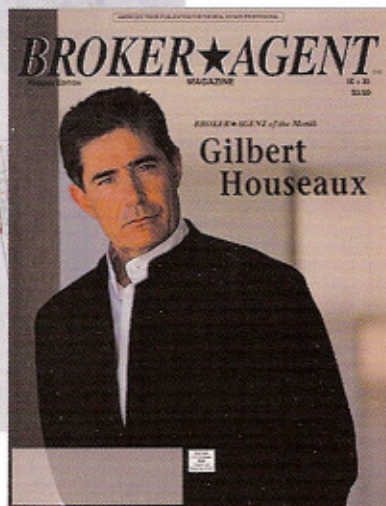


student of life, teacher and professional all rolled up into one impressive and delightful man.

Gilbert doesn't believe in standing still. Since he was featured as *BROKER AGENT Magazine's Agent of the Month* in November of 1999 he has continued to reach professional and personal goals, set a number of new ones and solidify his status as a top agent for COLDWELL BANKER SUCCESS REALTY in Scottsdale.

Some say that a man's success must also be measured by his friendships and by his experiences, and that is precisely what makes Gilbert more than just your average "successful real estate agent." Born and raised in the southwestern region of France, Gilbert was educated at a prestigious French military academy and earned a degree in mathematics. He had a

successful teaching career that he chose to leave when adventure and travel beckoned. His travels took him throughout Europe and Africa and eventually to the United States. His introduction to this country wasn't an easy one—he arrived in New York City with not much more than huge ambition and a will to succeed. For a time, that meant selling drawings on the sidewalks of Greenwich Village and sleeping on park benches. He became a voracious reader of "all things English," to help teach himself the language. Before long he was on his way to making it in America.



Before deciding upon a career in real estate, Gilbert had several interesting and successful experiences. He produced a

movie in which he was an actor and his own stuntman—something he has been thinking about doing again "for fun." He also managed a nightclub/restaurant, taught French and mathematics and was a highly successful private investigator.

When he moved to Phoenix over 20 years ago, Gilbert decided to get his real estate license and has built a solid career in real estate here. He signed on with MERRILL LYNCH in 1984 and tells humorously about his early struggles. "In the first three months in the real estate business, I was fired three times!" he laughs. "My somewhat potent personality did not mix with the manager's ideas of what made a rookie agent successful." He approached his new manager with a unique plan. "Some of the traditional practices, like cold calling, weren't working for me. So I asked for 60 days to try things my way. If it didn't work, I agreed to do anything she asked." Sixty days later, he was the top selling agent in that office and earned the company's "Rookie of the Year" award for 1984. And after just three years in the industry, Gilbert made the largest single transaction to date for the company at the time.

Gilbert Houseaux



by Laura Barron
photography by Thompson
Photographic

then & now

On a small white piece of paper taped to the edge of his desk, **Gilbert Houseaux** has the following words:

Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming "WOW! What a Ride!"

Gilbert reads these words every day, but he doesn't really need any reminding that life is an adventure—especially his life. He is the consummate adventurer,

While the company changed around him, Gilbert stayed put and kept focused on his business. As MERRILL LYNCH became PRUDENTIAL REALTY and then PRUDENTIAL was bought by COLDWELL BANKER, Gilbert has stayed at the same office, not letting the changes distract him. He says that the keys to his success include dedication, hard work and commitment.

Gilbert not only works hard, he tries to work smart—building on the experiences of the past to be more effective. His goal is to always find a way that is “better, faster, and easier” for the benefit of his customers (a concept he applies to his own life, as well.) Ten-hour days, seven days a week are his routine and he loves it. “I have a lot of energy and love to meet people, be with people, help people ... it makes life exciting.” When asked what he loves most about his business, he’ll tell you that it is being excited about “who I’m going to meet today!”

With people at the center of his business, Gilbert attracts clients from his personal life and from his European background. In fact, about 40 percent of his clients today are French or French speaking. “More Europeans are coming to Phoenix to buy second homes, or investment property and it is great to be able to help them through the buying process,” says Gilbert.

