



Reed Humphrey

Heather Humphrey

Lynsey Humphrey

Client-Centric

An Interview with
Reed, Heather, and Lynsey Humphrey, Owners, Alder & Tweed

COMPANY BRIEF Alder & Tweed's (alderandtweed.com) award-winning design team has the vision and resources to conceptualize and create the vacation homes of their clients' dreams. Their comprehensive design services span renovation design and construction supervision, color consultation, finish and fixture selection, custom and built-in furniture design, and space planning and furniture selection to provide some of the most luxurious second homes in Park City, Malibu, Lake Tahoe, Jackson Hole, Puerta Vallarta, Sun Valley, Mazatlan, and beyond.

What is the history of Alder & Tweed and what did you feel would differentiate the brand when you started?

Reed: We started in retail and like with most businesses, they evolve from where they start. They never end up where one thinks they are going to end up.

We had a retail location in Salt Lake City, and we come from a family of importers. Our parents imported from China for 40 years or so. In 2008 when the recession hit, our retail store was no longer doing as well as we might have liked. We saw potential at the time in Park City in terms of vacation home ownership.

We realized that retail was not our trade per se, but we felt there was something in the second-home buyers' market, primarily in terms of giving people an opportunity to buy second homes where they could just walk in the door and have everything as they like it.

We moved operations to Park City with the goal of bridging the gap for people between their primary residences in New York, Texas, or California with their vacation homes and make it super simple for them.

Lynsey: People enjoy the level of design, furnishings, and comfort that they have in their own homes and we can carry that into a vacation home.

How broad is the range of product you're providing and is there a theme to Alder & Tweed design?

Heather: We're very client-centric, which is unique in a way because many designers try to tell the client what they need; we try to guide the client in creating the home of their dreams.

We're primarily in the mountain area but we also service Southern California. Since we draw from what is around us, we tend to reflect the surroundings. In Park City, for instance, there is a mountainous feel but we offer a more modern, organic feel to the projects.

For beach homes, we like to bring in the elements of the beauty that surrounds the owners and combine them into the space of their dreams.

Lynsey: That's completely accurate. When we had to reshape our business because of the recession, we carved our own niche. We lean towards more modern aesthetics, and things that are new and fresh in a vacation home because people used to decorate vacation homes in a very cliché type of way.

Now we have clients that come to us and trust us to do any look and style for them.

Will Park City remain your focus or do you see strong opportunities in surrounding markets?

Heather: As long as people are vacationing, there is always opportunity.

The interesting thing about vacation residences is that they're usually owned by those with a higher level of income who can afford to buy a second home and are not as affected by the highs and lows of the economy. In fact, in times of low economy, they are sometimes more inclined to purchase because they feel they're getting a deal.

As long as people want to vacation in their second homes, we have a business there. There are certainly other avenues we can take but we still have a lot of opportunity in the realm we're in both here and in other places.

Reed: When our clients get to know us in Park City, they see how easy the process is and how we take it to the next level with vacation homes. We do all their housework, and provide all the blenders, toasters, towels, bath mats, lotions, and other needs so they can just walk in and enjoy it. They come to expect that ease, so they take us with them when they buy other vacation homes. We like to tell them, the only thing they'll need to bring to their new home is a toothbrush.

How difficult has it been to gain brand awareness for you and does it mainly come via word of mouth?

Heather: Our clients don't want to have to spend days shopping online and creating a look even though the Internet provides healthy competition for our industry.

Often, when someone buys a second home, they're not familiar with the area. They don't know where to ship things and don't want to track when they arrive. They also don't want a million packages at their door to unpack and install. For our clients, it's about what we can put together and the ease of the service.

Lynsey: Our clients are business leaders and athletes, or people who don't have the time, or don't want to take the time, to deal with these details. They want to come to their vacation homes to relax, enjoy their space, and ski or spend time on the beach.

Once they have that initial interaction with us and there is a common understanding of what they are looking for and what that end product will be, we take it from there. From start to finish, we handle all the details.

Heather: We are totally full service for our clients. This means we can put together concepts, work remotely with them on the details, and finalize the entire process. We value their time, so we'll even fly out to them to bring fabrics and other items for them to approve.

Some like to be really involved and have multiple meetings and others are less involved.

Are your services primarily for the high-end market or is it broader?

Reed: We're client-centric, so part of the sales process is coming up with a budget. Then we're pretty accommodating within that budget.

That said, our clients do run the gamut. We have oil guys from Texas and hedge funders from New York, but we also have no problem working with people who are buying a condo and have a smaller budget.

As a family, what has made your working dynamic so strong?

Reed: Lynsey focuses on sales, I focus on operations, and Heather focuses on design. Each person handles their own area. We're small business owners so we all wear a lot of hats and have to help where needed.

We speak our minds more and we have our moments, but at day's end we work it out. ●