

2018 Limousine & Sedan Operator of the Year

Nikko & Matt Assolin of Nikko's Worldwide Chauffeured Services

By Bridget Ann Peery

Nikko and Matt Assolin, the father and son duo of Nikko's Worldwide Chauffeured Services, operate in the cities of Houston and Austin, Texas, providing service as a team nearly four decades after Nikko started the business "sort of on a whim" with only a few vehicles.

Today, there is nothing whimsical about the exemplary company they run, as they have been named this year's TLPA Limousine & Sedan Operator of the Year.

"We're thrilled and honored to be chosen as the Limousine & Sedan Operator of the Year and to be receiving it at TLPA's centennial convention," says Matt.

Nikko moved to the Houston area from New York in 1970. Prior to working in transportation, he had been in the hotel business—another industry that prioritizes hospitality and customer relations—for close to 15 years, as vice president of operations for Holiday Inn. Nikko partnered with a friend in 1982, just as limousine vehicles were beginning to be manufactured.

"He started it sort of on a whim," Matt says. By 1986, Nikko and his wife Linda, who joined him in running the operation, grew the company to 15 vehicles and adopted a more corporate-based model. Since its founding, Nikko's Worldwide has catered to a number of entertainers, politicians and sports figures, including the Houston Astros for the past 25 years.

"As he was one of the first [few] in Houston, he was kind of the one who started things around here," says Matt, who remembers well his own start in the family business.

"I started when I was six or seven years old washing cars," he says. By the age of 16, Matt was well versed in the day-to-day functions.

In high school, he aspired to be a naval aviator. However, a knee injury kept him from the Naval Academy, so he chose another path: attending the University of Houston, where he received his degree in finance and economics in 2008, and running the family business with his father.

Nikko would come in four to five days a week to oversee service-quality standards, while Matt focused on the big picture, finances and company strategy. They expanded their

fleet in 2013, opening the second branch of Nikko's Worldwide in Austin.

Today, between Houston and Austin, their company has a combined fleet of about 50 sedans and buses and around the same number of chauffeurs. Matt attributes their success in these two very different markets to the service they provide, a priority that Nikko has reinforced since the earliest days of the company.

"We exist in our industry to be in the service of our clients and there are a lot of things that go into that," Matt explains. "Like making sure we have great employees, making sure we have great vehicles and, in this day and age, making sure we have great technologies in place."

For Matt, one example of all of those components coming together to work was the Super Bowl, which was held in Houston last year and had a paid attendance of over 70,000 people. Nikko's Worldwide fully dedicated its resources to prepare for the enormous undertaking.

"It was a massive event. We were able to get through it with minimal service errors. We had a great team. I was really proud of our team," Matt recalls. "We all worked long hours and we put in a massive amount of prep work to make sure during the event that everything was run properly. Our chauffeur staff was on point. What we accomplished in a matter of a week was incredible."

The business thrives today. Matt often travels between the two branches and for committees he is involved with. Matt serves as the vice chair of the Global Business Travel Association and the chair of the finance committee for the Texas Business Travel Association, and he works on the Chauffeur Driven Show Committee, to name a few.

"When you have a 24-hour type of business, it's always about trying to find the right balance between both," he says of his career and his family life with his wife Xochitl and his two young children. "Most days I work too much, but there are times when we can get away as a family and you enjoy it."



Nikko Assolin started his business in Houston, Texas, in 1982 with only a few vehicles. Today, he and his son Matt operate Nikko's Worldwide in two major cities in the state with almost 50 sedans and buses.