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Food & Lifestyle

40 Under 40: Jesse Baker, Jet Hospitality



Image: Anthony Bolante | PSBJ

Jesse Baker is the founder and CEO of Jet Hospitality.
ANTHONY BOLANTE | PSBJ



By [Joey Thompson](#) – Reporter, Puget Sound Business Journal
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Jesse Baker started his first business at 7 years old, filling out carbon-paper invoices for yardwork jobs in his neighborhood.

That entrepreneurial drive led him to start his own hospitality businesses in 2017, operating vacation rentals and a party yacht in Seattle. In the pandemic, he pivoted to acquiring motels, RV parks and other properties near recreational attractions, like the Tetons and Washington's Lake Roosevelt – investing his own money to spruce up a site

at Copalis Beach, Washington, while also building out a real estate development company in Seattle.

"We had the first place with glamping on the Washington coast," he said. "In 2021, we added four more (properties). It's been really crazy just hanging on to the reins."



Image: Anthony Bolante | PSBJ

Jesse Baker is pictured in the Business Journal photo studio in Seattle.

ANTHONY BOLANTE | PSBJ

- **Age:** 36
- **Company:** Jet Hospitality
- **Position:** Founder and CEO

How did you start a business at such a young age?

(My dad) was doing body repair in this industrial complex, and at first, I started going and cleaning the baskets at the kayak shop. Then I was hanging out with the jewelry maker, and I ended up getting a job sanding this guy's old Jeep for \$5 an hour. I was just a little fixer guy. When I moved to Wisconsin, I started doing all of the yard and landscaping jobs. I called it Outdoor Attractions. That was in the third grade. I started young because I had to. We were really poor.

What attracted you to studying hotel management and then starting your own company?

I went to Cornell for football and found out they had the best hotel school in the world. I transferred in my sophomore year and got on this track for three years, and they have a real estate minor, and I took that. It was '09 when I graduated, so there were no real estate jobs. I was putting my resume out and I ended up pinging Kidder Mathews and Peter Shorett, and he sent my resume on to John Gordon, who's the local hotel guy. I was put under him as a trainee, and he showed me the wizardly ways of valuation and appraisal. I was like, OK, I can do this with my own deals. I got sick of underwriting everyone else's deals.

What do you want to be doing in 10 years?

I've got Rednell Ventures with my buddy Bryan Walters, former Super Bowl champ for the Seahawks. I played college football with him at Cornell before he was drafted. So we got together and we're doing real estate development, with a few deals here, one in Ocean Shores and one in West Seattle. Then my other college roommate, Aaron Mumford, is Jet's COO So I've got two lieutenants that really are helping me. For Jet, my main priority is mapping the Rocky Mountains out, coming from here, down to Idaho, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico. We're shying away from Oregon and California, just because it's kind of its own entity. In short, I want to grow, and I'd say we're top five nationally already, as far as lifestyle lodging.

How do you take time for your personal life, or do you love staying busy?

I love the hustle. But, my wife is really good about booking and planning trips. I couldn't do it without her. We just did a little trip to Scottsdale, took a week break for spring training. We try to make a big deal of events like our anniversary or birthdays. Her family is also really good about booking family trips, so I get my fair share of being able to work remotely.