



GOOD INSTINCTS

Following his intuition led Brian Czarnecki to Camelback Resort. **BY CAROLEE NOURY**

When Brian Czarnecki was 22, he left his hometown of Scranton and moved to the Wrightsville Beach area of North Carolina. “I fell in love with the ocean,” he says.

That love was tested when consecutive hurricanes destroyed first his home and then his house framing business. “I lost absolutely everything.” That upheaval set Czarnecki on a path—not toward

dry land, as more cautious people might—to repairing his own sailboat and taking it out on the ocean for a year. “An acquaintance of mine said, ‘Why not? You’ll never have this chance again and if it isn’t right, you can always come back.’”

Czarnecki, now president and chief operating officer of the Camelback Resort in Tannersville, followed his intuition. He reinvented his loss as an opportunity. While on that trip, he met the owner of a struggling resort in the Bahamas who pressed Czarnecki to consider taking over the business to recreate it from the ground up. “It was when he said, ‘If it doesn’t work out, you can always go back,’ that it clicked,” says Czarnecki. There were those words again. “I took charge and transformed it into a popular boutique resort. While I was there, we added an airstrip and a marina.”

That adventurous spirit led him to his first position with Camelback as the vice president of sales and marketing. The all-season resort offers a variety of indoor and outdoor adventures including skiing, tubing, ropes courses, and indoor and outdoor water parks. “I met the owners, Ken Ellis and Art Berry, and connected to them and their vision. We have 1.6 million visitors each year and our best work happens when our guests walk away with memories that’ll stay with them for a lifetime,” he says. Czarnecki loves his role in visitors’ lives and just about everything he does. “Once in a while, people tell me I smile too much. It’s genuine. I truly love what I do. We don’t micromanage. Instead, we ask for feedback from our team and then show them their opinions count. When people value their work, they keep one another accountable and that makes my job easier.”

And his job is a little bit of everything, which suits Czarnecki just fine. He’s been entrepreneurial since he was a 20-year-old with his own driveway sealing business. “I’ve done just about everything. I’ve been a busboy, waiter, newspaper deliverer; I’ve sold knives, done framing and roofing. For me, it’s never just a job. And no job is beneath me. I’ve done it all and I’m ready to jump in where I’m needed.” 