Guy Coscas, original founder of AJ’S FINE FOODS, and former owner of CHRISTOPHER’S and THE FRENCH CORNER restaurants, is a long-time client and friend of Gilbert’s and appreciates his expertise in the Phoenix market. “Gilbert is a terrific person and knows exactly what he is doing in the real estate business,” says Guy. “I have bought and sold many houses with him. He has great integrity and definitely has found the key to success in this country.”

Gilbert also attracts clients from his personal life and hobbies. He is an avid outdoorsman and has a passion for martial arts. He practices martial arts several times a week and says what he learns from the people and the practice has a positive influence on his business. Clients **Ron and Becky Baddorf** are an example of how this works in Gilbert’s life. Having met them in martial arts classes and seminars, Ron and Becky hired him to be their real estate agent—and asked him to be the best man at their wedding, which took place at a martial arts camp! “Gilbert is not only a professional and knowledgeable real estate agent, he is an amazing person,” says Ron Baddorf. “He has endless energy and enthusiasm and is a joy to work with and be friends with.”

Today, with about 90 percent of his business coming from referrals, Gilbert says that he does things differently than when he was starting out. For one, he is more selective. “I only work with people I get along with,” he admits. Part of this decision comes from an evolutionary process that Gilbert began a few years ago—a conscious effort to surround himself with only positive energy. Through martial arts, meditation and positive

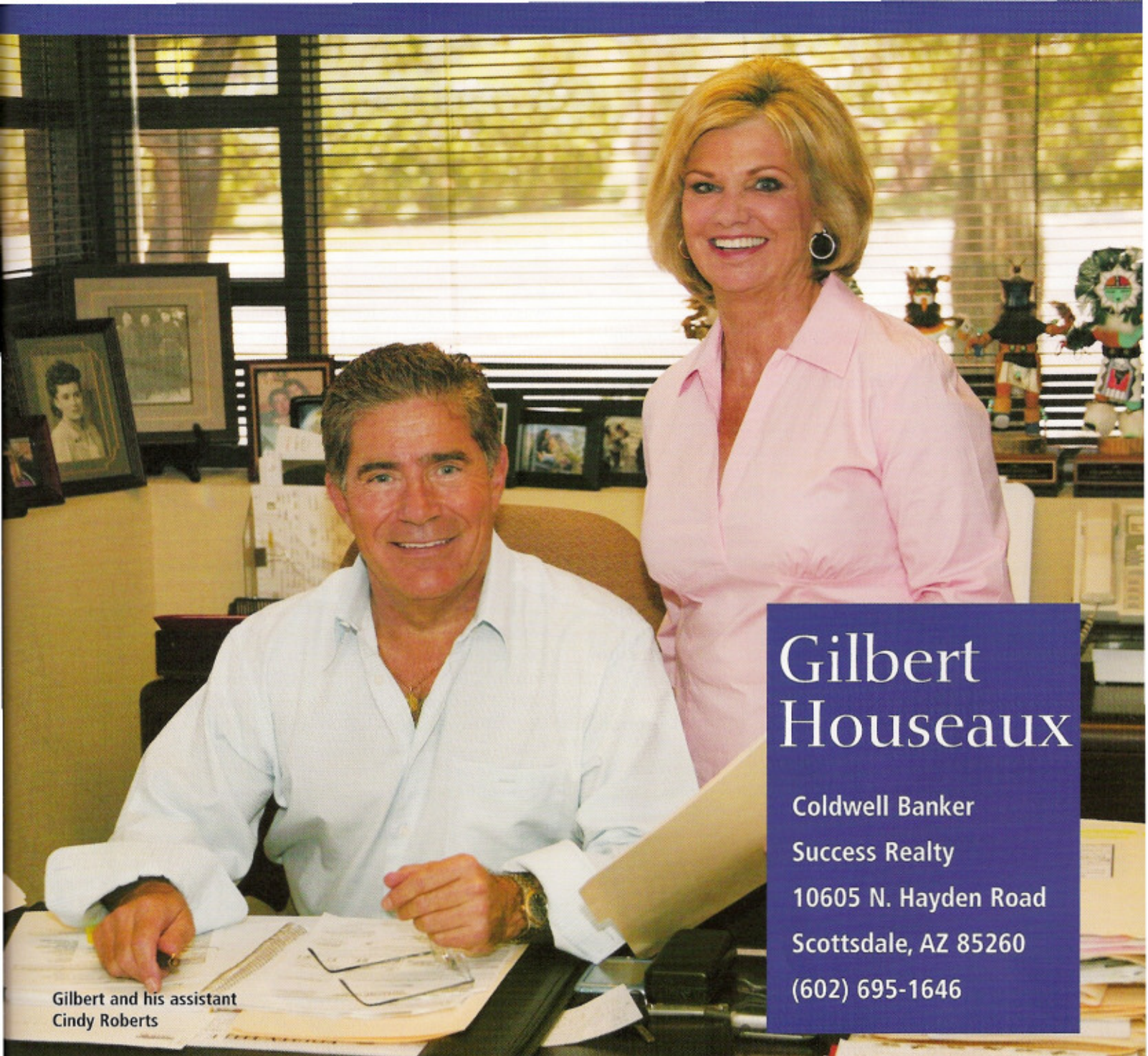
thinking practices, Gilbert says that both his personal and professional life have changed. “I like to think of it like being surrounded by an energy bubble,” he explains. “If I keep my energy positive—both inside and out—then everything works.” He admits that this new way of thinking has created a profound transformation. “Five years ago I was working for retirement. I was more moody and temperamental then. Today, I feel like I want to work forever and I love what I do every day!” When asked what inspired this change, Gilbert admits that it occurred over time, from a conscious choice to view things differently.

