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[00:00:00] **Speaker 1** That's not too brutal.

[00:00:00] **Speaker 2** Ha ha ha

[00:00:01] **Speaker 1** Alright, I guess, let's start with, give me how this all came to be, like the short thumbnail version of how you came to own a Resupport Top Door.

[00:00:10] **Speaker 2** Sure, absolutely. Yeah, my colleagues at the time thought that I was nuts. So I used to work for UW Credit Union down in the Madison area, was a banker for almost 10 years. And my parents and I, growing up, our family vacation was always going to fishing resorts in northern Minnesota. And we just kept talking about the idea. We'd just come up, we'd talk about it for a while. We should think about buying a resort. And we're like, no, we're crazy. But it just came up enough times that finally we decided to start looking and we looked across northern Wisconsin and northern Minnesota for a place. It had a long list of criteria to make sure it would work and we were super lucky that Deerfoot was available when we bought.

[00:00:50] **Speaker 1** And have you regretted that since then? No.

[00:00:53] **Speaker 2** It's been an amazing adventure. It certainly had some ups and downs, but yeah. But for running my own business, I never would have left my last company. It was a great company, but, yeah, being an entrepreneur and being up here on the Chippewa Flowage has been a dream come true.

[00:01:07] **Speaker 1** So you said you grew up going to fishing camps, specifically. It wasn't just a resort on the water. What is it about fishing camps that makes that special or different from, oh, it's a fun vacation?

[00:01:18] **Speaker 2** Yeah, I mean it was definitely a combination of the two, but growing up, my dad taught my sister and I to fish from the time we were old enough to hold a fishing pole. We were out fishing with him. My mom made sure that that happened and super fortunate for my parents in that experience and teaching us both. But I think just the memories that you make at a fishing resort, at a lake vacation, it's just so special. We saw those same people just one week out of the year. I still spend time with some of those people today. I mean, you just make great memories and have great experiences, and fishing is so much fun. I mean anybody who loves to fish, just that, you know, set of the line and the tug on the end of the the line, pretty awesome, so.

[00:02:00] **Speaker 1** So how important is walleye specifically to this flowage and to the lifeblood of resorts in the Northwood?

[00:02:08] **Speaker 2** Absolutely, it's definitely a fish that guests will ask about. They want to know what the walleye are biting on, what's the latest walleye fishing report. So it's something that guests who book they are targeting and want to come fish.

[00:02:22] **Speaker 1** And what's I mean do they believe you or do they know by now that you know what you're talking about I'm not just the lady

[00:02:30] **Speaker 2** Yeah, I think so. So my fish that I will target primarily is musky, so sometimes I will defer to, you know, the local guides or the local bait shops have great walleye reports that they put out, but yes, they know that I have a boat, I fish, I trailer, I launch, you know, back the boat, all that good stuff, so.

[00:02:49] **Speaker 1** But that makes a difference, right? I think so. For them to come to a resort like this, you're one of them. You understand what they're looking for.

[00:02:56] **Speaker 2** Yes, and we try to be very well set up for anglers. So there's electrical at the docks, we've got a boat launch right on site, we sell gas right at the lakeside. So we knew what we wanted in a fishing vacation and we made sure that we offer that here at your foot.

[00:03:12] **Speaker 1** And we've seen some resorts that have had to shift more to the family fun party atmosphere especially in the middle of the summer is are there still like the fishing key or is it just fishing like seasons or moments?

[00:03:26] **Speaker 2** Yeah, I mean we certainly get groups and families that want that party atmosphere. I mean, we do parties, events, we'd do live music, we've always got something going on, but our focus here at Deerfoot seems to always be fishing related or fishing adjacent for sure.

[00:03:42] **Speaker 1** So tell me a little bit about how you got to know John and Brent.

[00:03:46] **Speaker 2** Absolutely, so a couple different ways but it's been fun. They were guests of Deerfoot, so I met them here at Deerfoots Bar and Grill. Brenda's also a member of Wisconsin Women Fish and I'm an active member of that fishing club as well. And then up at Boulder Lodge, where they live close to Boulder Lounge, another resort in the area. They would be there for drop-in music nights. My dad plays live music, so we would connect in that way as well

[00:04:13] **Speaker 1** How many times have you been out with them, but you said with your dad?

[00:04:16] **Speaker 2** Yeah, yeah. We've taken two other river fishing trips with John and Brenda, my dad and I, and it's just always phenomenal. It's so much fun, the scenery is so beautiful, and tons of action always.

[00:04:29] **Speaker 1** What's the difference between going down a river that style versus just taking a boat and zooming out and finding the spot and using your sonar?

