

POWER COUPLE

By Natalie Duvall / Photography by Kate Greenawalt
Fashion provided by Filling's



Agave Brown ¾ sleeve
cotton/lycra dress, WCM
gold snakeskin belt with gold
hardware buckle

Robert Graham purple
and olive check sportshirt,
Scott Barber short sleeve
plum t-shirt, and Bill's
Khakis olive jean

IN 2010, RYAN BENNER AND LANI TODD DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

Their two-year-old partnership in a salon had gone sour, and — to be honest — they felt like they had failed.

"We had a large business, and we had to make a lot of hard decisions to get out of that business," Ryan says. "It felt like a failure to us. We had even pushed back our wedding to open that business in 2008." Lani agrees, and adds that for months she didn't know what they would do. As the weeks went on, they pondered their future amidst legal dealings that would officially end their old partnership. "We only had each other to lean on," Lani says. "There for a while, I didn't know what was going to happen. It just seemed like the end."

While Ryan and Lani hung in limbo, one of Lani's friends had an extra chair in her salon. She offered it to Lani so that she could work there and bring in her own clients. Other friends started encouraging the couple, too. "We had a lot of support," says Lani. "A lot of major cheerleaders. They said, 'You can do this, let's do this.'" So that's what Ryan and Lani did. They decided to make a go of it again, and in August of 2011, they opened Plum Salon and Spa at Urban Place in Lancaster. This time they went in together, as just a pair, and they've been happy ever since.

Despite their original disappointment and hardships,

"THIS POWER COUPLE MAKES SURE TO GIVE OTHER COUPLES A POWERFUL EXPERIENCE."

Ryan notes "The education was invaluable." Lani agrees. "It was negative, but at the same time, it became a positive because we were able to move on and do something else we are proud of."

And that's what makes them a true Power Couple.

"I think it really works for us," Lani says. "We do so much together. We've really accomplished a lot. We've been together six years. I feel really great about our relationship. People enjoy being

around us because we're a happy couple."

Neither of the pair came from a business background. "Our families weren't really into business," Ryan says. "I never really looked at business as an option as a child." But as they approached their 20s, business became something that drew them together.

Originally introduced by a mutual friend when Lani lived in Miami, the two only came together after Lani returned to the area. They became friends, and then became a couple that worked together. "We started out fixing houses," starts Lani. Ryan finishes her statement by adding, "Our whole relationship has been working together — whether with rental properties or whatnot. Now we have Plum. We started out [working together] and always enjoyed it."

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Published in **Fine Living Lancaster**
Issue Number Twenty-One • February, 2012

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Despite the fact that the two thoroughly enjoy working with each other, they admit that it's not without at least one big drawback. The two find it hard to stop thinking about work and change into a personal time mindset. Ryan says, "The hardest part is turning off the business and turning on the personal life. It's hard to say, 'Let's just relax and talk about our life.'" The couple decided that they need to prioritize making Friday nights their date nights. Even if a "date" just means getting some time to be normal.

Fortunately, both Lani and Ryan love talking about, and working at, their spa. Even though Ryan has another job — he does property management and

maintenance, too — he's noticed that he's spending more and more time at Plum because he enjoys it so much. "Now I'm trying to fit my other work around Plum." And he believes other men would enjoy it, too.

Lani relates, "I remember the first time he got a pedicure." Originally envisioning the spa service as being all about selecting the right nail polish, Ryan was happy to experience the nail and skin maintenance that came with it — and the foot and leg massage. Lani laughs, "He turned to me and said, 'I had no idea they rub your feet so much.'"

Right now, 15% of Plum's business is male, but they see that percentage rising. Most male clients are originally brought in by their wives or girlfriends. When men experience the salon lifestyle — and realize it's not effeminate — they keep coming back. Plum offers great couples' deals, and pairs love coming to the salon. Around Valentine's Day, Ryan and Lani make sure to provide special services for clients who want to celebrate their relationship, salon-style. This Power Couple makes sure to give other couples a powerful experience.

When asked to advise other wannabe Power Couples, the pair says it's important to go outside their comfort level — just like Ryan originally did with the spa. "Think of ways outside of your own network. Think outside of the box. Get involved with the community."

As both point out, the community is what makes them love working so much. When asked what the best thing is about Lancaster, they both chime, "The people!" Ryan says, "There's history and a lot of amazing architecture. There are stories. We love being a part of that and we support [the people of Lancaster]."

Perhaps that's what makes this Power Couple so great. When asked if there was anything they wanted to plug, they didn't mention their salon — they mentioned community nonprofit organizations, like PRiMA Theatre.

Ryan and Lani have overcome their initial hardships, and anyone who visits Plum Salon and Spa at Urban Place will quickly agree that they've achieved the success they worked so hard for. This Power Couple represents everything that's great about Lancaster: hard work, dedication, and love of the community. So the next time you feel stressed out, why not let their hard work give you a relaxing time? 🌸

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