a very positive impression on people. And I think people are really excited.

R

Robert Hamel 41:18

Oh, thanks.

J

Jason Duff 41:19

Yeah. And you also have a place here to stay. So you've got a loft that's going to be here in town.

R

Robert Hamel 41:25

So, yes, we're excited.

J**Jason Duff** 41:26

Well, I also— sure, that shows the commitment. Yeah. Like knowing what they said earlier in the podcast, that if you're going to do something, you've got to be dedicated to it. Yeah. You've got to put in the time to it. I think what was your line about was it's like you've got to work hard, like you've got to, you know, this is not— you can't just start a business for it to be a hobby.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 41:43

Correct.

R**Robert Hamel** 41:43

So, and we tested that in Bellefontaine. We've been here a year and a half. Now we understand it's the right fit. We can bring some business model to the Nest. That's why we wanted to acquire it. I think Susan's super excited because as she has seen what we've done as her vendor, she's like, you bring a lot here that I can't. And she's like, I want to grow with you guys, but I want to grow at a different capacity. So she still will be there and she's going to help me out. But, but what we had to do is I had to figure out the balance of that. So we are We will have an apartment here, so we will stay and be here frequently and be part of the brand. I think we can pass that torch off in Dresden to our girls that we have there, and it's established and it's running and it's doing everything it needs to. So, you know, not getting any closer to retirement. So now here's my new business endeavor.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 42:27

Well, we're at a point where Dresden, we have a solid team now that we've built from being out here, and Susan and the team at Nest is staying on here. So I feel like that'll help us balance our time.

J**Jason Duff** 42:39

Yeah, we're excited about that. And also for Bellefontaine businesses to have a chance to get access to Dresden. And that's the other thing about building these pipelines and these exchanges. There probably are businesses and products here that would do really well in Dresden, Ohio. And so this is again just establishing those relationships. And I also say like how one conversation, you know, us meeting each other, us sharing our addictions, we have a few like We are collectors of a lot of different things and all we drink is iced tea. So, you know, it's one of those things when you find someone— we hit it off and then of course got introduced to really the full team, many of your employees too. But just super excited for you guys and what you're doing here.

R**Robert Hamel** 43:23

So thanks. Us too.

J**Jason Duff** 43:25

Yeah. Awesome.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 43:26

Awesome. Well, I'm going to transition us a little bit. Congratulations. I don't want to skip over that too quickly. And thanks for sharing that on the podcast. Breaking the news there. But I'm going to transition us into just a more fun part of the show. And actually, we're going to do a real estate deep dive here. I'd like you guys maybe just to unpack a little bit of your— their eyes. We're jumping in.

J**Jason Duff** 43:49

This is where Ethan asks the really tough questions. Yeah. So get ready.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 43:54

No, just tell us a little bit about the purchase of your building in Dresden. Now that you have mixed use, you know, out of that space and you've made a short-term rental out of it too. So just maybe talk to us about what acquiring that building looks like. It's as much detail as you want to share, but and just how it's kind of evolved throughout the years.

R**Robert Hamel** 44:15

I think our— so our first, the primary store, as I call it, S'more Baskets, we bought it with the intention of the seasonality. But I think as we evolved, it could be something different. It could be a Nest situation, and that's something we want to bring to Dresden.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 44:27

Love that.

R**Robert Hamel** 44:27

I think as, as we kind of figure out inventory, we have a lot of inventory baskets. So I obviously targeted that. But the upstairs, I was like, okay, we need to do something with this. So it's twofold. I looked at it as if we rent it, being selective in what that process looked like. And if that didn't work out, it could always be a museum. And I would just charge for donations to tour. Yeah. But I think it's an— it could be an evolution of giving back. I mean, I think Real estate, when we bought it, it was kind of low. So I mean, I think when we look at it now, anything anyone buys investment-wise, if you own it, you're good. And I think that's kind of what we did with that. Then I think when we moved on to the other properties, we got those at— once again, I don't know, I've never been to a sheriff's sale. That's how we acquired those.

