

LIFESTYLE | REAL ESTATE | LEGACY

# LIVING *Greensbrier*



VOLUME 7



# *BACK HOME*

## *with the D'Antonis*

*Mike and Laurel D'Antoni aren't shy about their love for West Virginia and The Greenbrier. Back in 2014, when Mike was finishing up his head coaching run with the Los Angeles Lakers, the two turned their sights on a lovely home along Howard's Creek at The Greenbrier Sporting Club. Shortly after, the home became their family getaway—a place to reconnect with the state that Mike had always called “home.”*

*In residence to recharge and enjoy the late summer weather at their Greenbrier home after life in the NBA “Orlando Bubble,” Mike and Laurel sat down to talk about The Sporting Club, West Virginia, and the natural surroundings of their home.*

*GREENBRIER LIVING: Tell us a little about your history with the resort and why you came to purchase a home here.*



**MIKE D'ANTONI:** Well, I grew up about an hour and half away in Mullens, a little coal mining town in southern West Virginia. I had always heard about The Greenbrier, but we could never afford to come here. Then a few years ago, Laurel and I were looking to have a place in West Virginia and I had spoken to Jerry West who told me he and Karen had a family home here. So we came for a visit and fell immediately in love with it.

**LAUREL D'ANTONI:** Life as an NBA coach is very transient. The last I heard, the average length a coach stays with a team was somewhere in the 2.8 years on average range. For us, The Greenbrier is our place to get away from the stresses of work. The tranquility of the environment and the charm and hospitality of the West Virginian people are what continues to bring us back. We were very lucky that my interior designer from NYC, Christine Roughan Interiors, helped us put it all together. The crazy thing was she was one of the original





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designers of the Ralph Lauren shop at the hotel. She turned our home into a wonderful retreat in less than two months.

MD: When we purchased this home, my dad was living with us and I had a brother who was coaching at Marshall University, another brother practicing law in Charleston, and a sister who worked for the state, also in Charleston. It was perfect for our family get-togethers.

*GL: What do you tell people when you tell them you're headed to West Virginia?*

MD: Well, the big reason we come back here is because of the people. I mean, you can go any place in America and find beautiful homes, but the people here in West Virginia are special. They always have been. Just the way they demonstrate how they help each other in times of need, like during the flood of 2016. That's when my wife really fell in love with the fabric of

who West Virginians are. For me, it's just a special place and these special people are in my blood. So it's a real win-win.

LD: Many members of the Sporting Club have gotten involved with the local community. After the flood of 2016, members mobilized to help heal the community. Our family has continued to be involved with High Rocks (*highrocks.org*), a local organization that seeks to educate, empower and inspire young women in the area. Whether that means providing food items like peanut butter and jelly, and bread for afternoon snacks, mentoring a young person, or just writing a simple check—there are all sorts of ways to get involved. We also support our fellow Sporting Club Member, Jen Runyon, the president of the board of the Greenbrier Humane Society (*greenbrierhumane.org*). They have a wonderful relationship with the community to help find forever homes for our furry friends!

**GL:** *At what point in the year do you come back to this home?*

MD: Well, when I don't have job I'm here! (Laughs) We usually pop in and out at various times when there are breaks in the NBA season, or when one of our family members are here at the house. It is special to be here this fall for this spectacular display of color. I'm headed to New York to work with the Brooklyn Nets, which is much closer than Houston!

LD: The best time for us is probably sitting on this back porch and watching the eagles or the ospreys dive in the creek for fish. Or we have a lovely female deer that seems to have a couple of babies every year—their spotted backs and playfulness provides lots of entertainment! Of course, a little bit of velvet and robust Italian Brunello makes the sparks from the fireplace even warmer!

**GL:** *What kind of things do you guys enjoy when in residence?*

LD: Recently, we have discovered a fantastic fishing adventure through Mountain Water Adventures. James Crews, an extremely patient gentleman, taught us the art of fly fishing. And oh boy, did we catch some HUGE fish! We want to do our best to support our local businesses and this one is right downtown in White Sulphur Springs. You can't miss it. It's the perfect store to browse for a gift for the sportsman in your life.

MD: Of course I love to play golf—that's my biggest passion by far and the multiple courses here are fantastic. If you like golfing, you can't find a better place. We also like to explore all of the great restaurants and antique shops, as well as take country drives. And yes, Laurel loves to be in the back yard and watch all the nature. So there's always something to do.

LD: (Laughs) Yes! My particular passion is watching the wildlife around our house! The resident magnificent Great Blue Heron, with his brusque voice, and then there are the unintimidated hummingbird moths, an occasional black bear, and Appalachian Swallowtail butterflies. My father-in-law Lewis taught me to plant butterfly bushes and said they would come and boy did they. The list goes on and on. Just remember to always keep your binoculars and bird book on the kitchen table!

