# TIM BANKS
# CLOSE UP

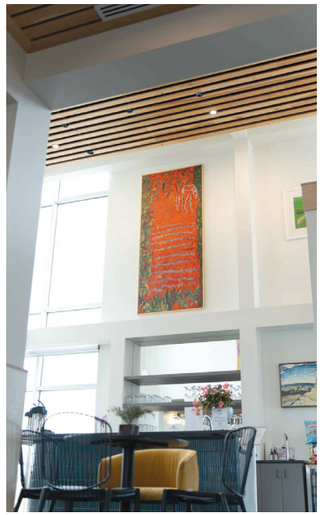
So you think you know Tim Banks, eh?
Think again.

Depending on who you ask, his name might summon the stereotype of an aggressive construction developer, an impatient headline-maker, or a sharp-edged businessman who doesn't wait for permission. He's been called a maverick, a disruptor, an a**hole. He shrugs it off. "I know I can come across like a jerk," he admits. "People have called me much worse. But I love PEI, and I've always believed if something needs to be said, say it. If something needs to be done, do it."

Words by **Stuart Hickox** // Photos: **Through the Lens Visual, Angela Rowlings**







That bluntness makes him a polarizing figure. But it also misses the bigger story. Because behind the caricature of the hard-driving entrepreneur is someone most people don't know: a survivor in recovery, a mentor to young Islanders, a defender of heritage, a champion of Island art. And this past summer, unexpectedly, a devoted dad to five orphaned baby ducklings.
Yes. "The duckies."

"We found them abandoned on the beach and couldn't leave them there," he says, almost defensively. He and his partner Carrie were walking Tim's sidekick cairn terrier, Killer (who isn't at all), when they noticed the tiny birds huddled at the shoreline. No parents in sight. Hours later, still no return. They called Candy Gallant at PEI Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation and were told that without help, the ducklings wouldn't survive the next tide or the next predator. Tim also learned that it's against the rules to care for wild birds in captivity.





TOP (L-R): The Hotel Acadia at Blackbush Beach Resort, **?? by artist ??**
ABOVE: Guest suite, The Hotel Acadia.
LEFT: Painting by artist, **??** hangs above the fireplace in the main lobby of The Hotel Acadia.

"So, we brought them home," he says. For nine weeks he hand fed and sheltered them, even building them a screened-in enclosure in his yard. Eventually, the duckies stretched their wings and were released back into the wild in late August. Killer had become their unlikely friend.

It's not exactly the public image most people associate with the man behind one of the biggest real estate development companies in Atlantic Canada. But that's precisely the point.

## Roots of a Fighter

Banks grew up in Summerside, the oldest child in a working-class family. His mother ran a service station while raising four kids on her own. His father had died suddenly when Tim was only 15. School fell by the wayside as he worked to help keep the family business afloat.



Those early years forged his edge. He shoveled guts in an abattoir, sold chocolate bars, delivered papers, pumped gas, and did whatever it took. "I learned fast that no one was coming to save us," he says. "You either figured it out or you went under." That included bending rules. "When I was 16 years old, I remember being called by a loyal customer on a Sunday to see if I could open the station to get him gas so he could catch the boat to New Brunswick. He didn't know which station was open on Sundays as set out by the Gas Dealer's Association, so I opened-up and as it was a beautiful spring day people lined up for gas and I responded by keeping the station open for the rest of the afternoon. On Monday evening a couple of members of the Association showed up implying that I could "go to jail" for breaking their rules. My Mom was there doing the bookkeeping, and she broke down in tears. With some advice from my uncle, that's when I figured it out: stupid rules that don't serve the public should be broken." I kept the station open every Sunday and every evening against their rules as it was our family's only source of income.

The lesson stuck. His now-familiar impatience with red tape can be traced directly back to those teenage years. "It's nearly impossible these days to get anything done," he says. "Even I have to push. Imagine being a young entrepreneur today trying to start something from scratch. Red tape is strangling our economy."
Building Beyond Buildings
By the time he launched







APM in 1980, Banks had already built a reputation for moving fast and taking risks. Over the years, those instincts grew APM into a powerhouse, completing thousands of commercial, institutional, and residential projects.

But the story isn't just about buildings. It's about what happens inside them — the jobs created, the businesses launched, the heritage preserved.

Banks has quietly invested heavily into restoring heritage properties. He has also raised millions to help non-profits like The Nature Conservancy purchase fragile wetlands and coastal areas so that they will be protected in perpetuity. He supports Island artists. He mentors young tradespeople, construction managers, and entrepreneurs. And he has a special fondness for bright engineering students. His employees say he's tough but fair, with little patience for excuses. "If you're working hard and trying your best, you know he'll have your back," says Ian Cheverie, Director of Sales & Guest Experience at The



TOP (L-R): Lobster roll, FiN
Folk (R) Tim has a wonderful collection of artwork on display throughout his home and The Hotel Acadia.
LEFT: (Top) A triptych by artist, **??** on display in the main lobby of The Hotel Arcadia.
(Bottom) Banks Fuel Station in Summerside with (toddler) Tim with his father on the left and Grandfather behind in doorway.

Hotel Acadia. "He's tough as nails, and that's how he gets sh*t done."
Ownership is a theme he returns to often. "We need more Islanders owning things here — businesses, homes, ideas. That's how you build prosperity."