J**Jason Duff** 45:12

Nice.

R**Robert Hamel** 45:12

So that's how both of those were bought. And that's a different process where you go in as an individual and you bid against others to acquire that. And that's kind of how we got those.

R **Ronnie Rhoades** 45:20
Yeah.

R **Robert Hamel** 45:21
Yeah.

R **Ronnie Rhoades** 45:21
Smart. Thanks for sharing that. I just know a lot of entrepreneurs end up dabbling in real estate, so it's kind of a show segment I like to include whenever it applies.

R **Robert Hamel** 45:30
But absolutely, because they can all be rentals.

J **Jason Duff** 45:31
Yeah.

R **Ronnie Rhoades** 45:32
One of our Christmas stores, an old— just picture an old white house, front, full front porch, has a 4-car garage behind it. Wow. And then we also acquired a third property, which right now we're using as a warehouse. But it could also be an antique mall. It could be— people have wanted us to put a brewery in it.

R **Robert Hamel** 45:53
I would recommend any entrepreneur has more than one building because you will need stuff for storage.

R **Ronnie Rhoades** 45:57
Yeah. Yeah.

J **Jason Duff** 45:58
You have options.

R **Ronnie Rhoades** 45:59
I know.

J **Jason Duff** 46:00
Jason knows all about that. We've heard Jason. My partner says you can't even pull into our garage. Why do we have a garage? And it's because they're all the treasures.

R

Ronnie Rhoades 46:10

Exactly. Yeah. When I started here, I walked in one of the most beautiful, outstanding buildings here in downtown Bellefontaine. They're on the corner, very prominent building. I walk inside and it's just full of treasures. There's like a little path that you can walk through. You have to walk through all of Jason's buildings.

R

Robert Hamel 46:28

That's where the big chair is, right? Yeah. I've seen the windows. I haven't gotten to—

R

Ronnie Rhoades 46:32

we got upstairs.

J

Jason Duff 46:32

Okay. They made me— I had to get— we had a big sale last year. Yeah. And they got rid of about 80% of my my treasures. They wouldn't— I wouldn't even be in town that day because they were giving stuff away way too cheap. But it's— we had to clear some stuff out.

R

Ronnie Rhoades 46:45

Yeah. Well, we recently found out you're a vendor in the Nest too.

J

Jason Duff 46:49

Oh, so I am. All my random things. Actually, I have more things that now that you guys— I, I can send you more product.

R

Ronnie Rhoades 46:59

Perfect.

J

Jason Duff 46:59

Yeah, I love that.

R

Ronnie Rhoades 47:01

I'm sure that'd be popular. All right, just a couple closing questions here, and that is, uh, what is one professional development resource that was impactful for the both of you along your journey? It could be a book, it could be a mentor or a group of people maybe that was helpful for you.

R

Robert Hamel 47:18

I think— go ahead.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 47:18

I would say the experience of retail, just coming up in the business of retail. And neither one of us went to college. We went right into the retail world right out of high school and just worked for what we both— where we both were. Ronnie working himself from a store manager to a district manager at one point with the grocery industry. I was a product supervisor into a store manager role managed many different stores, which I think is kind of on-the-job training, right?

R**Robert Hamel** 47:46

That's what—

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 47:47

yep, correct. And it sets you up to be an entrepreneur in, in theory, because you're— he was running multiple locations. I was in charge of one, learning those skills.

J**Jason Duff** 47:57

Was it sales? What, what out of you, if you kind of gave it a certain label, you know, display, sales, marketing, is there a certain thing that you say, I wish I would have learned this earlier in life, or I think this is really important to like win in retail?

R**Robert Hamel** 48:13

Yes, because when I first started retail, believe it or not, I was 17. I worked at Structure, which was a men's brand.

J**Jason Duff** 48:18

I remember Structure.

R**Robert Hamel** 48:20

So it was Express's men's side.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 48:21

Yeah.

