

INSIDER

Premium HOME > ADVERTISING

Rising interest rates can't stop the surging market for ultra-lux real estate. These 13 PR power players are competing for the attention of billionaire buyers.

Michael Kaminer Nov 21, 2022, 1:10 PM



- **The market for ultraluxury real estate is frothy and exclusive.**
- **But swanky parties and over-the-top stunts no longer grab the attention of well-heeled buyers.**
- **Here are 13 top publicists high-end developers are counting on to make sure their properties sell for top dollar.**

The housing market has been brutal for middle-income consumers, but ultraluxury real estate has never been frothier.

The world's wealthiest are putting their cash into property, and developers are vying for those millions with projects that only get glitzier, pricier, and more exclusive. Uncertainty in Europe and Latin America is funneling even more wealth into US real estate in cities like New York, Miami, and Los Angeles.

To grab the attention of ultrarich consumers, developers rely on a small cadre of public-relations pros who specialize in promoting extravagant properties that command stratospheric prices.

Insider has identified 13 of the most sought-after PR executives in luxury real estate based on research and conversations with industry insiders.

But these pros tell Insider their role has changed since the heady 2010s. The days of blowout parties, gaudy promotions, and over-the-top buyer incentives have passed. Digital campaigns have become as important as traditional media coverage. Promotions now focus on discreet luxury, with high-net-worth buyers more interested in "quality and amenities," said Vanessa Fioravante, co-founder and principal of Miami's Ander & Co. "And buyers are saying, 'instead of giving me a Lamborghini, just shave a couple hundred thousand dollars off the asking price.'"

Sarah Berman, founder and president, The Berman Group, New York City



The Berman Group

Heavyweight developers like RXR, Durst, and Howard Hughes have been Berman's clients for years, and her firm handles many of their highest-end luxury projects. Among them are Peter Marino-designed Rosewood Hotel and Residences in Miami Beach; Prata Riverside Village near Lisbon; and Manhattan's 200 E. 83rd St. Berman's counsel extends beyond PR to amenities and even design, like elements of a private club within a client's condo project.

"Agencies are getting involved from the first step to help differentiate buildings," Berman told Insider. Top-end buyers are seeking "access and global privileges, like private membership clubs," she said. While her firm still hosts events, they're now "very exclusive, very small, and very curated."

Most expensive client listing: Miami Beach penthouse at an undisclosed location for \$100 million.

Spencer Castillo, co-founder, C&R, Los Angeles and New York City



C&R

C&R has its own custom-content operation, headed by ex-Robb Report editor Bruce Wallin. It produces glossy lifestyle magazines including *Distinct* magazine, carried in every Montage hotel and branded residence, and *Hualalai Magazine*, for a master-planned community on Hawaii's Big Island.

"We started them for hotel clients, and they've become a great vehicle for property developers," C&R co-founder Castillo told *Insider*.

The firm's also designed headline-grabbing partnerships, like racing brand McLaren's tricked-out garage for client Pendry West Hollywood, and a custom-yacht option for owners at Montage Cay, a private island. A campaign for Hawaii's Kukui'ula even micro-targeted 30 top agents at CAA.

Most expensive client listing: Four Seasons Los Cabos Resort and Private Residences villa for \$40 million.

Robin Dolch, founder and president, Hundred Stories, New York City



Hundred Stories

Along with media relations, "high-end partnerships are now de rigeur" for ultraluxury real-estate clients, Hundred Stories founder and president Dolch told Insider. For example, owners of units at luxury condo 53 W 53rd can get private visits from superstylist John Barrett's hair salon, which is at the same address — an amenity concocted by Dolch's team.

"The days when a PR firm would just get ink are ancient history," Dolch said. Clients include Lodha UK, developer of London's ultraprime 1 Grosvenor Square and Holland Park Gate; developer Elad Group and its 108 Leonard and 201 East 74th Street projects in New York; and Regalia Sunny Isles in Miami Beach, with its \$32 million penthouse.

Most expensive client listing: UN Plaza penthouse in Manhattan for \$39.95 million.

