

MANNTM REPORT

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| THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE DEALS IN THE NY REAL ESTATE SCENE |



Halstead Property

DIANE M. RAMIREZ

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Rising Brokerage Star

In ballet, the truly talented ballerinas move up from the corps and become featured performers. The talent is evident from the beginning and through perseverance and dedication the corps member soon sees her name in lights.

It's like that in residential brokerage. Many agents have successful careers, but only a few have the talent, drive and business sense to move up into the stratosphere of a star. Again, potential is seen early.

Frances Katzen, of Prudential Douglas Elliman, was a premiere ballerina with several major dance companies before turning to real estate less than a year ago where she has shown the same star quality. In ballet, the proof of excellence is in the opinions of one's peers and the critics. In brokerage, it is far more objective – the amount and number of sales. In a short time, Frances has sold millions of dollars worth of co-ops and condominiums in Manhattan, while renting several high-price luxury apartments. Additionally, there are numerous listings worldwide in such countries as Hungary, Australia and Turkey. A creative marketer, Frances publishes a monthly email newsletter, "The Katzen Report."

"Frances has had a remarkable start, exceeding our expectations" says Yuval Greenblatt, her immediate supervisor and a Vice President and Manager of Prudential Douglas Elliman. "She is intuitive, diligent, extremely thorough, and provides what the consumer expects, real representation.

"She comes from a competitive background, has traveled extensively throughout the world and is not easily intimidated," Greenblatt adds. "She knows what to do, and to her credit, she does it. I can't say that about many people."

Born in South Africa, and raised in Australia, Frances came to New York at age 15 to study at the School of American Ballet and the danced professionally for 14 years with the American Ballet Theater, the Miami City Ballet and as a soloist with the Suzanne Farrell Ballet at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. A career-ending injury forced her to look elsewhere for a professional outlet for her energy, discipline and creativity.

Real estate was a natural endeavor. Her mother is a developer in Australia and her brother, Mark Zeff, is a noted architect and designer in Manhattan who has designed hotels, restaurants and the homes of such notables as actress Hilary Swank and Annie Liebowitz, the noted photographer.

"I would drive around with my mother looking at properties," Katzen recalls. "She has the developer's eye to see a ramshackled property and have the foresight and ability to turn it into something. I learned to understand value and potential."

"My brother is very talented and has exquisite taste, something that I think runs in our family," Katzen continues. "When I came to New York I went with him and saw how he looked at a space and what he would do with it. It was a fantastic learning experience."



Frances Katzen

Frances has combined the knowledge gained from her family with an innate sense of style and taste to quickly become recognized for the ability to "stage," or prop, an apartment before renting or selling.

"So many apartments have trouble selling or don't get the appropriate price because they show poorly," she says. "For example, an apartment on West 53rd Street had been on the market for more than six months and was costing the owner about \$10,000 per month to carry. I was finally given the exclusive and went in on a Saturday, brought in high-end rental furniture, pulled out the carpeting, added a few touches and in one week sold the property at the asking price."

"Stephen [Kotler] told me something that changed my view of selling and my business outlook. He said, 'You don't sell, you advise.' When I go into an apartment with a client, I watch and let them take it in. You really can't make someone buy."

"This fits my personality," Katzen continues. "It's about being real. People can tell when someone is being insincere. The quality of the product must resonate."

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