



julia murray

THE *next* GENERATION

Some of Whistler's brightest minds are picking up where their parents left off

story by CINDY FILIPENKO photos by BONNY MAKAREWICZ

Second-generation Whistlerites Julia Murray, Joey Houssian and Joey Gibbons have a lot in common. They're young, creative and putting down roots in the community. They embrace the entrepreneurial spirit of this place. And all of their parents were responsible for helping to build Whistler, its physical spaces, reputation and spirit.

Julia Murray's parents, Crazy Canuck Dave Murray and freestyle pioneer Stephanie Sloan, showed the world the calibre of skiers Whistler could produce. Joey Houssian's father, Joe, owner of Intrawest, was instrumental in the development of both Blackcomb Mountain and Whistler Village. Joey Gibbons's father, Dick, was an early investor in Whistler who bought struggling properties and created successful entertain-

ment venues. Today, all three continue in the work their parents undertook and keep making Whistler the unique place it is today.

JULIA MURRAY

Not quite 25, former Olympian Julia Murray has embarked on a second career as an entrepreneur, having developed a new breakfast cereal, Jules Fuel: Whistler Superfood. It was this concoction — which includes quinoa, chia, flax seeds and goji berries — that helped fuel Julia along her way to competing in ski cross at the 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

Despite an Olympic experience marred by last-minute surgery and gruelling, twice-a-day physio sessions resulting from a bad knee injury suffered in Lake Placid, >>



joey gibbons

Murray remembers the Games as a peak highlight of her racing career.

“The Vancouver Olympics were truly a magical experience, with the excitement of being part of ski cross having its Olympic debut,” said Murray. “On crutches, I had the experience of being a torch bearer in Whistler — that was incredible. Because of my knee, I ended up carrying the torch up the mountain on a snowmobile to pass it on to Steve Podborski. I remember the energy in the Village that night.”

Though her injury took away expectations of an Olympic medal, Murray bounced back to take silver at the world championships in 2011. But ultimately, her knee injury was the impetus for her decision to retire in 2012.

“It was kind of an overwhelming period of time,” Murray admits. “I was still on the team, but couldn’t ski for a year and a half. After meetings with my surgeon, I decided to move onto the next chapter of life, and save my knee.”

She hung up her skis and completed a diploma in communications at Capilano University. Then, back on the skis, along with her partner and fellow Olympian, Davey Barr, she helped create Whistler Blackcomb’s “Ski With An Olympian” program while blogging and hosting video segments for RTOWN Communications. And now, there’s Jules Fuel: Whistler Superfood.

“I feel that growing up in Whistler has taught me a lot and shaped me as a person. I now see the importance of balance in life as a result of being surrounded by inspirational people in this town. Work hard, so you can play harder, and afford to play period. I’ll be blessed if the main daily stress in my life is deciding between which fun activity to do that day ... So far, so good.”

JOEY GIBBONS

One of Joey Gibbons’s earliest memories is of a Christmas spent in Whistler when he was three. His father, Dick Gibbons, a Vancouver lawyer, had been an early investor in the resort, building the first commercial building

"I'M HIGHLY PASSIONATE ABOUT WHAT **YOUNG PEOPLE ACHIEVE** THROUGH OUR BUSINESSES. THEY COME FROM ENGLAND, FRANCE, AUSTRALIA AND SETTLE HERE, BUYING HOMES AND RAISING FAMILIES." >> *Joey Gibbons*

in Whistler in Village Square.

"We stayed above the bakery (now Hot Buns) in the first condo my dad finished — we were literally the only people in the Village," said Gibbons.

In the early '80s, the elder Gibbons sold the building and bought into the bankrupt Carlton Hotel and with it, the space that would become The Longhorn Saloon & Grill.

"The bar was never a family business — it was an investment," emphasized Gibbons. "My dad made it clear to me that I would never work in the bar business. He didn't want me to limit my opportunities. He was really hoping I'd go to university after my ski career (with the B.C. Ski Team) and become a lawyer or something like that."

