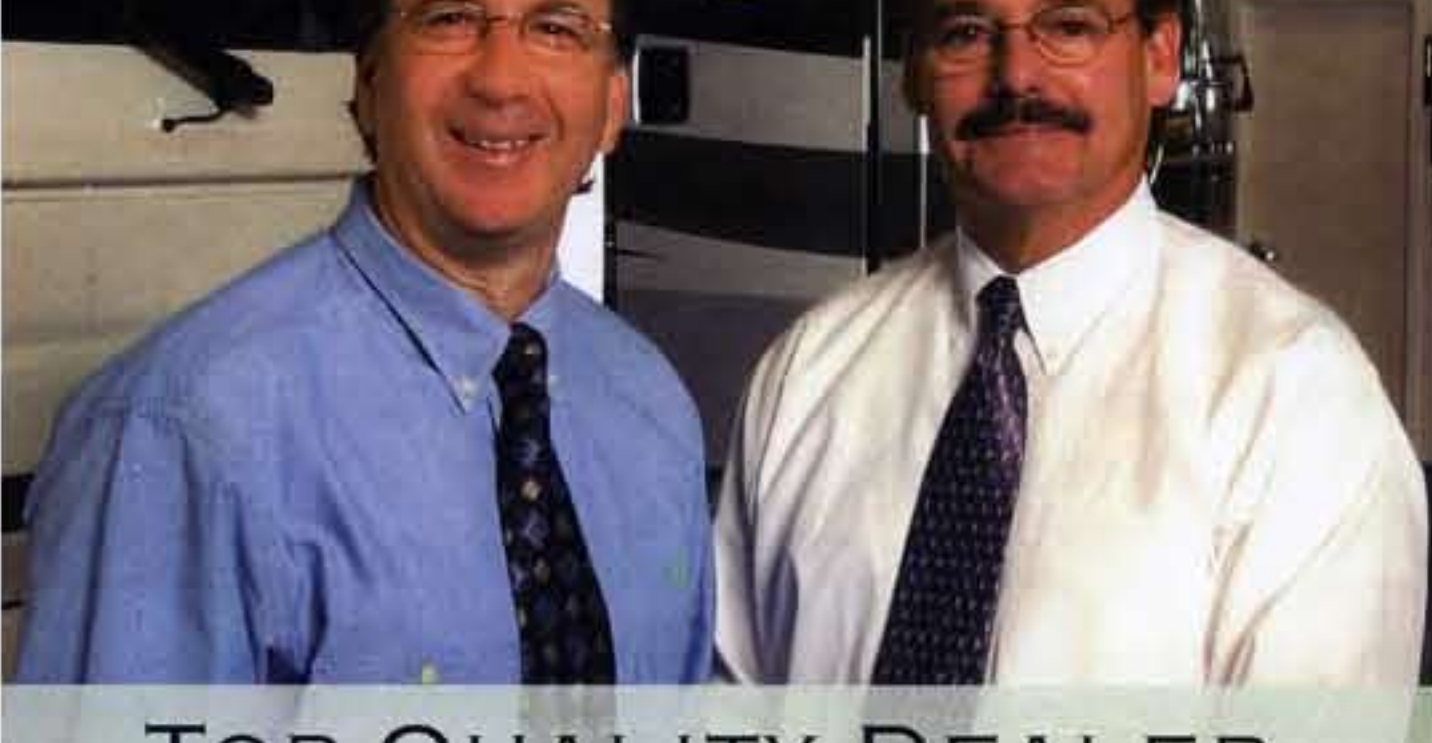


# RV EXECUTIVE TODAY



## TOP QUALITY DEALER OF THE YEAR

Owner Lindsey Reines and Sales Manager Doug Magee of Reines RV Center, Inc.

**ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:**

- Results of the RVDA RV Parts Repair Study
- 2005 RV Dealers International Convention/Expo Wrap-Up
- David Martin Louisville Workshop Preview



## Top Quality Dealer of the Year

*Reines RV Center, Inc.*

**Lindsey Reines**

**Reines RV Center, Inc., in Manassas, VA, is RVDA's 2005 Top Quality Dealer of the Year. Owner and President Lindsey Reines accepted the award on behalf of the dealership on September 29 at the RVDA Annual Meeting.**

**The Top Quality Dealer of the Year Award recognizes RV dealerships that, through their professionalism, promote a positive image of RV travel, RV dealers, and the RV industry at large.**

**In this special Q&A, RV Executive Today Editor Melissa Broadus talked with Lindsey about his dealership and the RV business.**

**Q:** *Reines RV Center, Inc. has been in business for a long time. Can you tell us the history of the dealership and how you got started in the business?*

**A:** My late father, Dusty, started out in the car business in 1946. In 1963, he decided to buy a couple of travel trailers to sell. He started with three and when he sold those he bought another three to sell. He gradually bought more travel trailers and decided to leave the car business entirely because he loved RV's. Our whole family found RV buyers to be more enjoyable.

My late brother, Richard, and I started working at the dealership when we were very young. I started selling RV's when I was 13 years old and sold my first trailer at 14. I began working full-time at the dealership in 1974.

We did everything at that time – from selling RV's to working in parts and even a little service. Our first sales office was about the size of my current office. Everybody heard everything! I would be trying to make a deal and my dad would say "we can't do that!"

In the 1980's we moved from Arlington, VA, to Fairfax, VA. We eventually outgrew that dealership location and, in 1998, we moved into our current location in Manassas.

