

Rooted in Horses, Grounded in Community



In the equestrian world, the most compelling women are often those whose lives with horses shape everything else they build. For Nadine, that connection runs deep, not only in the way she moves through the world as a horsewoman, but also in the way she leads, creates, and gives back.

While attention may naturally fall on the beauty of the projects around her, the more meaningful story is the woman behind them. Nadine's path reflects a blend of vision, work ethic, and heart, shaped by years in real estate, renovation, and design, and grounded in a desire to create spaces with both beauty and integrity.

Today, that vision is taking shape in Aiken, South Carolina, where Nadine has brought together two defining parts of her life: houses and horses. Aiken, with its historic charm and deeply rooted equestrian culture, feels like a fitting backdrop for someone

whose work is as much about stewardship as it is about style. More than simply building there, Nadine seems committed to contributing to the community around her.

That commitment is evident in the way she approaches both business and outreach. Through Integrity Temple, Nadine leads an all-women team centered on meaningful projects, job creation, and community investment. One of the clearest examples of that mission is the company's scholarship through the Aiken Technical College Foundation, which supports students pursuing construction-related trades such as welding, HVAC, and electrical work. It is a reflection of the belief that building something lasting is not only about homes or design, but also about creating opportunity for others.

That spirit of giving back feels especially significant in a town long shaped by horses, sport, and tradition. Nadine's hope

to shine additional light on Aiken and its surrounding equestrian community says a great deal about the values behind her work. Hers is not simply a story about design or development. It is a story about leadership, purpose, and the ways a horsewoman's life can shape a broader vision.

We had the opportunity to sit down with Nadine to learn more about the path that brought her here, the values that guide her work, and the role horses have played in shaping the woman she is today.

HORSE & STYLE: *How did horses first come into your life, and in what ways has being an equestrian shaped the woman you are today?*

NADINE: Horses first came into my life through a childhood friend when I was about six years old. She would take me to her grandparents' farm, and we would spend the day in the barn. Her grandparents



let me tag along, and when she joined 4-H, I went through the program with her and learned so much about horses during that time.

I was not from a horse family, so horses were not really in my family's orbit. But whenever I needed a break from the world or time to think, I always found myself near a farm or spending time around other people's horses. Later, when my daughter was old enough, I enrolled her in horse camp. I loved being there so much that the counselors eventually had to ask me to leave because I would linger, watching and interacting with the horses. Four months after she started camp, I bought my own horse.

When I was 19 and in college, I wrote a life-to-do list, and one of the things on it was to take riding lessons. I did not take my first lesson until I was 38, but horses had always been part of the life I imagined. Being an equestrian has shaped me because working with animals as large and powerful as horses requires confidence. It is a partnership, whether you are riding or handling a horse on the ground. When doubt shows up in my life, I often remind myself, if I can manage a 1,400-pound animal, I can probably do this too. The capability you develop as a horsewoman spills over into every other area of growth.

H&S: *You have built a career around homes, renovation, and design. How did that path begin for you, and what first inspired you to turn that passion into Integrity Temple?*

NADINE: My entire life, I have been aware of my environment and how I felt in it. From a young age, I noticed that the spaces around me influenced how I moved, how I made decisions, and what kind of ecosystem I wanted to be in. I always remembered how I felt when I entered someone's home. I absorbed and studied those spaces. As a child, I noticed the difference between homes with white carpet, where you felt you had to behave carefully, and homes with darker rugs or more relaxed spaces. I paid attention to neat homes, unkempt homes, hotels, museums, schools, theaters, and gyms. Over time, I developed a strong sense of how interiors functioned and how a space could either support or interrupt daily life. Even scent became part of that memory for me. I remember being five years old at a friend's house where her mother always had eucalyptus oil somewhere in the home. To this day,



eucalyptus delights me, and I use it in my own homes because I remember how happy I felt in that space.

In college, I began in interior design, though I ultimately graduated with a business degree in merchandising management because it allowed me to finish faster. My passion, however, was always design. After college, I worked in the furniture industry and attended furniture markets in North Carolina, and my devotion to homes continued.

After my first child, I left corporate life and began renovating homes. I found that many builders and homeowners did not always know how to perfect a space, so I focused on houses that had the right bones but needed a custom touch. I became very intentional about curb appeal, color, materials, and broad appeal. I never want a buyer to dislike a home because of a design choice that feels too narrow or limiting. I want the home to feel attractive, functional, and welcoming to as many people as possible.

After my years as a full-time stay-at-home mom, I was finally able to dedicate myself fully as an entrepreneur. I had cultivated design and construction experience over those 20 years, and when the gate opened, I established my LLC, bought a property,

hired staff, and created what I believe is one of the most appealing properties under restoration in our market. Integrity Temple became the place where all of those experiences could come together.

