

Ken Gorin

RIDE ON

The Collection President on life as a head of industry, and what a ride it's been

If you live in Miami, you know Ken Gorin. Chances are you're either a loyal client of the 39-year auto industry veteran, or you really wanna be. Why? Well, Gorin is the President and CEO of THE COLLECTION, "one of South Florida's premiere luxury automotive dealerships, housing the globe's most celebrated automotive brands." Read: Audi, Porsche, Ferrari, Maserati, Aston Martin, Jaguar, McLaren and most recently, Alfa Romeo. He's also involved in automotive, business, religious and charitable associations. He's on boards and councils. He's won awards and received accolades. And it's because he's such a wealth of information. He's entirely a treasure to what is the automotive industry. All when he's not being a dad. Toys for Boys recently caught up with Gorin to get the low down on what's on the rise and we were filled in on all things automotive, learned of his recent move to Beach House 8 and chatted how the future is electric.

—Q&A—

JS: Tell me about your vision for THE COLLECTION and how you saw it becoming the wildly successful dealership that it is.

KG: When I came to Miami from Connecticut at the end of 1994 to join my business partner, Ugo Colombo, I was quite taken aback by the lack of work ethic and sense of urgency in general, around business establishments in Miami. To become familiar with the area, I checked out a few service oriented businesses. I remember being in line at the dry cleaner waiting to be acknowledged. When I finally got to the front of the line, the attendant was on the phone with her back to all of us in line and was loudly talking about her experience at the clubs the night before, and she went on for quite some time. I finally tried to get her attention and she replied "be with ya in a minute" and continued talking on her phone. I had to

laugh. I then went to a local car dealership just to check it out. Before I could even get in the door, all the salespeople were lined up in front waiting for the next customer, which seemed like they were getting ready to accost them. I knew then that my vision of providing service that exceeded expectations and building relationships with clients would be perfect in Miami. The Collection had great brands and good people, but the employees did not follow proper processes and lacked direction. I embarked on what became a three year period of changing the culture at the dealership and finding new people to build the proper team to implement my vision. Finding people that believed that honesty and integrity were core values proved more daunting than I first thought, but once I was able to build a core team, it became easier to attract the right members for our "family" as

continues

WORDS _ JILIAN SANZ

PHOTOS _ CAMILO RIOS WHITE



I call us, and we became known for being a dealership like no other.

JS: Talk to me about brand selection, you just added Alfa Romeo, how does a brand become so lucky as to be welcomed into THE COLLECTION family?

KG: Alfa Romeo was a bit different than other brands that we have added. Brands that were in our portfolio when I arrived were Jaguar, Ferrari, Porsche and Audi. Adding a brand has to be done carefully and it's an extensive process; for us, it must be premium and complement our other brands, but it also must represent the core values of our brand THE COLLECTION. Brands that were added include Aston Martin in 1997, Maserati in 2002 and McLaren in 2010. With Alfa Romeo, it was part of the parent group of Maserati. So they came to us and awarded us the franchise. The interesting part was that at the time, we were one of only two or three Maserati dealers in the whole United States selected to represent Maserati and Alfa Romeo together.

JS: While almost all of your automobiles are of a certain, often unattainable price point, you do have some offerings, let's say in your Audi range, that cater to maybe what you might call the aspirational client that one day, as they amass wealth, will upgrade. I assume that you have life-long clients that grow with you. Similarly, I'm sure there are legacy situations where parents bring their children, etc. What role does that play in the company's success?

KG: That is a huge part of who we are. We have never concentrated on selling cars outside of

South Florida. We want to create relationships, so we concentrate on greater Miami: Coral Gables, Pinecrest, Key Biscayne, Miami Beach, etc. Those relationships have brought in family, friends, business associates, neighbors and people that are recommended. I have always felt that an existing client's recommendation has far more impact than any advertising we can place. We actually don't want to sell, or service one car. We want to build lifelong relationships. Also, many of our brands have added more attainable models, like the Audi A3 and Q3, Jaguar XE and F-PACE SUV, Porsche Macan and the Maserati Ghibli. These models are attainable for different members within the relationships we have, so the cycle repeats itself, and we keep having new members join our family.

JS: Tell me about somethings that might be unique to THE COLLECTION, like, for example, the DB10 that you shared with our readers at our event.

KG: I love Miami and so do the manufactures we represent. Many times, they offer us a rare cars we can treat our clients to. The DB10 was one recent example. It was the actual car used in the last James Bond film. However, my current obsession is the new DB11. It just arrived at the dealership and I highly recommend you experience it and take it for a ride - this is hands down my favorite Aston Martin ever!