Gina Faridniya, VP of spaces, Antenna Group, New York City



Antenna Group

Antenna Group's roster includes about ten ultraluxury projects – a small but high-profile part of its broad real-estate and tech practices. Among them are: Miami's Baccarat Residences, St. Regis Residences, and Casa Bella by B&B Italia; Malibu's "zero-carbon" MariSol project; and 200 Amsterdam and 393 West End Avenue in Manhattan. While Antenna Group made its name with surgically precise digital campaigns as well as PR, traditional media moves the needle most for high-end clients, said Faridniya.

"A compelling narrative, brand partnerships, and social media all play a critical role in promoting luxury properties," she told Insider. "But for upscale residences especially, there's still power in a great headline."

Most expensive client listing: Penthouse at 200 Amsterdam for \$38 million.

Vanessa Fioravante, co-founder, Ander & Co., Miami



Ander & Co

Deeply connected in the Sunshine State, co-founder Fioravante boasts a client list that includes Fisher Island's The Links Estates, Arquitectonica-designed Ritz-Carlton Residences at Estero Bay, and Villa Valencia, Coral Gables' priciest condos. With an outpost in Bogota, Ander & Co. is one of the few PR firms to have boots on the ground in Latin America – a key target for Florida luxury properties.

"There's a lot of wealth coming from Latin America, and it's a major driver for us," Fioravante told Insider. While "lavish" stunts are now considered passe, Fioravante once persuaded a Miami Beach developer to entice potential buyers with a pink diamond worth \$500,000.

Most expensive client listing: Links Estates home on Fisher Island for \$33 million.

Rebecca Goldberg-Brodsky, co-founder, DADA Goldberg, New York City



DADA Goldberg

Unconventional luxury developers in places like Brooklyn and upstate New York tap this unorthodox agency, whose primary focus is design and creators. To promote The Brooklyn Home Company's residences, the agency commissioned a site-specific installation from artist Yuko Nishikawa, and for Brooklyn's Saint Marks Place project, DADA Goldberg conceived a design expo with curator Kira de Paola.

"We're not a traditional real-estate PR firm, and we came out of left field," co-founder Goldberg-Brodsky told Insider.

DADA Goldberg made headlines with Kerhonkson, New York's Hudson Woods project, whose PR push helped it sell out without a broker. Current clients include The Brooklyn Home Company, developer of \$14 million townhouses; The Brooklyn Tower, the borough's highest spire; and Boerum Hill's St. Mark's Place condos. "Visually driven storytelling drives our campaigns," Goldberg-Brodsky said.

Most expensive client listing: \$19.5 million penthouse at Brooklyn's Olympia Dumbo.

Leslie LeCount, co-founder, Optimist Consulting, New York City



Optimist Consulting

A dual focus on real estate and luxury brands – think Audemars Piguet and Phillips auctions – has made Optimist a go-to for top-tier developers. Along with trophy buildings like The Towers of the Waldorf Astoria Residences, the firm's clients include Miami's 888 Brickell and Robert A.M. Stern-designed South Flagler House in West Palm Beach, along with branded residences for Marriott and Rosewood.

"Our knowledge of ultra-high-net-worth buyers helps us stand out," said co-founder Leslie LeCount, who oversees Optimist's real-estate practice.

Most expensive client listing: Duplex penthouse in Manhattan's 111 West 57th Street for \$66 million.

Florence Quinn, founder, Quinn, New York City and Miami



Quinn

Quinn is as much a creative agency as it is a PR firm. Its eponymous founder has become a sought-after partner to help snazz up high-end projects with out-of-left-field ideas.

For The Ritz-Carlton Residences in Miami Beach, Quinn scored a PR coup when she promoted an art studio as a residential amenity. For the splashy Oceana Bal Harbour development, Quinn helped pick two giant Jeff Koons sculptures for the condo's public areas. Co-owned by Oceana buyers, the works have been borrowed by the Whitney, Pompidou, and Guggenheim Bilbao.

Quinn also finds "influencer brokers" like Douglas Elliman's Fredrik Eklund and SERHANT's Ryan Serhant to help market ritzy properties. With their "star power and dazzle", they have become as critical as Instagram and LinkedIn, Quinn told Insider. "Our job is to get them the assets they need to promote a property on their own social channels," she said.

