

## The Purplebricks Family

Working with Purplebricks is a family affair for the Hunts. Julian, wife Sarah and daughter Joanna have teamed up to represent the estate agent as Local Property Experts in picturesque South East Kent.

Some 20 years ago Sarah had been working in travel and experienced how that industry was changing. Holidaymakers who had regularly poured over glossy brochures picked up from high street shops before choosing their getaway location were going online to check out resorts and arrange their own flights and accommodation.

She left and joined the property arm of an insurance company in Kent where she met her husband-to-be Julian, who at the time was her boss. They have worked together in property ever since, having run one agency with a partner, and been franchise owners of a national chain in Ashford and Tenterden. Julian, a fellow of the National Association of Estate Agents, has worked in agencies since the age of 16.

A few years ago they felt the same had started to happen in the way people were looking to buy and sell property. Instead of scouring a town centre window display full of houses for sale, the internet was becoming the first point of call for those searching for a home.

Always on the lookout for an opportunity the couple registered a website "propertyonline", thinking that one day they may be in a position to launch their own customer-driven internet operation. Others were thinking the same.

"I had watched one industry change from being on the high street to one that embraced the internet and technology and it seemed natural that estate agents would go the same way. When you think about the traditional way houses are bought and sold, it is archaic," said Sarah.

"People want a 24/7 service, where they have access to information and can check on their property sale at any time."

Sarah, 53, and Julian, 51, saw Purplebricks had developed an idea similar to their own and was rapidly establishing itself by offering an alternative service to those selling a home, combining great people with cutting edge technology. "We sat down one night and discussed what was happening in the market. The following day I sent Julian's CV to Purplebricks, 20 minutes later they were on the phone and one month later he launched his own business and was engaged as a Local Property Expert, covering postcodes surrounding Ashford. It was ideal, it is where he grew up, went to school and has lived all his life."

Julian hit the ground running. Six valuations were booked in the first month - a number which today has massively multiplied. "He was working 17 to 18 hours a day", remembers Sarah, and exactly one year later they were back working together handling the burgeoning workload. In the meantime daughter Joanna, who had already spent five years learning the business with a major chain, also switched to work with Purplebricks, making it a truly family run operation.

“It is a different way of work,” said Sarah. “It’s not about hitting targets. We have always been well aware that there is a distrust of the work done by some estate agents. People begrudgingly pay out the commission that is charged. They feel robbed when VAT is sometimes added onto that bill and they invariably want to know what you did for the money.

“It’s refreshing to go to people and offer honest advice, a great service and save them thousands in commiseration in the process. We regard every sale as a personal success.

“People like the way we work. It’s like Amazon and Woolworths. Once upon a time, everyone went to Woolworths but then Amazon came along and because of its convenience everyone started using it and it took off. All industries change and the way houses are sold has changed too.”

Ed Notes:

Purplebricks Local Property Experts cover dedicated, local postcode areas and tend to earn significantly more than they did when an estate agent on the high street. They typically have 5 years’ estate agency experience and many of them are former Valuation Managers, Branch Managers or Area Managers with high street agents.

To speak to Sarah, or for high res images of the family, please speak to Nicola Hamilton in the Purplebricks press office on 0121 794 3934. Or email [nicola.hamilton@purplebricks.com](mailto:nicola.hamilton@purplebricks.com).