JS: You just moved in to a new home, tell me about that experience and a little bit about the space and design. And if the snacks will be as good as the ones in THE COLLECTION ;)

continues





KG: My daughters are already grown and out of the house. My oldest, Amanda, is living and working at an entertainment marketing firm in New York. My youngest, Gabby, who turns 25 soon, is in Philadelphia working for a high-end events, catering and production company. I feel great that they are happy and starting their lives as independent adults. So, it was time for me to down size a bit as the house was getting too large for me. Ugo was partnering with Valerio Morabito on Beach House 8 in Miami Beach and it was just what I wanted. I was the first one to buy a unit. It is really a jewel in so many aspects and there is nothing like it on Miami Beach. I love the beach and the ocean, and love the lifestyle. When we were young, my parents always took us to the Connecticut shore. I always found it calming. I'm also having fun rediscovering Miami Beach again. Designing the home and furnishing it was a labor of love; I worked closely with my interior designer, Carolyn McCarthy from Interiors Non-Pareil, on every single detail. Besides selecting furniture and fabrics, we actually moved a lot of walls to get the space just right. We have worked together for almost 20 years, but my previous homes have always been somewhat traditional. This was our first modern design collaborating together and it was so much fun. From the reaction of people that have come over, she really has knocked it out of the park. My new home is perfect for me and I really love it. My work days are sometimes long, and being that I am a bit OCD, I tend to create my own stress at times, so coming home puts me instantly at peace. The design is very Zen and there is the breeze and the sound of the ocean.

There's no other place I'd rather be. Oh, and yes, the snacks are healthy and organic!

JS: As we move decidedly into the future so much changes thanks to technology and the like, tell me about your vision for the future of THE COLLECTION.

KG: People are always complementing our facility, which is truly unique in design, let alone eight brands together all under one roof. However our most valuable asset is our people. I recently met with all the employees at our dealership to discuss the future and to then form focus groups of employees who will develop our vision for the next decade. We call it Vision 2025. The ideas are flushed out from the bottom up, so the employees truly have a voice. I recently updated the Vision team members, as well as all of the Management Team on my next initiative. We were a true disruptor (and still are in many ways) in the automotive experience when this journey started 21 years ago. I am now redoubling my efforts in raising the bar in what THE COLLECTION brand represents. I don't want to give too much away now, but expect innovation; not just in automotive but in all of what luxury retail represents. We are in the midst of developing new initiatives to raise our own standards that honor our clients' time. In today's fast-paced lifestyle, time is the true definition of luxury. It is our most valuable commodity. My goal is to not only respect our clients' time, but to assist in organizing their life so they can enjoy their life to the fullest; conveniently and in a moment's notice. Think five-star concierge services with an added layer of "surprise and delight".

continues



I'm also thrilled to be announcing the addition of a Bachour Bakery + Bistro at THE COLLECTION. We are adding this café (their first one is on Brickell and is at the top of all the lists) in the Spring of 2017 and I couldn't be more excited. Clients will be able to enjoy café services whenever they are visiting us. My dear friend Lee Schragger introduced us and Bachour's philosophy is perfectly aligned with ours. I'm looking forward to making the shopping and service experience even more unique for our guests. Wait until you try their Truffle bun and Spicy tuna toast! Look for pop-up days before the official opening.

JS: On the subject of future, talk to me a bit about the future of automobiles, for example, almost everything has a hybrid or electric component now a days, how is this affecting the industry?

KG: The future is very bright and it's definitely electric. We have already seen a shift within all the brands we represent. It started with the Hypercars, which were all hybrids; the Porsche 918 Spyder, the McLaren P1 and the Ferrari LaFerrari. Mainstream is upon us with Audi's e-tron® and Porsche's eHybrids. Porsche is going to produce their fully-electric Mission E in a couple of years. I just saw the production model, and it is a game changer for sure. And Jaguar just showed the I-Pace all electric SUV at the LA Auto Show. Some are saying that we will eventually see all cars shift to fully electric, but I think the combustion engine will be around for quite some time yet. Most engines are already assisted with Turbo charges now, and that will switch to electric assisting, with some models being fully electric. Autonomous driving is also at the cusp of making

a breakthrough, but our clients love the cars they drive, have fun driving them and it is an important extension of their lifestyle. They might use some elements of autonomous driving in congested traffic like US-1, but there is nothing like driving a car and being in control for most drivers.

JS: What are your thoughts on this wave of uber-luxury SUVs?

KG: Miami loves SUV's, so I say enjoy! We sold more Porsche Cayenne SUVs than any dealer in the world, so that gives you an indication of the demand right here in Miami. We now offer the best in SUVs...Audi Q3, Q5, Q7 and soon a Q8, Porsche Cayenne and Macan, the all new Jaguar F Pace and I Pace coming soon that I previously mentioned, and the all new Maserati Levante just arrived. They dub it the Maserati of SUV's. As with all our brands, we always offer a unique buying experience as well as having all these SUV's available under one roof without leaving our building.

JS: Besides cars, what are some other toys of interest to you? Or hobbies perhaps that you enjoy?

KG: I love supporting the Ferrari Challenge around the Circuit, so that is great fun. Our racing team is headed up by the Romanelli family - brothers Gregory, Arthur and Oliver as well as their patriarch Peter; they are truly in a league of their own and we are also perfectly aligned together. I love collecting watches and they are a true passion of mine. And like I said, I am really enjoying my new place and I've had fun making it a home. I am looking forward to adding a piece or two to my art collection, so I am definitely an interested buyer at ArtBasel this year.