[00:04:39] **Speaker 2** I think river fishing is very new to me, but the main difference that I observe having grown up lake fishing is that the river fishing, those fish know if prey floats by, it's gone. So the aggression, like just the aggressive nature of the bite in the river is fun. The spots where they will strike is often very predictable. It's just a very different experience than just floating down the river too, even Even if the fish aren't biting, it's quite an experience.

[00:05:07] **Speaker 1** And picking up a couple while it was a new thing.

[00:05:10] **Speaker 2** Yeah, I don't think we caught walleye on either trip before. We were targeting muskie and smallmouth on those prior trips, but that was fun today.

[00:05:20] **Speaker 1** What is it about, I know it's not your number one target, but what is it about catching a wall, how is it different from some of the other species where you're like, oh, that's different. That's a wall.

[00:05:28] **Speaker 2** Yeah, I mean, you can definitely feel that head tug is different. The fight is different, sometimes the bite is more finicky, I would say. I think that Walleye definitely at times requires anglers to up their game.

[00:05:42] **Speaker 1** Does that make it, is that why it's unique? I mean is that, I mean there's a cultural connection to walleye being up higher up on the pyramid, above panfish, and maybe next to musky adjacent.

[00:05:53] **Speaker 2** I think, too, because people enjoy eating walleye so much. It's like the trophy, let's bring it home and cook it up for everybody. But there are a lot of delicious fish. I don't know exactly the answer to that question, but it's very common. That belief is strongly held.

[00:06:10] **Speaker 1** So talk to me a little bit about what someone like Brenda can offer, especially your connection to women fish. Because making a space for women to learn and feel comfortable, it's a very male-dominated environment. Oh yeah.

[00:06:23] **Speaker 2** Yeah, and that's very important to me as well, to have a place where women feel comfortable. They can come by themselves, they can come with just their kids, they don't have to have a man that comes with them necessarily, and they can be comfortable here fishing at Deerfoot. I think going with Brenda on the river, one of the things that I have heard her talk about that really seems relatable is that you don't really have to use huge tackle. It can be very small, it can be easy to cast, easy to throw. You should be able to fish all day and be comfortable, and that's one thing that she really, I think, has changed a lot of minds of women who thought, oh, maybe I can't do this. They absolutely can, and catch big fish.

[00:07:05] **Speaker 1** One of the aspects that we're looking at in this is all of the research that is going at universities and the DNR and GLIFWIC and the tribes. Sure. There's a lot of money. There's lot of time and effort that goes into stocking and research. Is it worth it? I mean, can it be justified for one species to put all those hours and all that money into it?

[00:07:26] **Speaker 2** I think in general, yes, and there are people who are so interested in each species that I think the support is there as well. But yeah, I think that for people that come up, there's such an economic connection to it as well, I mean we have people who will book a trip just to chase walleye or just to just chase muskie, and if that particular species is not supported, I mean all the businesses feel that.

[00:07:51] **Speaker 1** I mean, it's interwoven into the rest of the economy. It sometimes gets lumped with tourism, but it has its own place.

[00:08:00] **Speaker 2** And directly connected to tourism. I mean, we're members of many of the local organizations that help bring people to the area, and if the fishing is good, the people come.

[00:08:10] **Speaker 1** And they hear about it, right? Yeah.

[00:08:11] **Speaker 2** Yeah, oh yes, yes, and if the fishing is bad they hear about it too.

[00:08:15] **Speaker 1** Alright, anything else that you'd like to add along the lines of what we were talking about?

[00:08:19] **Speaker 2** Um, like about walleye or about...

[00:08:23] **Speaker 1** I mean, there's no right, you don't have to, I'm just curious, giving you a chance if you're like, I wanted to say this, but you never asked about it.

[00:08:31] **Speaker 2** I don't think so.

[00:08:32] **Speaker 1** Totally fine. Can I get you to say and spell your name just so I have it correct?

[00:08:37] **Speaker 2** Amanda Wilson, A-M-A-N-D-A, W-I-L-S-O-N.

[00:08:42] **Speaker 1** And owner. Yes. Soul owner, right? Soul owner. You bought out your parents. Yes, but you still get to blossom around once you get married.

[00:08:48] **Speaker 2** Yes, and they are still incredibly tied into all of this, obviously, yeah, wouldn't be able to do it without them.

[00:08:54] **Speaker 1** Great, thank you so much, we really appreciate it. It's nice to meet you. Yeah, you too.

[00:08:56] **Speaker 2** Yeah, you too. Thanks.