## Blackbush: Reimagining the Shoreline in Winter

Banks' latest passion project, Blackbush Beach Resort, is one of the most ambitious hospitality developments PEI has seen in decades and is on the cutting edge of PEI's effort to expand the tourist season beyond the busy summer months. At its centre is The Hotel Acadia, a modern nod to Island heritage and year-round tourism.

"It's about reclaiming what

this shoreline used to mean to Islanders," Banks explains. "Families came here to escape, to connect, to breathe. It was where locals used their hands and their brains to create meaningful things. We want to bring that back."
The resort also signals his belief that PEI's future rests on marrying heritage with innovation. Restaurants like FiN Folk Food celebrate both tradition and experimentation. Coffee shops and music spaces are designed to become community hubs. "We're not just building a sustainable resort," he says. "We're building a destination that creates jobs, builds careers, and draws people here in every season."

And by the end of 2025, Banks and his partner Carrie MacNabb will open a new wedding and events venue in the old St. Michael's Parish church at nearby Corran Ban. They call the fully restored heritage venue, "Down by the Bridge" because that's how locals have referred to the area for decades.

### Preservation and Prosperity

Banks is blunt about what he sees as the biggest challenge facing PEI: fear of change. "We've gotten timid as a province," he says. "Government should protect our resources, but lately they're mostly just getting in the way. We need to stop being so scared all the time."
Nowhere is that more evident, he argues, than in downtown Charlottetown. The city's new Draft Official Plan, he believes, threatens to choke the life out of the historic core by focusing too heavily on restrictions instead of possibilities. "There's no preservation without prosperity," Banks says flatly. "If you overregulate the 500 Lot Zone, you don't save heritage — you kill it. Because heritage needs people. It needs commerce, housing, and activity. Without that, the downtown becomes an unsafe zone, not a bustling city."
He points to other municipalities that have balanced heritage and growth by allowing height and density in their cores.

"In any other North American city, downtown is where you add height and density — because that's how you preserve the old while building the new. Here, we act like growth is a threat. It's not. Growth is the only way preservation survives. And if we don't fix this problem now, we will lose more farmland, and everything between Charlottetown and Cavendish will soon be a suburb."

### Fighting Red Tape

His frustration with regulation isn't abstract. Banks has watched affordable housing projects stall in bureaucratic limbo, seen entrepreneurs walk away from downtown because of impossible design rules, and experienced his own developments getting tied up in years of delay.
"This isn't about me," he says. "I can manage, as we've got the resources. But young people, newcomers, small businesses? They get crushed before they can even get started. That's who loses when government smothers initiative."
It's why he's been so vocal about cutting red tape and why he has pushed government to rethink how policy gets made. "Consultation shouldn't just mean listening to the loudest voices who don't want anything to change. It should mean bringing builders, entrepreneurs, business owners, heritage folks, and community leaders to the table. That's how you get a plan that works."

### The Disappointments

Banks gets quiet when he is struggling to say something important. It's how his team knows to shut up and listen.

"I've been involved in many businesses," he said. "I was a founding director of Killam Properties, a public company; I put my money in, and my one condition was that they invest in PEI. Things were great, but then the Government got functioning with a "socialist attitude" and now the environment for business here has been tainted. The Island is losing opportunities and critical public investment."


















TOP (L-R): Folk Fries in the renovated food court, shoppers visiting Royalty Crossing. MIDDLE (L-R): The renovated food court is a welcoming space (R) Liv Colvin-Daley, sales associate for Stokes, assits a shopper. BOTTOM (L-R): Pandora and Lululemon are just two of the many new stores now located in Royalty Crossing.

### The Reputation vs. the Reality

Banks knows his reputation: Brash. Intimidating. Quick-tempered. He even leans into it sometimes. "Look, I'm not running for office," he laughs. "I don't need to make everyone happy."
But those who know him best talk about something else: his loyalty, his relentlessness, his refusal to quit on people who try. They also talk about the duckies. "They're pretty special," he admits. "They reminded me that no matter how big you build something, it's the small things that matter."
True to form, he saved the duckies by breaking the rules. It's a fitting metaphor for a man whose life has been defined by contradiction: big developer, small Island. Hard edges, soft heart. Fierce ambition, deep loyalty.

### Legacy

Ask what drives him now, and the answer comes fast: legacy.
"I want to be part of something that lasts. Not just buildings, but community. Jobs, homes, amazing public spaces. I want to attract other people who love PEI, to build a province where young people see a future."
That legacy already includes Blackbush, The Hotel Acadia, a rejuvenated Royalty Crossing mall, heritage restorations, and hundreds of affordable apartments. It includes mentorship, investments in art, and a fight for a downtown Charlottetown that balances heritage preservation and sustainability with prosperity.

"I want my employees and the local people who work with us to eventually be the owners. I will fight to my last breath to keep what we build here in the hands of Islanders."

Because for all the headlines, the fights, the reputation, Tim Banks isn't just building projects. He's building possibility. "Prince Edward Island has everything it needs to thrive," he says. "We just need the courage to make it happen."

APM COMMERCIAL
21 John Yeo Dr Unit 2,
Charlottetown
902.569.4000
apmcommercial.ca

BLACKBUSH BEACH RESORT
20 Carrie Me Wy, Grand Tracadie
902.672.4334
blackbush.ca

ROYALTY CROSSING
670 University Ave,
Charlottetown
902.800.2040
royaltycrossing.ca