

Olympian Enters Real Estate Competition, By Rochelle Lash National Post (Financial Post Executive Profile)

LAKE PLACID – The bottom line is not Joe Barile's top priority in business. PARAGAPH During Mr. Barile's two early careers, first as a master carpenter and then as an Olympic athlete in luge, money was the last thing on his mind. Now, as the builder of a \$50 million (U.S.) resort, he can't avoid the distraction of costs and cash flow, but superlative quality and exquisite detailing are just as meaningful to him

"I want to express my dreams...not to feel limited," says Mr. Barile. "I've never worked for anyone and I'm happiest that way."

As CEO of a private company, Resort Holdings Lake Placid, and with his wife Patricia as president, Joe Barile can let loose.

This year he has channeled his passion for building and his love for craftsmanship into creating a spectacular hill-top hotel, The Whiteface Lodge, which encompasses 85 sumptuous apartment-hotel suites, a gourmet dining room and exceptional facilities such as a beach club and a superb fitness room, as befits an Olympian as owner.

The Whiteface Lodge is the most recent glory of Lake Placid, N.Y., a vintage tourist town which has held two Winter Olympic Games, one in 1932 and another in 1980, all a two-hour drive south of Montreal.

Mr. Barile is handsome, engaging and eloquent, the sort of intensely dynamic man who could, well, sell condominiums to New Yorkers. And he is doing so successfully, using an emerging business model call fractional ownership in which owners buy a minimum of a one-sixth part of a deluxe apartment. That translates into eight to nine weeks per year, rotating so that each owner eventually hits every major holiday and all four seasons.

The Whiteface Lodge is a superb example of the rustic, folksy Adirondack style of architecture combined with the last word in luxury. Its sturdy exterior is made of granite and white pine logs overlaid on nine inches of soundproof concrete and stainless steel girders, all plastered and planed by hand under Mr. Barile's watchful eye.

"By using natural materials we have brought the great outdoors inside," says Mr. Barile. "And we spared no expense...I get carried away...my passion is to build and we put creativity first and costs second."

The interiors, supervised by Mrs. Barile, are rich with bespoke furnishings of leather and tapestry, hand-wrought metal fixtures and custom-made birch bark furniture. Whiteface Lodge's suites have deep-dish beds, fireplaces and balconies with splendid views of the Adirondack Mountains. If not for the plasma televisions and stainless steel kitchens, one would think this impressive country escape has been around for 100 years.

Mr. Barile freely admits he's a perfectionist and a hands-on manager, profoundly involved in all the elements of the interior and exterior plans. He personally laid the stone for the kitchen's open bread oven; he improved the blacksmith's design for a metal fireplace screen, and he tells the gardeners how to trim the flowers without damaging the root system.

"Yes, I am a perfectionist, but we're all a team," says Mr. Barile. "Everyone puts up with me and they all know 'Joe' has done this before."

Mr. Barile, 46, is the quintessentially self-made man, defiantly proud of having skipped university and leap-frogging from high school to a business which generates \$25 million to \$30 million U.S. in annual sales.

A master carpenter at 14, Mr. Barile created fine furniture and cabinetry in the garage of his parents' home in the hum-drum suburbs of New Jersey. Introverted, pensive and observant, he liked being on his own. Add to that the traits of being fiercely tenacious and unswervingly focused, and you have a competitive athlete in the making. Mr. Barile spent nine years racing luges and earned a spot on the U.S. team at the 1988 Olympics in Calgary. As a builder, he sold his first house at the age of 18, and captivated by the impressive profit margin, he kept going.

It doesn't take Freud to figure out that Mr. Barile had some tough love driving him to his considerable achievements. Analyze this: His father was a master sergeant in the U.S. Army.

"He was a disciplinarian, a teacher and sometimes an S.O.B.," says Mr. Barile. "Sometimes we can't stand our parents when we're growing up ...'why is he so tough?' I wondered, but when become men ourselves we realize why they wanted us to be so disciplined.

"When I turned 18 my dad became my best friend...he taught me how to be more efficient, how to provide for a family, and that a father doesn't retire until the day he dies."

Mr. Barile's fondness for family life, and perhaps his desire to live out dreams of a childhood he almost missed, is expressed at Whiteface Lodge. Within a few months the hotel will have completed exceptional kid-friendly facilities such as an ice-cream parlour, a year-round outdoor skating rink, a 60-seat cinema and a 10-pin bowling alley.

Joe and Patricia Barile live a few kilometres from Whiteface Lodge on a ranch with their young daughters, Jillian and Alexis.

Mr. Barile admits that his title of CEO of Resort Holdings trumps his wife's position as president, but at home she is the boss.

"I help out at home," says Mr. Barile. "I really do."