So Gibbons went to Bishop's University in Quebec, obtained a BBA and ended up managing a 1,000-seat bar. By the time he returned to the coast he was certain about his career path.

"When I was considering opening a bar in Banff, my dad said, 'Instead of starting at the bottom, you can start a little higher with an established business. If you're going to do it, you might as well do it with us.' I started as a busser after I'd been running a thousand-seat place," mused Gibbons.

Today, The Longhorn, Buffalo Bills and Tapley's Neighbourhood Pub are all part of the Gibbons Hospitality Group, a company encompassing a dozen businesses across Canada including bars, soft-seat venues and a ticketing centre operated by Gibbons and his brother.

For Gibbons, hospitality is about the people — the people who frequent his establishments and the people who work for him.

"The No. 1 asset Whistler has is the quality of people our town attracts. We get some of the best, brightest people in the world," he said. "I'm highly passionate about what young people achieve through our businesses. They come from England, France, Australia and settle here, buying homes and raising families."

With a young family of his own — three children under eight — Gibbons has firmly set down roots in Whistler.

"I couldn't fathom living anywhere else." >>

Expect the Unexpected

The Champagne Lounge



604 932 3433

4121 VILLAGE GREEN

BEARFOOTBISTRO.COM

OPEN FROM 3PM FOR APRÈS

& FROM 5:30PM FOR DINNER

OYSTER SPECIAL: 3 TO 6PM

APRÈS · OYSTER BAR WITH **DAILY SPECIALS** · LIVE JAZZ ENTERTAINMENT · **LATE NIGHT COCKTAILS** · DJ SET ON SATURDAY NIGHTS · **CASUAL MENU** · HOME OF THE COLDEST VODKA TASTING ROOM WORLDWIDE, THE

BELVEDERE ICE ROOM



joey houssian

JOEY HOUSSIAN

“I grew up on the (Vancouver’s) North Shore, so for our family, we’d go skiing in Whistler every weekend in the winter,” said Joey Houssian, owner of The Adventure Group (TAG). “I remember the Sunday nights when it was really dumping and we’d convince Mom and Dad to stay another night and we’d ski on Mondays. It always felt like home to me.”

Making Whistler his full-time home and going into business in the mountains just felt natural to Houssian. So in 2002, he bought a small adventure tourism company

“MY PARENTS ALSO TAUGHT US THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY AND TO BE **GENEROUS AND KIND.**”

>> *Joey Houssian*

that offered ATV-touring and snowshoeing. Today, TAG offers more than 10 experiences, including high-speed, long-distance thrill rides through Superfly Ziplines, river rafting and snowmobile tours. Having gone into the business because he loved playing host in Whistler, Houssian travels the world to discover new adventures that could be added to the TAG inventory.

“I think we’re in somewhat of a post-Olympic renewal period. I see this interesting intersection in tourism where hospitality, authenticity and service meet,” he said. “What I like to do and am striving to do with TAG is to ensure that activities are really authentic and provide experiences that create lifetime memories.”

Houssian’s perspective on both life and business comes from the people he considers his closest advisors and friends — his parents.

“My dad has this great ability to teach through just sharing his own experiences in

business and relating them back to issues we (Joey, his brother and sister) might be having,” he said.

“My parents also taught us the importance of family and to be generous and kind.”

The young entrepreneur applies these values in both business and community life. He and his company support two Whistler charities, Zero Ceiling, an organization that provides adventure-based learning for at-risk youth and Playground Builders, a group that constructs playgrounds in war-torn areas. Houssian also sits on the boards of both not-for-profits as a way of being further involved in a community he cares deeply about.

“Why do I love Whistler? Of course, I love being in the mountains and being in nature, but the answer is — the people it attracts.” **W**

SCAN THE PAGES OF THIS STORY WITH LAYAR to learn more about the people and businesses featured here. [layar](#)