R**Robert Hamel** 48:22

Okay. And I'll never forget my supervisor. I was there part-time and I was so quiet and shy, believe it or not. She's like, I don't think this is going to be the right thing for you. And I think as she was my mentor and my leader and she gave me that feedback, I had to really realize I'm like, oh crap, I may not have a job because I'm not talking to people or I'm not doing what the expectations is. So then I had to kind of come out of my shell and, well, look where I am now. But I think as I listened to that and I knew what I wanted to do because I love talking to people and selling, but I might not have conveyed that obviously at that age. But as I, as I grew and I developed, that's what I came to love is manage and lead people and sell. Like, it's all about the experience when you're at our store, down to cookies and water. And this is— I'm doing this just for you. Here's a gift with purchase and The basket.

J**Jason Duff** 49:07

Give me a basket. Like, it's all those little touches.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 49:10

So, yeah, yeah, that's what I was going to say. I mean, definitely for those listening to this episode, there's a lot of golden nuggets in and around retail. And just some of the stuff you were saying resonated with me in what I'm seeing in our Bellefontaine shops too. Like, some of the best retailers in town are those who are— it sounds so simple, but who are excellent with customer service, greeting people and creating an experience for them. And then another thing was just being innovative. I mean, you guys are coming up with new ideas and, you know, being known for something. And the example you gave of the, the boutique and just ideas like that, uh, I appreciate. I think that's what's, uh, lending to some of your success. And I think those are some of the golden nuggets, I guess.

J**Jason Duff** 49:49

I took— it is the— it is the— that's a great point, Ethan. It is a differentiator. You cannot wait for the phone to ring. And if you're operating a store and you see someone walking by thinking about going in, you have to get them to have the courage to open the door. And when they do open the door, you have to say something to them. Yeah. Doesn't mean that you prey on them and freak them out to the point that you're like, they want to run. But like, good old-fashioned customer service is a lost art. And we especially need to prepare and teach young people these skills.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 50:25

Well, a lot of times in Dresden, when people walk in, the first thing I start with, are you from around here? Because then that opens opens the door. If they're a tourist, you know, you're catering that way. If it's somebody local from one of the surrounding towns, they're there for maybe the boutique, they haven't been to us before. What brings you in? You open a little bit of dialogue and start a conversation. Yeah. And again, it sounds so simple, but like, it's harder in practice. And if done well, it makes a huge difference, I think, for your business. Um, but last question I have for you guys here is, uh, where can people learn more about you guys and, uh, follow your businesses? Facebook. Facebook. S'more Baskets. Okay, is that the— is that the main platform for y'all? Yeah, mostly. We have— we do have a website, smorebaskets.com. Great, great. I will, uh, link those in the show notes.

J**Jason Duff** 51:14

And I also know with their various business, um, they are going to soon have Nest 1896 and those particular channels But I'm going to encourage all of the visitors to go— our listeners today to become visitors and go old school, jump in a car, take the road trip to Dresden, walk through these shops. It's a great experience. And the other thing, when you go to Dresden, you know, there's actually a gigantic basket that you can get your picture in front of.

R**Robert Hamel** 51:45

It's actually in the Guinness World Book of Records for being the largest hand-woven basket.

J**Jason Duff** 51:50

You can get your picture in front of that basket. You can do lunch, you can grab coffee, you can walk around and shop. And it's a really beautiful town. So put that on there and also look forward to the— this will next year will be the third annual basket.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 52:05

Yes.

J**Jason Duff** 52:06

Yes. Show. So Basket Festival. There you go. Ethan, put that on your road trip list.

R**Ronnie Rhoades** 52:13

Yeah.

R**Robert Hamel** 52:13

I've been July.

J**Jason Duff** 52:15

July.

R

Ronnie Rhoades 52:15

There you go. All right. Thank you, guys. Appreciate it. Thanks.

E

Ethan DeLeon 52:19

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