Most expensive client listing: \$40 million penthouse at Mandarin Oriental Residences, Barcelona.

John Rice, VP, Magrino, New York City



Magrino

The biggest change in PR for luxury real estate has been "a demand for digital instead of PR," according to Rice, Magrino's vice president in charge of real-estate clients. "Just a few years ago, the industry wouldn't touch social media."

Among the firm's assignments are Harry Macklowe's One Wall Street, New York's largest office-to-condo conversion; social media for 200 Amsterdam, whose \$19.5 million penthouse set a neighborhood record; and Florida's waterfront Alba Palm Beach, set to debut in 2025.

Christie's International Real Estate has been a longtime client for listings around the world. As a bonus, agency founder Susan Magrino is a boldface name who hobnobs with luxury developers and their likely customers.

Most expensive client listing: Combined unit at One Wall Street for \$19.05 million.

Suzanne Rosnowski, founder and CEO, Relevance International, New York City and London



Relevance International

With flags planted in New York, LA, and London, Rosnowski's firm has made global luxury projects a signature, including Athens' €8 billion Ellinikon development and Platinum LEED-certified "super-luxury" Camellias condos in Gurgaon, India.

"I can connect internationally with a huge sector of this market," Suzanne Rosnowski told Insider. "If there's someone in the Middle East, I link them with the person in LA they need to know."

Technology's also changing the ultra-luxury game, Rosnowski said, with clients ramping up demands for social strategies, mobile ad buys, and brand-building. What they're not seeking is blowout parties. "Maybe that worked in 2013, but buyers don't want them anymore. They want quality and a solid investment, like buying Hermes or Chanel."

Most expensive client listing: The former Aaron Spelling estate in Holmby Hills, Los Angeles, \$165 million.

Duree Ross, founder and president, Duree and Company, Miami



Duree and Company

Ross promotes top-end listings for Realtors like Jills Zeder Group, RealTrends' highest-performing brokers for 2021, and Coldwell Banker Realty Florida. In Aspen, where her firm has a satellite, clients include luxury condo mavens Gary Feldman Group. Ross' portfolio also includes megadevelopers like Elad Group, builder of NYC's 22 Central Park South.

"Luxury buyers like partnerships around mindfulness and anything green that makes them feel good about what they're doing," said Ross, whose grandfather Roy Riker, Sr. was a major East Coast property developer.

For example, she aligned Palm Beach client 3550 South Ocean with Florida's Loggerhead MarineLife Center to raise awareness of endangered sea turtles. "The goal ultimately was to build out a CSR program that would resonate with buyers, given the project is oceanfront," Ross said.

Most expensive client listing: Adjacent Fort Lauderdale mansions for \$54 million.

Michael Tavani, founder, M18, New York City and Miami



M18

M18 has been a power player in New York real estate PR for years. Lately, the firm's become a major force nationally and globally. In South Florida, its prestige projects include Miami's 1000 Museum by Zaha Hadid and the swish Cipriani residences; markets like Los Angeles, London, Atlanta, and Mexico are growing fast.

"The ultra-high-net-worth consumer is living above the clouds. We use all forms of strategic communications and messaging, but a big, thoughtful story in a global business newspaper is something a broker, friend, or attorney might share with a prospective buyer," M18 founder Michael Tavani told Insider.

Most expensive client listing: A 7,545-square-foot, \$250 million triplex at Manhattan's Central Park Tower.

Tadd Schwartz, president, Schwartz Media Strategies, Miami

Some of Miami's glitziest projects have come to Schwartz, a PR veteran who's deeply networked in South Florida. On his roster are Missoni Baia, the fashion brand's first Florida residences; Mr. C Residences, condos from a branch of the famed Cipriani clan; Renzo Piano-designed Eighty Seven Park; and Marriott-backed EDITION Residences.

And while Schwartz engineered Aston-Martin test drives and helicopter rides for that brand's 2017 condo launch, today's campaigns take subtler approaches, he said. "South Florida is dealing with a major affordability crisis, and we need to be careful to not appear tone-deaf with our luxe projects while 75% of the residents in Miami can't afford a single-family home."

Most expensive client listing: Full-floor residence at Rem Koolhaas-designed The Perigon Miami Beach for \$19.6 million.