**Q:** *You made a significant investment in your new dealership. What was your thought process behind the move?*

**A:** At the dealership in Fairfax we were on a two acre lot. It was much too small for our dealership to be able to expand and grow the way we wanted to.

In 1996, we purchased 10 acres of land in Manassas to build our new dealership – right off of I-66. The interstate location is very important, because research shows that dealerships with interstate locations

can expect to grow about 40 percent. Along with the growth potential, I-66 is a gateway to Washington D.C.

The growth has been phenomenal and we could use even more space. I understand that many dealers looking at expansion right now are looking for 15 acres – and that sounds about right to me.

We have an extensive parts department and 16 service bays. We also thought it was important to add an indoor showroom. When you think about it, people buying some RV's are paying as much or more as they would for a luxury car like a BMW or Lexus. We try to give them a luxury car experience when the come to our dealership.

I know this is controversial with some dealers, but we decided to bring in Camping World when we made the move. Initially, Camping World wanted to be a separate building, but we ended up changing our facility to have the first Camping World that is under the same roof as an RV dealership. I think that has been beneficial. The growth in customer traffic increases sales for both companies.

*continued on page 12*

**Right:** Reines RV began as a car dealership in the 1940's. Lindsey stands in front of portraits of his late brother Richard and late father Dusty.

**Below:** Past RVDA Chairman Marty Shea presents Lindsey Reines the award with RVDA President Mike Molino

**Q:** *Reines RV Center, Inc. includes an indoor showroom.*

**A:** We have 16 service bays and an indoor showroom. We also thought it was important to add an indoor showroom. When you think about it, people buying some RV's are paying as much or more as they would for a luxury car like a BMW or Lexus. We try to give them a luxury car experience when the come to our dealership.

Sales Manager Doug Magee works with a customer to get the proper unit.

**Q:** *The Washington D.C. area is a unique market. Tell us a little bit about how that affects your dealership.*

**A:** The area is dominated by the Federal government and businesses that do business with the government. The Washington area also includes some of the highest income counties in the country. So it's a great market, but it's my experience that this area can be very sensitive to economic and political events.

For example, the dealership had its three most months in recent history during the 2000 Presidential election. People seemed to be unhappy with the candidates, and consumer confidence was down because of the uncertainty surrounding the election outcome.

I think we also have some advantages being in this market. We may be able to sense a pick-up in consumer confidence a little sooner than in other regions. I remember that three days after September 11th, we had customers coming in making purchases. To me, that said things were going to be OK.

**Q:** *Can you tell us about your dealership's training program?*

**A:** Training is very important here and I want to become more involved and hands-on with the training process at the dealership. I've been in the industry for 31 years and there is still a lot to learn.

We participate in industry certification programs. Certification programs really help with employee pride. For example,

Reines RV Center, Inc. is located off I-66 in Manassas, VA.

Reines RV Center has 16 service bays to care for their customers' needs.

**Q:** *You are a member of an RVDA/Spader 20 Group. How has that influenced your business?*

**A:** My 20 group involvement is a big factor in the success of the dealership. The dealers in my group are people I look up to. We meet quarterly and we hold each other accountable through reviewing financials and in visiting each other's dealerships. I truly believe that if there were a problem, I could call on any one of them for help. It is a special group of people.

Reines RV Center, Inc. includes an indoor showroom.

**Q:** *What do you see ahead for the RV business?*

**A:** I think the RV business has a bright future. I've been in this industry a long time and have seen really tough times – like odd and even days for gas purchases. Right now, it is not as bad as some in the media portray the situation. It just takes some time for consumer confidence to build up. Challenges make it interesting.

The thing that is really going to influence the future of the industry is dealer/manufacture relationships. There should be a partnership between dealers and their manufacturers. Manufacturers need to get back to the basics with their dealers – focusing on customer satisfaction.

Right now, many manufacturers seem focused on only selling units. They are building these extremely complex RV's and we are selling them. Then, when the units come in for service, they expect the technicians to be able to fix everything. Manufacturers expect a technician to be a "jack of all trades," but some are not always willing to pay a fair labor rate for the increased work.

The statistics I saw at the convention show that the service experience is a critical factor in customer satisfaction and return business at the dealership. We need to work together as dealers and manufacturers to put more focus on quality products before the sale and service at the end of the sale, so the customers will come back. ♦

**Q:** *What do you see ahead for the future of dealer/manufacture relationships?*

**A:** We have also invited key manufacturers to attend our 20 group meetings. Ron Fenech from Keystone RV Company and Bruce Hertzke from Winniebag Industries attended recent meetings. We've also had RVDA President Mike Molino as a guest as well. We find it beneficial to have these leaders at our meetings.

**Q:** *What do you see ahead for the future of dealer/manufacture relationships?*

**A:** We have also invited key manufacturers to attend our 20 group meetings. Ron Fenech from Keystone RV Company and Bruce Hertzke from Winniebag Industries attended recent meetings. We've also had RVDA President Mike Molino as a guest as well. We find it beneficial to have these leaders at our meetings.

**Fund deals faster. Make life easier.**

BANK OF AMERICA OFFERS MAXIMUM SPEED AND CONVENIENCE. Achieve fast, easy funding at preferred rates with our instant credit approval program. It's that simple. With 35 years of industry commitment and complete, full-service retail credit capabilities, we have what you need to approve buyers. Lots and lots of buyers. Visit [www.bankofamerica.com/rvdealer](http://www.bankofamerica.com/rvdealer) to learn more.

**Bank of America Higher Standards**