

Limo-service operator offers East-Coast style

By Patricia Bathurst
SPECIAL FOR THE REPUBLIC

Darren Pascale had a successful career in the entertainment and restaurant worlds, but when he relocated to the Southeast Valley, he took off in a different direction.

You might even say he stretched in that new direction.

His Chandler-based company, NY 54 Limousines, has grown in just four years from no cars to a fleet of nearly two dozen (customers like choices) and a growing roster of private and corporate clients, including a new contract to ferry the Arizona Cardinals around town.

Besides offering everything from town cars to stretch Hummers, NY 54 also provides security services upon client request.

"I began working in limousine services even before leaving the East Coast," said Pascale, who lives in Gilbert. "So I knew what kinds of services I wanted to develop and what clientele I wanted to attract."

Naming the new business NY 54 was a calculated strategy, Pascale said, intended to set the company apart with a bit of East Coast cachet and flair.

"I'd done some research into the market. I wanted to determine what it would take to develop a top-notch, first-class approach through assessing what the market is like and what it would take to be better."

He actually began building his business with cold calls and a single-page Web site — and no vehicles.

"When you're the new kid on the block, it can take a little time to get the phone to ring," he said. "So when the phones did start to ring, I went out and purchased one limo and one sedan."

The business soon developed a strong client base and began steady

growth.

Pascale's emphasis on customer service means that NY 54 drivers undergo rigorous screening and thorough training that begins with a custom etiquette course.

"Besides keeping our vehicles spotlessly clean, we have a dress code," Pascale said. "I believe the first impression clients have is key to their perception of service."

"We also work with our drivers to learn how to be flexible and adapt to the client's needs."

After that grounding in the stylish approach Pascale said his customers expect, new drivers complete a driving course (those long limos are every bit as tricky on turns as you might expect) and then spend time working with a more experienced driver.

"The limos can be intimidating at first," he said, "but after a couple of days, you lose that factor and learn how to rely on side mirrors and your own driving skills."

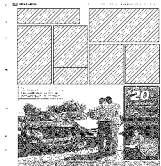
He's proud to note that, to date, his drivers have not had any accidents, "although I think one of my drivers rolled over a curb once."

Customer interest and need persuaded Pascale to add security as one of NY 54's custom services.

Trained and licensed security personnel make up a cadre he can call on for services requiring a team of up to eight professionals.

As Pascale looks ahead, he's creating what he calls a "different way to do this business." He has a distinct vision, and is working toward a completely "sophisticated, elegant, first-class service in which the sky's the limit."

"We're going to develop a company that is truly distinguished as a limousine service."





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Darren Pascale opened his limousine service with no limos. Now he has nearly two dozen. His customers include the Arizona Cardinals.