

Cardente Real Estate

A culture of teamwork and integrity



PHOTO COURTESY OF CARDENTE REAL ESTATE

Cardente Real Estate, at 322 Fore St. in the Heart of Portland, has flourished since its founding in 2005.

CARDENTE REAL ESTATE WAS FOUNDED IN 2005 by Matthew Cardente as a small-shop firm looking to provide clients with a better alternative to their real estate needs. Today, this full-service real estate and investment brokerage is an industry leader working in the Heart of Portland, representing clients in multi-million-dollar deals that are key to the vibrant transformations going on in Portland and elsewhere in Northern New England. As of mid-year 2017, the firm has nine commercial brokers plus support staff who occupy the top three floors in Portland's Old Port at 322 Fore Street.

Cardente was recognized in 2016 as a CoStar Power Broker for Leasing and for Sales—and has won one or both awards every year since 2012. Three brokers at Cardente have been recipients of the Maine Commercial Realtor of the Year Award. Specializing in all aspects of sales and leasing of commercial real estate throughout Maine and New Hampshire, Cardente's philosophy is built on integrity, teamwork, and "Building a foundation of trust, one client at a time."

It takes a special type of person to work for Cardente Real Estate:

Michael Cardente joined his brother Matthew at the beginning, serving as Financial and General Manager while earning his broker license. Previously, Mike managed hundreds of thousands of square feet of commercial properties in Maine and Florida, working with companies like Federal Express and AAA.

"It's not a typical office," he says. "It's much more of a team atmosphere, rather than a bunch of independent contractors. We put a lot of thought into who comes aboard—and how they'll get along with other people in the office."

Chemistry has resulted in great longevity internally, which serves clients through shared knowledge.

"We communicate about upcoming properties. We're sounding boards with each other to overcome obstacles and put the property in front of everybody's clients. Our clients get the experience of the whole company, not just one broker."

Major accomplishments include the sale of the former Paul's Food Center at 585 Congress St. In 2014, he brokered the Old Port Portfolio (five buildings on Wharf and Fore streets) for \$5.617 million. Both Cardente brothers sold 511 Congress St., Portland—a 130,000-square-foot office tower and adjacent parking lots—for \$12.45 million. In 2016, Mike won the company's Broker of the Year award in recognition of the sale and lease transactions he completed.

Greg Perry has also been with the firm from the beginning, becoming partner in 2012. In 2016, Perry was named Broker of the Year by the Maine Commercial Association of Realtors and the 2016 Broker of the Year by Cardente Real Estate, and was recognized by the National Association of Realtors as among the top 25 Commercial Brokers in the country.

Perry has a strong background in commercial construction and development. "I grew up with Matthew. I met with him and we thought it would be a good partnership and a great working relationship."

Perry counts his accomplishments less in transactions and more in relationships.

"The picture starts with a client who might buy one building and then, over time, grow their portfolio, build their wealth and get excited about commercial real estate. Some clients I worked with on small projects are now buying multi-million-dollar investment properties. It's fun to watch that kind of growth."

He likes the culture of cooperation.

"We cooperate and make our listings public. We don't just sell internally."

Karen Rich came to the firm shortly after it began. Her arrival was heralded as strong affirmation of Cardente's mission.

Rich has practiced commercial real estate in Portland since 1991 and was voted 2012 Maine Commercial Realtor of the Year. Before joining Cardente, she was broker/owner of Major, O'Connor & Rich Commercial Real Estate, then a broker with Commercial Properties.

Rich has been involved with numerous retail and investment projects, including the \$15 million sale of the Custom House Parking Garage in Portland—the largest commercial real estate transaction in Maine in 2004; and the redevelopment of Western Avenue Crossing in South Portland—a deal she's particularly proud of.

"That whole section of Western Avenue was undeveloped. I represented the client who bought that land and handled all of the initial transactions."

With her long experience, Rich had much to offer Cardente.

"I think my background has been helpful. The longer you're in your field, especially commercial real estate, you have a lot of knowledge that comes with experience," she says. "You know your market—and that leads to better service for your clients."