A few other things have changed since the last *BROKER AGENT Magazine* story about Gilbert—he has gotten married! He married **Virginia Gee** in 2002, and they enjoy their new life together. Virginia is also a successful real estate agent for COLDWELL BANKER SUCCESS, practicing out of a different office. “Virginia is very supportive of my work habits and helps me to keep them balanced with my life,” says Gilbert. Along with the joy of a new union, came the loss of Gilbert’s two dogs—both in the same year. “It was one of the most difficult things—to lose them both,” Gilbert says. But now he and Virginia have two new dogs—Golden Labs, Star and Maximus. He already has Maximus, just a puppy, is scheduled for hunting field trials. “Here I am training him to be a strong and masculine hunting dog, and my wife calls him Sweet Pea! What’s a guy to do?” he laughs. In addition to his Arizona family and friends, Gilbert and Virginia keep in touch with loved ones in France whenever possible, including his daughter and two grandchildren.

With his new attitude and new family Gilbert still manages to work seven days a week, admitting to often being the first one in the office and last one to leave. (He is trying to improve that, he admits, by taking a day off now and then.) Having had a successful team from 1986 to 1988, Gilbert is once again looking to build a team. He currently works closely with his assistant, **Cindy Roberts**. “Cindy is excellent,” says Gilbert. “She keeps me organized and on track.”

Gilbert also credits part of his success to education. He is always striving to learn new things, both in business and in his personal life, that help him succeed. He has trained with **BRIAN BUFFINI’S REFERRAL SYSTEMS**, one of the country’s top real estate coaching companies. He also likes to coach new agents in their education, often sharing his knowledge by conducting seminars for COLDWELL BANKER.

Another key to Gilbert’s success is communication. He has an “A+ list” of clients, which he keeps in touch with regularly with his coaches encouragement. He does monthly mailings, keeps in regular phone contact and has an annual party for his friends and clients. In addition to traditional marketing activities, Gilbert’s unique communication approach combines a mix of knowledge, experience, technique and energy. And this formula makes it easy and inviting for his clients to keep in touch with



Gilbert and his assistant
Cindy Roberts

Gilbert Houseaux

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him. "There is always somebody in his office just chatting and having coffee," says his assistant Cindy. Clients are drawn to Gilbert because he does everything possible to ensure their needs are met with ease and efficiency. "Clients want an agent they can trust, with whom they can build a rapport," he says. It might also be that his happiness and zest for life are contagious.

While Gilbert is modest about his success, the awards and plaques on his office wall tell the story of a steady stream of accomplishment. "I just like to say that I've increased my business year over year since I started," he says.

The future is sure to hold more success for Gilbert. He's a man with boundless energy, a love of people and a passion for his business and for life. Having started in this country with not much more than "the American dream," **Gilbert Houseaux** has proven that this dream can become a reality. With his sense of adventure, charming personality and belief in "hard work with a smart approach," Gilbert is sure to bring happiness to many people in the future—as their real estate agent and as their friend. ★

