

Having IT ALL

Now that **Kandis Wrigley** has created her own successful business, she's also going to fulfill her lifelong dream.

BY JAKE JARVI

You've heard of Kandis Wrigley. That comes with the territory when your married moniker is plastered all over packs of gum at every grocery store, giant billboards overlooking I-94, and Chicago's most beloved sports address. However, between her determination to ride her horses at Nationals this year and the success of San Juan Ventures, the rapidly growing business she created, Wrigley is bent upon being known for more than just her last name.

The inspiration for San Juan Ventures came to Wrigley while she was vacationing in Bali in 2003. She was taken with the beautiful handcrafted woodwork that she saw being produced. "It wasn't so much the wood that captivated me, it was the culture of craftsmanship," says Wrigley. "The combination of these exotic materials and the superior craftsmanship, which is passed down to kids who train under their fathers and grandfathers, just surpassed anything I'd ever seen." Over the course of a few trips, she started integrating Balinese woodwork into her North Shore home. When she saw the way the imported wood captivated everyone who came in contact with it, she made her move.

San Juan Ventures is a fine imported wood company that specializes in custom furnishings, architectural elements, hardwood flooring, and slabs made from exotic native woods from across Indonesia. All of their products are produced and finished in Bali and made available to high-end designers all over the world. Whether it's a beautiful 24-foot-long single slab of Lychee wood with a visceral live edge to serve as a bar in a Hong Kong high-rise hotel, or a six-foot-wide table made from the root system of a teak tree on the rooftop terrace

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of a Ritz-Carlton Residence in Dallas, the exotic luxury evident in their woodwork is breathtaking. But Wrigley wanted to make sure that even as they offered some of the largest single slabs of finished wood available that they weren't taking a toll on the natural resources of Bali.

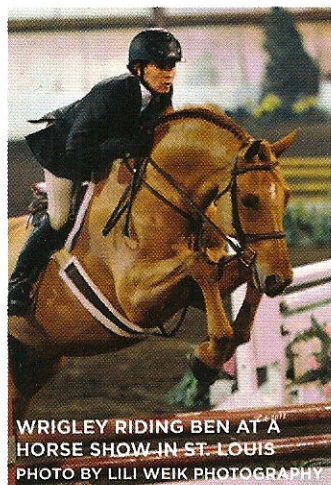
"We're a [Forest Stewardship Council] certified company," she says. "The vast majority of our product is either reclaimed, salvaged, abandoned, or sustainable. I see a piece of wood like one of our mango tables and it says to me so much more than just a slab of wood from Northern Canada. No offense to that, but this served as an orchard tree on a mango plantation in Indonesia. Once it was overly mature and no longer bearing fruit, it was cut down and replaced with younger saplings that could perform in the plantation. It doesn't mean that the wood is compromised in any way; it had just served its purpose and lived its life. It would have become kindling. This table has a story."

It's a story that designers for elite hospitality firms and high-end residences apparently enjoy telling. Halfway through 2011, it looks like San Juan Ventures is going to more than double last year's sales and Wrigley can finally move her Bali team of craftsmen from their charming "always floods during the rainy season" start-up shop to a large facility with additional space for a showroom. They also expanded their inventory last year when they decided to start offering Indonesian accessories that they encountered through their Bali operations. The accessories range in size and price, from small yoga statuary to one-of-a-kind antique finds made out of wood or stone.

The time required to get the business to this level over the last few years has come at the cost of time spent with Wrigley's lifelong passion: horseback riding. So even though she's determined to work harder than ever to retain the upward momentum of the business throughout 2011, she's also decided she wants to qualify for the Washington Nationals in D.C. this fall. "It's been a lifetime goal and I finally have the horses that can get me there," she says. "Let's face it, I'm 47, so...why not? I made the commitment in January to start building points and we'll see." Since January, Wrigley has taken time in between traveling the world to introduce the senior design directors of top international firms to San Juan Ventures and spending evenings with her son to train with her horses, Ben and Jack. Over the course of 10 horse shows before the end of September, Wrigley has to earn enough points in competition to rank in the top 30 in the country to qualify for the Nationals in October. "Those are the three things that are the most important to me: my family, my business, and my horses," Wrigley says. "When they're important to you, you find the time to make it work."

According to Wrigley, conquering everything at once is in her blood. Her mother, who is nearing 80 years old, just got back from

touring Vietnam and Cambodia, on motorbike for part of the tour. Her 80-year-old father is going to take a break from building his own house in the San Juan Islands in May to embark on a photography trip of Provence, France. "It's not even pushing myself," says Wrigley. "My family role model was to always have a lot of interesting things happening. It can be tough, there's no question about it, but it's incredibly exciting to build something from the ground up." □



WRIGLEY RIDING BEN AT A HORSE SHOW IN ST. LOUIS
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