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A Private Magazine for the Residents of Portola Valley and Woodside

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Cover Photo by Steve Fisch Photography

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HIGH TECH PEST CONTROL

By Abbie Burgess | Photo by Steve Nelson at Jim Nelson & Son Photography

Pandemic lessons from the pest management industry

Jim Rossi, owner of Presto Pest Control in San Jose, has learned lessons from his industry that are applicable to the current pandemic. “One of the benefits of being in pest control is that we receive explicit training in the handling and use of chemicals,” Jim says. “We are required to wear gloves of specific thickness, specific materials for personal protection as well as go through an annual respirator training.” Sanitation is always a big part of successful pest control practices. Jim says this also applies to our daily lives in reducing the spread of all types of diseases.

The pandemic has severely affected his business, with many customers including restaurants postponing services. But Jim’s business concerns are nothing compared to the concern he has for his oldest son, a 24-year-old paramedic for Santa Clara County. “I worry about him becoming exposed to the virus. First responders are said to be the most impacted profession.”

Gratitude leads to Presto Pest Control

Jim, a former IT professional, found himself doing pest control work by chance, after stepping in to help out a company that suddenly found itself short staffed. He passed the exam on the first try and received certification to become qualified for pest management duties. “I had forgotten how much I had enjoyed being outdoors traveling to different locations,” he says.

After providing pest control services to a local Italian restaurant, Jim was asked by the restaurant owner to service his mother’s home. This simple job led to a career-shifting epiphany for Jim. “She reminded me so much of my own Italian grandmother—she was so thankful and kept repeating her sincere appreciation. I had forgotten the feeling of someone sharing their heartfelt gratitude with me, something that I hadn’t felt since I was 17 years old.” As he left the customer’s residence, he recalled the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake which he had experienced in his own grandmother’s home. “Everything began to shake, the front door swung open and my grandmother began screaming. I could see the streets rolling up and down like waves,” he remembers.



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After the quake subsided, his grandmother Ida Rossi sent him out to round up the widows in the neighborhood. "My grandmother was a matriarch in the area so she insisted everyone come to her home. Many elderly neighbors were terrified and in shock. I had to comfort them while leading them back to my grandma's home." The heartwarming feeling from receiving the elders' deep gratitude during that emergency in Jim's teen years surged into the present day after helping rid the lady's home of pests. "The thankfulness she conveyed to me triggered my feelings from the past event. I cried most of the way home that night."

Soon Jim was in business for himself with Presto Pest Control. His company serves all types of buildings, from corporations to single family homes. Clients call for help dealing with rodents, bed bugs and other pests, live trapping animals, tree and shrub care and termite intervention. To help with the task the company is licensed by the FAA for unmanned drone use to get a visual overview of the client's problem, if needed. What's the first thing a person with a pest issue should do? Identify the type of pest, says Jim. All pests need food, water and shelter so eliminating one or more of those will resolve the issue.

It might surprise people to learn that today's pest management tools are environmentally friendly and have a low toxicity. "It's highly regulated and there is a great deal of effort is made to be safe," Jim explains. Most chemicals that are used are category 3 which have a very low environmental impact, even though Jim is licensed to handle the most hazardous chemicals.

Pest control goes high tech

Jim was born and raised in the Bay Area. Prior to starting Presto, he worked for start-ups in the tech industry. "I really enjoy solving technically challenging problems and coming up with solutions," he says.

Back in the days when the World Wide Web was still referred to as the Information SuperHighway, Jim had a memorable career moment while working as a Network Operations Center Engineer. "I was responsible for providing 24/7 monitoring of server farms in the early '90s. Our biggest client was Yahoo," he recalls. One day, Jim kept noticing odd outages of a fraction of a second. As the shift progressed the outages began to be a few seconds longer here and there. His multiple warnings went unheeded by the client as well as Tier 2 and 3 network engineers because it didn't meet the two minute downtime protocol. "At the end of the day I went home to sleep only to be called hours later by a security investigator for the company. It turned out the whole building that housed the Yahoo servers had lost power and was completely down. When they tried to figure out



what happened they saw all the tickets I had created during my shift as I tried to prevent a disaster from occurring. It made worldwide news that Yahoo was shut down."

Jim believes his background in technology will help him stay ahead of the curve in the pest control industry. "I believe I can utilize my background in creating new products and services to advance the pest control industry," Jim says. "I like to be cutting edge and am technology driven." He uses a portable thermal printer in his vehicle to print reports directly at the client site, uses a cloud based software to track pesticide usage, and has a service portal for customers to see their work history online. Jim says that new products are being released such as rodent bait stations that will record and provide a detailed report of activity electronically. "It's like transitioning from analog to digital, which really helps to collect data and determine effective treatment plans."

It is the quality of service provided that sets his company apart, Jim says. "Many of my customers were previously using bigger companies that have a lot of TV advertising. However when they became interested in finding a better solution they found me at Presto Pest Control." Jim genuinely enjoys helping others restore the calm and order of pest free living to their environments.

Clients can contact Jim at (408) 966-8600 or visit www.presto-pest.com.



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