H&S: *What drew you specifically to Aiken, and why did it feel like the right place to bring together your love of horses, design, and community?*

NADINE: When I lived in Michigan, there was a beautiful eventing barn nearby, and in the winter, riders and owners would travel to Aiken to get out of the cold. I kept hearing people talk about this picturesque Southern horse town, and the image I had in my mind fueled my desire to see it one day. Coincidentally, my husband was later recruited from Michigan to Columbia, South Carolina, which is only about an hour from Aiken.

Once we moved, I immediately enrolled my daughter in horse camp at Aiken Pony Club, and I could not get enough of Aiken. I loved the roads, the downtown, the equestrian farms and properties, the well-developed center of town, and the quaintness of it all. I soaked it in. Someone once told me that people who feel a heightened sense of energy often connect deeply with horses, and to me, Aiken has that energy. Horses are energy. Riding is a

relationship with one of the most powerful animals in the world, and Aiken carries that feeling everywhere.

So many urban homes have pastures attached, and that drew me in immediately. I have always imagined a life where horses were part of the picture. Aiken is so horse-centric, from its Winter Colony history to Hitchcock Woods, the urban horse district, the sandy footing, and the moderate climate. It felt like a natural fit.

Aiken also has many of the architectural styles I love. Families from the Northeast brought certain design influences with them, and the older established homes have details that appeal to me deeply, including cedar shake, gambrel roofs, cupolas, crossback designs, and barns. All of those elements speak to my interests and my sense of place.

H&S: *Integrity Temple has been described as an all-women team with a strong focus on opportunity and outreach. What does supporting women in business and the trades mean to you personally?*

NADINE: The women I work with in construction have an intensity about perfecting their craft. Their aim is excellence, and that shared standard elevates the work. When you expect the best, you

create a better product, and that has always been our goal: to raise the construction standard and attract buyers who expect a well-built residence.

For me, supporting women in the trades means helping them build confidence they can carry into any part of the construction industry, whether they continue in residential construction, move into materials or manufacturing, or join another company down the line. If they begin in an environment with a high standard, they can take that foundation with them and be successful elsewhere.

The work we do has real-world consequences. A home should be a place of rest, not a place where the owner feels they have to keep working on unfinished details. Our goal is to absorb the energy, time, and expectation required to make the home feel complete, so the homeowner can simply enjoy the space.

I also carry stories with me: builder stories, architectural stories, design lessons, success stories, and cautionary tales. I use all of that wisdom to navigate each project, leaning into what works and avoiding the mistakes I have seen or heard about. In that way, every project becomes part of a larger learning process.

H&S: *Can you share more about the scholarship through Aiken Technical College and why investing in students pursuing the trades felt important to you?*

NADINE: Throughout my life, I have always felt that when I receive something, I need to find a way to give back. When I was a community college student, I received

a scholarship from the Traverse City Track Club. It was the only scholarship I ever received, and it was essential in helping me attend school. I came from a blue-collar background, and that scholarship was a huge push forward in my academic life. I always felt it was a debt I needed to pay back in some way.

Investing in students pursuing the trades matters because trades can become life changers. Without skilled trades, we do not have an industry. I see that every day. Many business owners began with a technical degree, developed their craft, built companies, and then brought on apprentices. Our electrician has three apprentices, and they have done all of the electrical work on the property. Seeing young, skilled tradespeople at work makes it clear that we need more of them.

A trade can support a person and a family. Whether someone becomes a journeyman, electrician, HVAC technician, welder, or another skilled professional, that path can create stability and opportunity. It is a strong alternative to a traditional four-year program, especially for people who are drawn to hands-on work and physical labor. Blue-collar work is not always appreciated in the same way as a four-year degree, but it can provide lifelong skills, strong earning potential, and work that is always needed.

H&S: *The Sanctuary project feels like a reflection of both your equestrian life and your design sensibility. What does that project say about who you are and what you hope to create in Aiken?*

NADINE: The Sanctuary reflects my belief that thoughtful design should make life

easier, more beautiful, and more functional. I learned about lean design in graduate-level courses, and one of the core ideas is evaluating work as effort. I wanted to create a farm designed with those principles in mind, reducing the daily workload for the farm owner.

My goal was to design a property that one person could manage, so logistics were central to every decision. Things that need to be near each other were placed with intention. The layout was designed to reduce unnecessary movement, simplify daily chores, and support the rhythm of caring for horses.

At the same time, The Sanctuary is also about beauty and feeling. It brings together the practicality of farm life with the design details that make a property feel special. In many ways, it says that I care about stewardship, efficiency, comfort, and creating spaces that support both people and animals. In Aiken, I hope to create places that honor the equestrian lifestyle while contributing something lasting and thoughtful to the community.

For Nadine, the throughline is clear: horses, homes, and community are not separate chapters, but connected parts of the same story. Her work in Aiken reflects a life shaped by observation, resilience, and a deep respect for the spaces where people and animals live, gather, and grow. Through Integrity Temple, The Sanctuary, and her investment in the next generation of skilled tradespeople, Nadine is building more than beautiful properties. She is creating opportunity, honoring tradition, and leaving a thoughtful imprint on a town whose equestrian spirit continues to inspire her. **H&S**

