

# Allenhurst duo help chefs start their own restaurants

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Richard R. Santore owns [Bielat Santore & Co.](#), Allenhurst, with his partner, Barry J. Bielat.

## When did you decide you wanted to be an entrepreneur?

Besides a few summer jobs I had during high school, I have always been in business for myself. I began with my own rock 'n' roll band which lasted over 10 years before meeting my partner, Barry Bielat.

## Why did you start this business?

Barry Bielat actually started the real estate business and I joined with him in 1982 as a computer systems analyst to automate and systemize his real estate business. Within a short period of time, I found myself on the other side of the table selling real estate.

## Were there any challenges that made you think twice about striking out on your own?

There are always challenges in running your own business. But at the end of the day, you have yourself to pat on the back when you succeed and pick up yourself off the canvass when you don't.

## If you could do it again, what would you do differently?

I would have most likely started personally investing in real estate earlier in my career.

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Richard R. Santore, left, and Barry Bielat own [Bielat Santore & Co.](#), a commercial real estate firm in Allenhurst specializing in the sale of restaurants and other food-related businesses. (Photo: Bob Karp/Staff Photographer)

**What's the best business advice you have ever received?**

The best advice I have ever received came from my dad when I was young. He said son, "if you are not going to do something right, don't do it all."

**What personality trait helps you the most?**

My faith in God is what drives me. I wake up every morning knowing that God has a plan for my life and that whatever comes my way during each day, He is with me in it.

**What's the hardest part of the job?**

The hardest part of our business is dealing with what I perceive to be a lack of a "sense of urgency" in many of the clients and professionals who are involved in any given transaction. I am a get-it-done and get-it-done-right person and not everybody operates in the same manner or on the same time clock.

**The easiest?**

The easiest is simple; trying to do the right thing for all of our clients. Helping them in whatever I can and putting their interests before mine. Believe me, if you can do that in your business, prosperity will always come your way.

**What surprised you the most about running the business?**

How blessed I am to have my own business and to have such good fortune with it for over 35 years. A benefit is the flexibility the business has afforded me to juggle my schedule so that I never missed any of my children's dance recitals, plays, baseball, football, basketball games or other such events when they were growing up. For that I am very grateful.

**Describe your most unusual customer, job or work experience.**

The most unusual customer we had walked into our office one day unannounced and said he wanted to buy a restaurant. He was dressed in tattered, dirty jeans and a flannel shirt. He looked disheveled. My partner and I thought to ourselves; "there is no way this guy can buy a restaurant." Well he did and he paid cash without going to a bank for financing.

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Richard R. Santore, left, and Barry Bielat own Bielat Santore & Co., a commercial real estate firm in Allenhurst specializing in the sale of restaurants and other food-related businesses. (Photo: Bob Karp/Staff Photographer)

### How would you like the business to grow and change?

Our business is always evolving and we try to employ new technology whenever and wherever available. We have been growing the business for over 35 years, but I would someday like to find and train a successor so that my partner and I could work three days a week instead of six.

### In one sentence, tell us why customers should go there.

Customers should engage our brokerage services because we are simply the best at what we do.

### What do you love about the community where your business is located?

Our office is located two blocks from the ocean in Allenhurst and I live only five blocks from the ocean. People tell me I am lucky because I only have a 10-minute drive to the office. However, they fail to realize that I am traveling up and down the roads of New Jersey three to four days a week.

### When you leave work, do you leave the office behind, or are you always in contact?

I am always accessible to my clients. However, I do try to get away completely on Sundays unless there is an emergency.

### What do you do in your off time?

I spend a good deal of time with my family. I like to play golf and I attend yoga classes four times a week. I also run a Christian Fellowship Bible Study from my office every Wednesday evening.

### When you leave the business behind someday, what will you do?

Play a bit more golf, travel with my wife and spend a great deal of time spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ, in whatever way He leads me.

*Small Business Spotlight runs Mondays. If you're a small-business owner in Monmouth and Ocean counties interested in taking part in this Q&A, contact business producer Dennis P. Carmody at [dcarmody@gannettnj.com](mailto:dcarmody@gannettnj.com).*

### BIELAT SANTORE & CO.

**Describe your business:** Bielat Santore & Co. is a commercial real estate firm. The company's expertise lies chiefly within the restaurant and hospitality industry, specializing in the sale of restaurants and other food and beverage real estate and businesses. Since 1978, the principals of Bielat Santore & Co., Barry Bielat and Richard Santore, have sold more restaurants and similar types of commercial properties in New Jersey than any other real estate company. The firm has secured in excess of \$500 million in financing to facilitate these transactions.

**Owners:** Barry J. Bielat and Richard R. Santore

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**Hours:** 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays

**Founded:** 1978