Cardente Real Estate

322 Fore St., Portland, ME

Commercial Real Estate/
Investment Brokerage

Matthew Cardente,
President/Designated Broker

Founded 2005

9 employees

www.cardente.com

Mike Cobb has been a licensed real estate professional in Maine since 2007. He has a background in construction, project management and land development; and extensive experience in client negotiations. Cobb became a partner in 2015.

Cobb was exposed to real estate development from a young age, thanks to his father, a builder and broker.

"I grew up around building single-family houses, doing summer jobs, everything from finish work to lugging shingles," he says.

Cobb always loved big-building architecture, so it was a natural progression into commercial. Joining Cardente in 2013, he clicked.

"We're all looking out for each other, pushing each other's listings, trying to get deals done."

He likes the firm's local character, too.

"We're built and operated in Maine. From a client's perspective, they know we care about the market we work in."

Top accomplishments include finding a buyer for 959 Congress St. in Portland—a \$1.287 million transaction—just days after he joined the firm; and the record downtown Bangor sale of a luxury apartment building at 28 Broad St., for \$3.125 million.

"The important part is getting to the finish line, and that revolves around client expectations," he says. "I'm always going to be the straight-shooter for our clients."

Mark Sandler joined Cardente in 2015. Previously, he was president of Sandler Brothers, a family-owned food distribution company. But he had a passion for commercial real estate.

"I met Matt and liked the way he did real estate," Sandler says. "The brokers are knowledgeable, personable, honest and hard-working."

Sandler's focus is on building relationships.

"You treat people fairly and you're honest. For clients, that means looking out for their best interests."

Restaurant transactions are favorites, like the family-owned Captain's Galley in Old Orchard Beach. He recently connected a Windham property-owner with a New York family opening a Japanese restaurant.

Cheri Bonawitz joined Cardente in October 2016, bringing extensive experience in commercial leasing and sales. Practicing real estate in Maine since 2009, one of Bonawitz's larger accomplishments was her team involvement with the sale of J&S Oil in April 2016. Cardente is a natural fit.

"They're professional and helpful, with a wealth of knowledge. We often team up with each other. Clients aren't hiring just one of us, but the knowledge that we all have."

Bonawitz counts the \$1.5 million sale of the 19th century Higgins Beach Inn, in Scarborough, as a memorable transaction.

"We took the time to find the right buyer and, after a recent total renovation, Higgins Beach Inn is beginning a new chapter."

The most important traits for a broker?

"You have to be patient and listen to your client."

Marnie Coleman joined Cardente in January 2017 as Director of Operations. She's been a Maine real estate agent since 2010, achieving her broker license in 2017. Before Cardente, Coleman was most recently Assistant Market Center Administrator at Keller Williams Realty.

She got involved in real estate by happenstance.

"My buyer's agent needed an assistant. Six months later I was licensed and kept going."

She loves the field.

"You're in the hub of business activity, and it's always interesting."

Cardente brought the opportunity to work for a smaller firm where she can grow professionally.

"I needed to get out of my comfort zone and keep learning."



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CARDENTE REAL ESTATE



Maria Horn recently joined the staff as marketing assistant, landing in Maine from New Mexico.

"I was learning graphic design in Santa Fe and was ready to get out of the desert," she says.

Horn loves Maine and plans to explore the beaches. She also enjoys Cardente and sees her new position as a great way to grow her graphic design portfolio and learn about real estate marketing.

"Everybody is friendly and helpful. A family business is a great place to work."

Andrew LeBlanc joined the firm in June 2017 after being an agent at the Dunham Group. LeBlanc brings extensive experience in the financial and commercial sector, most recently managing a large portfolio of commercial properties at Vickery Downing Associates.

"We have a very loyal and experienced brokerage team in place, with many of them directly responsible for making what Cardente Real Estate has become today," says Matthew Cardente, Designated Broker and President of Cardente Real Estate. "I say 'team,' but to me, they are all my family."

Cardente has been a licensed Maine Broker for 17 years and for over 10 years in the State of New Hampshire.

"You always know you have great people by your side when you learn something new from them every day." ●

Top: Cardente Real Estate brokered the sale of a luxury apartment building at 28 Broad St. in downtown Bangor for \$3.125 million.

Bottom: The 19th century Higgins Beach Inn, in Scarborough, before and after (in inset) its purchase and renovation.