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# Serving Up Toronto's Best

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By Amber Clarke

An entrepreneur in the restaurant business for 20 years, Joel Lazarus switched careers to pursue his hobby and love of real estate and has never looked back.

"I love it. I should have been here 25 years ago," said Lazarus, 48, a real estate agent for five years now. "I enjoy the independence of this business and I enjoy the excitement. I enjoy the fact I'm never usually doing the same thing twice. There's always something different."

An agent with Coldwell Banker Terrequity Realty in Toronto, he's now serving up the best Toronto has to offer

to buyers and sellers in his target markets of Etobicoke Mississauga and downtown Toronto. He points out he does work the entire Greater Toronto Area for clients - from Burlington, to Milton, to Brampton, to Ajax - going wherever his clients take him. Approximately 75 per cent of his business is residential and 25 percent commercial and industrial investment.

During the first six months of 2003 he ranked in the top five per cent of agents in the GTA for buyer-controlled sales according the IMS Agent Achievement Awards. After his first year in the business he achieved the

international Coldwell Banker Sterling Society Award. In 2000, he was the number one Agent for Buyer Controlled Sales in his office. And for the past three years he's received the President's Circle Award. Coldwell Banker Terrequity Realty has 180 agents based out of four Toronto locations, with the company's head office in North York and additional offices located in downtown Toronto, Mississauga and Etobicoke.

Although Lazarus owned and operated two restaurants over a twenty-year period before becoming a real estate agent, he's always been buying, renovating and selling properties on the side. He stumbled into this profitable and rewarding hobby when he was 22. Young, ambitious, and an entrepreneur at heart, he had grown up the child of a single parent always living in apartments. He says he always wanted to own his own home and enjoy a backyard, and a year after opening his first restaurant in Hamilton he decided a house with a second income would be his ticket into home ownership. He looked around Hamilton and found his first gem - a 120-year old run-down brick Victorian house in a depressed part of the city, complete with a grandfathered apartment.

"I found an old dump. I found a

