

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Jennifer Hayes, Eden Vardy, Casey McConnell, Adriann Wanner, Brad Veltman and Duncan Clauss



Generation E

Young entrepreneurs find that “the real world” is really in Aspen.

BY GREG FITZSIMMONS

IN A TOWN THAT BECKONS TO GLOBAL leaders, several ambitious Aspenites have found a niche within their respective and very diverse disciplines: jet travel, craft beer, text marketing, dining and sustainable living. The following young trailblazers are infusing our local business scene with refreshing exuberance and innovative leadership.

TAKE OFF

ADRIANN WANNER, PRESIDENT AND COFOUNDER, EVOJETS

Adriann Wanner personifies the athletic, cultural and entrepreneurial endeavors that make her hometown unique. “Like most kids that grow up in Aspen,” she says, “I trained with the Aspen Valley Ski Club. That lasted for a short time before I started dancing with the Aspen Ballet (now Aspen Santa Fe Ballet). My parents founded and owned Zele for many years; hence my first job in high school was as a barista.”

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With her roots planted in town, it was only natural that Wanner, who turns 27 in July, would return to Aspen after graduating from college.

“Aspen is a real hot spot for the jet set,” she says. Sensing a market for shared-flight operations, Wanner developed evojets with partner Chris Kelly two years ago. The company’s wingspan reaches many facets of the private-jet community—assisting clients with on-demand charters, shared-flight services and aircraft placement—all to save clients between 20 and 40 percent in the charter market. “We cater to a small fraction of the top one percent of income earners across the US,” says Wanner. “Which is to say, a large percentage of Aspenites.” *Visit evojets.com.*

ON TAP

DUNCAN CLAUSS AND BRAD VELTMAN, COFOUNDERS, ASPEN BREWING COMPANY

For Duncan Clauss and Brad Veltman, what started with a home brewing kit in a Boulder apartment near the University of Colorado has turned into a thriving brewery in downtown Aspen. The seven beers on tap at the Aspen Brewing Company have quickly garnered regional and national praise.

“Not an ounce of beer is being wasted,” says Veltman. “It’s crunch time for sure.”

The duo’s taste for handcrafted beer was born in Front Range breweries in Boulder. While skiing in Aspen during a winter break, Clauss, 24, and Veltman, 25, were shocked to find that the Roaring Fork Valley was devoid of any brewpubs north of Glenwood Springs. They spent their senior year drafting a business plan, and days after receiving their diplomas they packed a truck and headed for Aspen (they met their third partner, Rory Douthit, now the assistant brewer, that summer in town). Now, after less than two years in business, the Aspen Brewing Company is creating quite a stir in the intimate industry of craft beers. In fact, local demand is so high that they’re being forced to turn some people away. “Not an ounce of beer is being wasted,” says Veltman. “It’s crunch time for sure.” *Visit aspenbrewery.com.*

TEXT TALK

CASEY MCCONELL, CEO, QITTLE

Picture a marketing tool that could potentially reach anyone at any moment, casting a large, highly-targeted net while directly conveying a specific message. This advertising tactic is the cornerstone of Qittle, an Aspen-based mobile-marketing provider that’s revolutionizing the way

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businesses reach their consumers—by using text messaging. Casey McConnell’s entrepreneurial spirit rings (or vibrates) with each message.

“The mobile phone is the new personal computer,” says the soon-to-be 31-year-old CEO. Qittle provides an instantaneous line of contact between company and consumer: Whether it’s announcing eight inches of new snow at Snowmass or a new “Body Pump” class at Aspen Club & Spa, Qittle’s platform gives clients the freedom and mobility to communicate at the press of a button.

The future looks bright for Qittle. Clients are jumping on board in droves, and McConnell has big plans for his business. “I want Qittle to be to mobile what Google is to search.” *Visit qittle.com.*

HOW SWEET, INDEED

JENNIFER HAYES, OWNER, THE SWEET LIFE

A former event planner for *Time* magazine, Jennifer Hayes was as cosmopolitan as they come, living in Manhattan and sporting the requisite heels to a midtown office and uptown dinner par-

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ties. Looking for something different in post-9/11 New York, she packed up. It’s a story well known to Aspenites: “I wasn’t going to be in the mountains longer than a year,” says Hayes, now 34. The one-year getaway soon morphed into long-term plans, and Hayes had to figure out a way to make the mountains home. The result? The Sweet Life, which opened in Telluride in 2003

to a resounding reception. Quickly it became a hangout for local kids, a staple for family vacations and a favorite of visiting Hollywood elite.

Fast-forward to Snowmass Base Village’s recent grand opening, and it’s evident that Hayes’s hard work and creativity is sweet, indeed. The iconic red barn is home to the second incarnation of The Sweet Life, blending a ’50s-style diner with an ice cream parlor and candy shop. An ideal product for the family-friendly Snowmass market, The Sweet Life’s S’mores, homemade ice cream and fun-loving atmosphere are keeping people of all ages happy. *Visit thesweetlifeinc.com.*

SUSTAINABLE SMARTS

EDEN VARDY, CO-CREATOR, COMMON SENSE REGENERATION PROJECT

Eden Vardy is not afraid to roll up his sleeves and get dirty. The forward-thinking, eco-conscious Aspen resident relishes soil under his fingernails after a long day on his hands and knees. Devoted to educating residents of the Roaring Fork Valley about creative sustainable living practices, Vardy and his Common Sense Regeneration Project have inspired many within the community and abroad. Whether the 23-year-old is leading organic-growing and natural-building workshops to local residents or setting up a permaculture demonstration site alongside children at an AIDS orphanage in Uganda, Vardy’s commitment to action is the impetus behind CSRSP.

“CSRSP will assist locals in designing their own regenerative home systems,” says Vardy.

Perhaps Vardy was destined to work toward inspiring ecological awareness; after all, his first name translates to “paradise” in Hebrew. “CSRSP will assist locals in designing their own regenerative home systems,” says Vardy, “from organic gardens to no-impact renovations.” *Visit re-generation.us.*