



High-Security Luxury

An Interview with Lynel Brown,
Vice President, Brown Safe Manufacturing



A few samples of the wide selection of Brown Safes

EDITORS' NOTE Lynel Brown's induction into her father's business began at a very early age. Her earliest memories include duties in and around the Brown Safe office. She joined Brown Safe full time immediately out of college and has played an integral role in the growth of the company. From strategic planning to daily decisions in company management, Brown is active in all aspects of the company. Along with a lifetime of applied business experience, Brown holds a Bachelor of Science degree from San Diego State University, and actively studies trends and developments within the independent business community. She volunteers her free time to children's organizations, and has also raised and trained a special assistance dog for Canine Companions.



Lynel Brown

COMPANY BRIEF Brown Safe Manufacturing (brownsafe.com) has designed and built the world's finest security products for over 30 years. Each one of their high security safes is made to offer the utmost in performance and protection. Everything they build is made in the U.S. by their highly skilled craftsman, and overseen by the owner and founder, Frederick Brown. They take great pride in producing top-notch luxury safes, gun safes, and vault doors that continually prove to be more than capable of withstanding harsh abuse and the daily demands of governmental agencies worldwide, military applications, and foreign embassies, along with the needs of celebrity clientele and hard-working homeowners alike.

Would you talk about the history of Brown Safe Manufacturing and how it has evolved?

Brown Safe is a family-owned company. My father founded it about 34 years ago. We build a variety of high-security luxury safes for both jewelry and watches, and we also build a wide range of specialized security safes and vaults for the global military sector.

Is your most important focus on the individual, corporate, or government markets?

We're diversified, which has helped us through various recessions. It used to be that the majority of safes were made in the U.S. In the 1980s, there was a huge influx of product that came out of China and virtually every single company folded or started to bring in Chinese product. We are one of the last companies in the U.S. that actually makes a product – everyone else is just importing from the same handful of factories in China.

As far as the split, we're probably 60 percent residential and 40 percent government contracts – we do a variety of different projects with the government. We make all the vault doors that protect armories, as well as vaults to protect classified documents, for instance.

Is it hard to differentiate in the space?

Yes and no. Just like in any business or industry, understanding the importance of relationships is key. We pride ourselves on service and a special kind of commitment to our clients. Our custom-

ers are used to a level of quality and craftsmanship that goes far beyond simply good. Brown Safe gives them an outstanding security solution. Our safes and vault systems are designed to withstand a fantastic amount of punishment. One of our clients had a beautiful home in a remote location that was sadly caught in a large wildfire. The house was lost, caught in the center of a fire that took weeks to contain. The only thing left was our safe. We opened it up and everything in that Brown Safe was unharmed. We gave the customer a new safe. It was an emotional experience, opening that safe. The family was all there. They were so thankful to have the keepsakes and documentation they stowed in our safe. Our goal is to safeguard the irreplaceable. Often, it isn't just conventional valuables like jewels or watches; it is keepsakes, family heirlooms, photos, and other intrinsic items. These are true valuables and we understand the importance of keeping them safe no matter what.

There really is nothing like our product out there right now. First and foremost, security is our focus. The residential safes have the same technological advances that go into our military safes. Our products are designed to last generations. My father founded Brown Safe Manufacturing on the premise that we provide clients with a new level of security. The quality of our safes allows us to offer clients a 50-year no-questions-asked warranty. We stand behind our safes and the clients who buy them.

Has the way that safes are made changed?

We have employees that have worked with us for 35 years and have been with us since the beginning, so some of the techniques are exactly the same. Where it has changed is that some of the materials we use are different, so if you have a safe that you want to put in a high-rise in New York, weight is going to be a consideration, for instance. We add a composite material to the outside of a base safe for fire protection, but the base safe is

exactly the same as what we started making a long time ago; what has changed is the actual bolt work, as well as the composite fills that are added to it – we pull from aeronautical and the racing industries, as well as our military contracts, who let us in on materials other people don't get to use. But a lot of the craftsmanship is exactly the same.

How much is the product customized?

There is no limit with our customization for clients. Probably 80 percent are fairly customized in that safes used to be ugly grey boxes and have since become the central hub of the organization in the home.

We have clients that are in and out of the safe several times per day. It doesn't need to be hidden; it's a high-security safe and it can be right in the dressing room or a closet. Aesthetically, it needs to blend in with the environment and the layout needs to be such that it fits.

Because it's meant to be a forever product, the insides are very configurable. You can take out the inside and put something different in when needs change.

Can the safes interface with a client's existing security system?

We can go as deep as the client wants to go. We'll do a lot of integration where, for instance, if they shut the door but forget to turn the handle, it's going to show up on a home automation that the door is shut but the handle has not been turned.

We also have a GPS system that integrates with the home automation as well, so the client arms the safe and leaves, and if the safe was to be removed from the premises, the authorities, as well as the client, are alerted.

This helps guard against higher-end burglary attempts.

Is there adequate awareness out there of the value these types of safes can offer?

It's very much out there and is at the core of what we do. We try to put as much information as we can online and when they call in, we have sales liaisons that are trained in the manufacturing process and we take them on the floor, so they understand everything.

Our clientele is a very educated bunch and they are putting a lot of eggs in one basket with a safe. You've organized everything into one central location for the burglar, which is what most safes do.

So we educate and don't try to hide anything, and it's a cat-mouse game so we're constantly innovating in order to protect our clients against those who want to get into the safes. ●